

# The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities



## Chamber of Regions

**14<sup>th</sup> PLENARY SESSION**  
**CPR(14)3REP**  
24 April 2007

### Language Education in Regional or Minority Languages

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Explanatory memorandum  
Committee on Culture and Education

#### Summary:

Since the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has been in operation, it has come to be recognised as the key legal instrument in its field.

An analysis of the reports of the Committee of Experts of the Charter, with regard to language education, has highlighted the benefits for educational authorities to introduce detailed descriptions of their educational models for regional or minority language education, to be more consistent in their treatment and implementation of the Charter, and to take further measures to consolidate and develop regional or minority language teaching in their regions. Thereby they would continue to progress towards a European space where regional or minority language education is systematically provided in a coherent fashion.

R : Chamber of Regions / L : Local Chamber  
ILDG : Independent and Liberal Democrat Group  
EPP/CD : European People's Party – Christian Democrats Group  
SOC : Socialist Group  
NR : Member not belonging to a Political Group of the Congress



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## **Acknowledgements**

*The Secretariat of the Congress wishes to thank Dr. Bernadet de Jager and Drs. Cor van der Meer for preparing the report with the Fryske Academy / Mercator Education.*

## 1 Introduction

The Council of Europe's language education policies aim to promote plurilingualism, linguistic diversity, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship and social cohesion.

The central goal of language education in Europe is to ensure the participation in society of every European citizen, to strengthen the conditions for their successful access to the labour market and finally to further social inclusion and social cohesion. Essential to these language policies are adequate language proficiency levels demonstrated at the end of both primary schooling and the period of obligatory school attendance.

It is essential to the success of a multilingual society that the language command exhibited by European citizens in several languages (at least M + 2) has been developed well enough for communication on the shop floor, in phone calls and in e-mail contacts. Well-developed language skills are essential if individuals are to benefit from opportunities in employment and mobility. On the other hand, language skills are also needed for fully qualified participation in social life. Language policies should also be directed towards social inclusion and social cohesion, because globalisation and internationalisation pose new challenges to social cohesion and integration.

In theory, language learning policies include national language(s), minority and immigrant languages as well as foreign languages. In practice, however, most of the studies and projects are focused on the teaching and learning of foreign national languages, and some of them on the learning and teaching of the national mother-tongue(s). Only few projects are focused on the learning and teaching of regional or minority languages, or immigrant languages. The present study aims to fill this gap.

The study's starting point is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, a Treaty of the Council of Europe (ETS 148). The importance of the Charter in the field of regional or minority language protection has been recognised by the European Parliament, which - in its Resolution on Regional and Lesser-used Languages (2003) - referred to the Charter as the "key Europe-wide legal frame of reference applying in this sphere". The Charter focuses on the protection of regional or minority languages and cultures as such; *not* on the protection of minority groups. The provisions in part II (art. 7) of the Charter contain legally binding obligations for the Treaty parties in general terms. The most important obligation related to education is "the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages." This clause provides a minimum standard for every regional or minority language, both in terms of teaching the language and teaching through the medium of the language, depending on the situation of each language group.

The Charter's obligations are described in greater detail in the menu system belonging to part III of the Charter of which art. 8 'Education' is the most important article for this study. As part of the ratification procedure, treaty parties select undertakings listed in the menu system which best fit the actual situation of the language group concerned. The menu system contains undertakings related to pre-school provisions, primary school, secondary education, vocational training, higher and adult education, teacher training and the inspectorate. At present, the Charter has been ratified by 21 member States of the Council of Europe and Montenegro. It has been signed by a further 11 member States. A three-yearly monitoring cycle forms part of the Charter system. An independent Committee of Experts (Comex) is charged with the monitoring process. As part of the monitoring cycle, each treaty party compiles a periodic report on the implementation of its undertakings. The Committee is responsible for on-the-spot visits and evaluation reports compiled by the Committee of Experts itself.

The initiative for drafting the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was taken by the (forerunner of) the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities ("the Congress") in 1984. The Charter was opened for signature in 1992 and entered into force in 1998 after five ratifications, at which point the implementing and monitoring system started to operate. On the basis of the reports issued in the first and (partly) in the second monitoring cycle, the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe drafted recommendations. At its 2006 autumn session, the Congress's Committee on Culture and Education decided to analyse the national reports as well as the reports of the Comex in order to formulate common goals and minimum standards for the teaching and learning of regional or minority languages in terms of article 8 (Education) of the Charter.

This study aims to provide a description of minimum conditions and minimum provisions required to establish minimum standards for language education. The conditions and provisions are described in terms of time investment (both teaching *in* and teaching *of* languages), teaching materials, teacher

qualifications, educational models and finally control mechanisms employed by the inspectorate. The description can be viewed as a more detailed analysis of the ratification levels mentioned in article 8 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

## **2 Analysis**

### **2.1 Relevant Documents**

The implementing and monitoring system consists of several instruments foreseen in the Charter.

Article 7.4 encourages the treaty parties to install consulting bodies which are to express the wishes and needs of the relevant language communities. Articles 15 and 16 of the Charter require periodic national reports every three years and the composing of an international Committee of Experts (Comex) in which every country as a treaty party is represented. Finally, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe must present a report to the Committee of Ministers as well as to the Parliamentary Assembly every two years on the developments of the ratifications and the implementation of the Charter.

During the last decade, the Comex has evaluated these reports and visited the national governments as well as the language communities. The Comex findings are collected in the evaluation reports and presented together with the recommendations to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The monitoring cycle is completed by publication of the reports and recommendations to the treaty parties, to wit the national governments responsible for the implementation of the signed undertakings of the Charter. All these reports and recommendations provide new input to the regional and national debate aimed at the improvement of the position, the protection and the promotion of the regional and minority languages concerned.

The Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM; ETS 157) is another treaty of the Council of Europe related to the education *of* and *in* minority languages. The Framework Convention also came into force in 1998. So far, 43 countries have signed the FCNM - of which 39 have finalised the ratification procedure. In article 14 of the FCNM, the right is stated to education *in* and *of* minority languages. Treaty parties are invited to offer and to maintain adequate education provisions in the relevant minority languages. However, no rules or undertakings are formulated in the FCNM on specific requirements in terms of time investment, continuity of teaching, quality of teachers, availability of teaching materials and tests. For that reason the FCNM can hardly be used as a document of reference when it comes to setting minimum standards for the education in minority languages.

The Common European Framework of Reference (first version 1995, Council of Europe publication 1998) has been developed to formulate and set common goals and strategies for language learning and language teaching. Originally, the CEFR was developed to equalise the teaching of foreign languages. Since the CEFR was first implemented, however, several attempts have been made to adapt it for mother-tongue education as well as for second language teaching. As a result of various projects and initiatives, concrete descriptions are now available in terms of "can-do" statements for several minority languages. These descriptions can be used for further analysis and also for the description of quality requirements with regard to the education *of* and *in* regional and minority languages. Nowadays, the implementation of the CEFR has become a part of the teaching structures and routines used by teachers and students with the introduction of the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

On behalf of the European Commission, a study was carried out in 1995 on the position and future prospects of the lesser used languages in six EU member states. Later, this study was completed by additional studies on the position of lesser used languages in the EU accession member states. Full details are available on the Euromosaic website.

Through the publication of the Regional Dossiers, Mercator Education has mapped out minority language education in the European member states. The dossiers are concise reports providing factual information on the position of a minority language within the educational system of the European member state concerned. Over thirty such dossiers have now been written.

The Council of Europe is currently working on the development of a 'Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education' (draft version 2003). In this Council of Europe project, proposals are formulated towards the creation of a European Culture of Plurilingualism and the Organising of Plurilingual Education.

## 2.2 Areas of analysis

This study concentrates on a set of themes that are relevant for the development of common goals and for formulating minimum standards for education *of* and *in* regional or minority languages. The following areas are included:

- educational models (including time investment);
- education goals (related to the Common European Framework of Reference); availability and quality of teaching materials;
- teacher's qualifications and teacher training;
- position and role of the Inspectorate;
- legal position of the language concerned.

## 2.3 Country selection

In principle, the corpus on which this study is based includes those countries which have ratified the Charter and which have signed undertakings from article 8 (Education) for compulsory education (both primary and secondary schooling) at levels i, ii and / or iii.

Of the 13 countries that were selected in the initial stages of the analysing process, 8 countries and 10 languages were selected: Austria (Croatian, Slovene), Germany (Upper and Lower Sorbian), the Netherlands (Frisian), Slovakia (Hungarian), Slovenia (Italian), Spain (Catalan), Sweden (Sami) and the United Kingdom (Welsh). It was decided to exclude Croatia and Norway, because these countries only signed the undertaking for pre-primary schooling. Denmark was excluded, because this country only signed the undertaking for secondary education at levels iii/iv. Further selection criteria involved a balanced number of countries per ratification level and the availability of a regional dossier from Mercator Education. As a result, Finland was excluded because the research team already studied four countries at level i and Switzerland was excluded because Mercator Education has not published a regional dossier on Italian or Rhaeto-Romance so far.

## 2.4 Study approach

The actual study contains a comparative description of the various positions held by the regional or minority languages and the drafting of summarised conclusions. It also contains recommendations aimed at setting common goals and formulating minimum standards for education in regional and minority languages by the treaty parties.

For each minority language, the descriptions concern:

- the level of ratification;
- the number of users of the minority language;
- education goals;
- educational models;
- time investment (subject and medium of instruction);
- teaching materials;
- reach of education in minority language (incl. decline or increase);
- evaluation / examinations;
- teacher qualifications;
- teacher training;
- the inspectorate;
- the legal position and authority within the respective country.

Basic information was gathered from the national periodic reports, evaluation reports by the Comex, reports of the Council of Europe to the member states and also regional dossiers of Mercator Education and Euromosaic. Additional information was collected from internal Council of Europe publications.

### 3 Towards minimum standards

#### 3.1 Level of ratification and educational models

Article 8 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages contains several undertakings concerning education that can be ratified at four levels:

- i) to make available education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
- ii) to make available a substantial part of education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
- iii) to provide, within education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
- iv) to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient.

This paragraph describes education in the minority language in eight countries that ratified undertakings concerning education at the four different levels. Next to the description of the educational models in both primary and secondary education, the judgments and comments of the Committee of Experts are summarized. On the basis of this information, recommendations are formulated focused on setting minimum standards for minority language education.

##### Level i

The countries which ratified the Charter at level i - subscribing to make available education in the relevant regional or minority languages - included in this study are Slovakia (Hungarian), Slovenia (Italian), Spain (Catalan) and the United Kingdom (Welsh). In these countries, the models of education *in* and *of* the minority language differ. In Spain, the minority language is used as the standard language of instruction for all pupils in all schools. In the other three countries (Slovakia, Slovenia and United Kingdom), the minority language is the main language of instruction in some schools and is partly used in bilingual schools, while other schools use the majority language. The key element here is that the minority language speakers have an educational option. In two of the latter three countries, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, pupils in schools where the majority language is the language of instruction learn the minority language as a subject. In Slovakia, Hungarian is not taught in Slovak classes, nor in schools with Slovak as the medium of instruction. In Catalan schools in Spain in which more than 75% are Spanish speaking pupils, the Linguistic Immersion Programme can be applied. In the UK, pupils who do not have Welsh as their mother tongue follow language immersion courses.

For Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Spain, an evaluation report of the Committee of Experts is available. In all three countries, the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings fulfilled. In the case of Welsh in the United Kingdom in primary education, the Committee of Experts raises the question whether Welsh-medium or bilingual education is genuinely available for all pupils whose parents would opt for these forms of education. For secondary education, the Committee does not conclude on fulfilment. The Committee observed that the percentage of Welsh-medium lessons may be very low, that some pupils have to travel long distances and that there is a lack of continuity. A large percentage of pupils study Welsh as a *second* language in secondary education, whereas they studied it as their *first* language in primary school.

##### Level ii

In addition, two countries were studied (Austria and the Netherlands) that ratified the Charter for primary education at level ii, which means that these countries subscribed to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages. Both countries ratified the Charter for secondary education at level iii. In Austria, we studied the educational situation of two minority languages: Croatian and Slovene.

Concerning Croatian, there are no primary schools with Croatian as the primary language of instruction. Some bilingual schools use Croatian next to German in teaching all subjects, and most schools teach Croatian as a second language for three hours a week. In Austrian primary schools, teaching *in* and *of* Slovene takes place in bilingual schools, in bilingual classes and also in a bilingual section within a class. Since 2001, German and Slovene are to be used to the same extent as the medium of instruction. In practice, this differs greatly. Pupils registered for bilingual classes whose Slovene is insufficient should be offered additional remedial teaching in Slovene, if there are three or more of these children. In German classes, Slovene may be taught as additional subject.

In the Netherlands, Frisian is a compulsory subject in primary schools in Friesland. In practice, teachers spend 30 to 60 minutes per week on Frisian lessons. There are large differences between schools.

The Committee of Experts concluded that Austria partly fulfilled the undertaking concerning Croatian in Austria. They comment that since the ratio of teaching in German and Croatian is not defined by law, in practice the teaching of Croatian is sometimes very limited. The Committee considers the undertaking for Slovene in Austrian primary education as fulfilled at present. In their judgement, the Committee writes that attention must be paid to the variable language command demonstrated by pupils and also to the increasing risk of closure of bilingual schools resulting from decreasing pupil numbers, and finally to the fact that the weighting of Slovene and German is not equal in practice. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking for primary education not fulfilled for Frisian in the Netherlands. In the Committee's opinion, schools spend too little time on Frisian, which cannot be interpreted as a substantial part of education.

#### Level iii

Two countries, Austria and the Netherlands, which ratified the Charter for primary education at level ii, ratified it for secondary education at level iii. This implies the undertaking to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum. In Burgenland in Austria, most secondary schools offer Croatian as an optional subject. There are two bilingual schools offering bilingual instruction in Croatian in some or all subjects. Concerning Slovene, secondary schools offer Slovene as a compulsory subject (4 hours, mother tongue), as a foreign language and as an optional additional subject. In the Netherlands, Frisian is a compulsory subject in the lower grades of secondary education. In practice, 70% of secondary schools teach Frisian. In addition, 30% of secondary schools incidentally use Frisian as language of instruction. In the upper grades, Frisian is an optional subject.

The Committee of Experts concluded that Austria has fulfilled the undertaking concerning secondary education both for Slovene and for Croatian. According to the Committee, the Netherlands have not fulfilled the undertaking for secondary education related to Frisian. In the Committee's opinion, the position of Frisian and the quality of lessons are not sufficient in secondary education. In the upper grades, Frisian is an optional subject and this cannot be regarded as an integral part of the curriculum.

#### Level iv

Germany and Sweden ratified the Charter at level iv, which implies that they apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above, at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient. In Germany, the educational position of both Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian was examined. In both cases, at primary school level, Sorbian may be taught as mother tongue, as second language and as foreign language. There are some Sorbian schools. In German schools, Sorbian may be taught as an additional subject. Parents' wishes determine the teaching of Sorbian. In secondary education, Lower Sorbian is offered as an optional subject in two schools. For Upper Sorbian, there are also Sorbian and bilingual secondary schools.

In Sweden, most Sami children attend regular schools and receive up to six hours of home language instruction. Some municipalities offer integrated Sami education, in which part of the education has a Sami focus. There are six Sami schools, where children are taught in both the Sami and the Swedish language from first to sixth grade. After sixth grade, pupils enter a regular school where they still receive lessons in Sami (Sami language, Sami handicraft and society oriented subjects).

The Committee of Experts judged that Germany only partly fulfilled the undertakings concerning both primary and secondary education. For Lower Sorbian in primary education, the Committee observed a shortage of bilingual teachers, insufficient continuity following pre-school and an absence of Sorbian education in all territories where it is used. The latter two observations also concern Upper Sorbian in primary education. In addition, the lack of a strict legal framework related to the minimum number of pupils required for education in Upper Sorbian is seen as a threat to the undertaking. For secondary education, availability also poses a threat, as well as the high number of students required (20) before secondary education in Upper Sorbian is organised. The Committee of Experts considers the Swedish undertakings related to Sami fulfilled.

#### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and in particular:

- invite the competent authority to write a description of the ratification levels in terms of possible educational models, the number of teaching hours in and of the regional or minority language and finally the target population (all pupils in areas with regional or minority languages or only regional or minority speakers).
- ensure that the teaching in or of the regional or minority language provides the basis for its effective transmission;
- actively involve families in the transmission of the regional or minority language, in particular before pre-school education;
- ensure that the education system provides continuity for education in the regional or minority language;
- ensure that education in the regional or minority language is generally available throughout the territory where that language is currently used;
- offer teaching in or of the regional or minority language in territories where the language has traditionally been used;
- determine a minimum number of pupils needed for the establishment of a language class which is lower than the threshold for a class in the official language;
- teach the regional or minority language as part of the curriculum;
- describe the position of the minority language in education both in terms of the minority language as a subject and in terms of the minority language as the language of instruction (educational models);
- describe the amount of time the minority language is taught or used as the language of instruction within the different models of minority language education;
- describe the target population of the employed educational models for instruction in and of the minority language;
- guarantee the availability of the chosen provisions of minority education;
- guarantee longitudinality in the provision of minority language education in pre-primary, primary and secondary education;
- guarantee the necessary provisions at school and pupil level to deal with differences between the language skills in the regional or minority language of minority language speakers and pupils that learn the minority language as second language.

States that ratify the Charter at level i and level ii should:

- give minority language speakers a guaranteed option for education where the regional or minority language is used as the language of instruction within a reasonable distance from their home;
- provide all pupils in the area of the minority language with some basic instruction in the regional or minority language.

### **3.2 Education goals**

Ratification of the European Charter has consequences for educational goals and curricula. Still, level descriptions do not specifically concern educational goals of teaching the minority language. In addition to the undertakings concerning minority language education, article 8 mentions a specific undertaking dealing with education in the history and culture of the minority language speakers:

*g)* to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language.

Seven of the eight countries studied in this report have ratified this additional undertaking.



The following section describes the available information concerning the goals of education in the minority language and the teaching of the history and culture of the minority language speakers.

#### Level i

The countries that ratified on level i - Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom – have generally set the same goals for the minority language as for the majority language. Slovenia used the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for the description of the goals for Italian language learning. Since Slovenia has different educational models for the teaching of Italian, different goals are set: all related to the different levels of language proficiency within the CEFR. For example, students who learn Italian as a second language should reach A2 (Way stage) to B1 (Threshold) levels at the end of primary school (age 15) and B2 (Vantage) or C1 (Effectiveness) level at the end of upper secondary education. Pupils in primary schools (aged 9 to 15) who learn Italian as a foreign language should reach A1 (Breakthrough) to A2 (Way stage) levels. At the end of upper secondary school, students should reach A2 (Way stage) to B1 (Threshold) proficiency levels.

With regard to the teaching of the history and culture of the minority speakers, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom have integrated these subjects into the curriculum. The Committee of Experts concludes that all three countries have fulfilled this undertaking. In Slovakia, there is no official way of teaching regional geography or a different view on history.

#### Level ii / level iii

The information on goals and curricula within the countries that ratified level ii is of a rather general nature. In Austria, the curriculum in primary schools where both German and Slovene are used as a medium of instruction contains the same educational objectives as the curriculum of other Austrian schools. From the new Minority Education Act for Carinthia (1988), new curricula were issued for primary schools with German and Slovene as languages of instruction. These curricula emphasise the didactics involved in bilingual teaching and the importance of intercultural learning, taking the pupils' environment into account. No specific information has been found on goals for the teaching of Croatian in Austria.

In the Netherlands, the Minister of Education has defined attainment goals for Frisian. Until 2006, these goals were fully identical for both Dutch and Frisian language acquisition. In 2006, new attainment goals were formulated which differ between Frisian and Dutch and take the mother tongue of the pupils into account. Although Frisian is a compulsory subject at the lower levels of secondary education, there were no officially formulated attainment goals until 2006.

The Committee of Experts has insufficient information concerning the way history and culture of the minority group is taught in both Austria and the Netherlands. The Committee's conclusions suggest that this undertaking should also become rooted in monolingual majority language schools and bilingual schools.

#### Level iv

With respect to the countries that ratified at level iv - Germany and Sweden - again the description of educational goals is rather general. Concerning Upper Sorbian, the Saxon School Law stipulates that Sorbian schools should foster and develop the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Sorbs. In Sweden, in addition to meeting the goals of compulsory education, the Sami schools should ensure that every pupil is familiar with the Sami heritage and is able to speak, read and write Sami. There are different goals for those who learn Sami as a first language or as a second language.

Germany has not ratified undertaking g). The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled in Sweden, but advises a stronger structured commitment within the curriculum, because the actual teaching sometimes depends on the will of teachers and head masters.

#### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should use the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for the description of quantifiable education goals in the regional or minority language.

The Council of Europe should stimulate countries employing different educational models for teaching the regional or minority language to relate language acquisition goals within each of these models to the different language acquisition levels listed in the CEFR.

The Member States of the Council of Europe should set quantifiable goals for language acquisition in the regional or minority language as well as for teaching the history and culture of regional or minority language speakers.

The Member States of the Council of Europe should integrate the history and culture of the regional or minority language speakers in the curriculum of all schools in the country.

### 3.3 Teaching materials

In order to be able to teach the regional or minority language or to teach other subjects in the regional or minority language, teachers need suitable teaching materials. Educational models and goals concerning the regional or minority language have implications for the teaching materials. Below, we present information on teaching materials in the different countries studied and we also present the Committee of Experts' comments concerning teaching materials.

#### Level i

In Slovakia, course books are free. Each year, the Ministry of Education distributes a list of approved books from which schools may order according to the number of students. Most of the Hungarian course books are translated from Slovak. Exceptions concern the alphabet, reading books in junior sections (grades 5-9) and books on Hungarian grammar and literature. Books used in vocational schools are either translated from Slovak or published in the Slovak language.

In Slovenia, the development of teaching materials is the domain of the National Education Institute of Slovenia. Teachers in primary and secondary education mostly use books and manuals published by Slovenian editors, Italian publishing houses, as well as material issued by the EDIT Publishing House of Rijeka. A considerable part of the materials is prepared by the teachers themselves. Teaching/learning methods are based on the CEFR.

Concerning Catalan in Spain, sufficient material is available for language teaching both in terms of teaching *of* the language and teaching *in* the language at all levels of education. In addition, the organisation Service for Catalan Teaching (SEDEC) within the Department of Education in Catalonia attempts to cover specific needs left unattended by the publishing houses, such as linguistic immersion programmes and provisions for late incoming students.

In the United Kingdom, the Assessment, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for Wales is mainly responsible for commissioning Welsh medium teaching materials. Much work has been done during the past 20 years, but constant changes to the Curriculum Orders for individual subjects cause difficulties in matching needs and provisions. Teachers in secondary schools show commitment and innovation in producing and providing their own resources.

The Committee of Experts does not specifically focus on teaching materials, but when the fulfilment of a specific undertaking is endangered because of a lack of suitable teaching materials, the Committee does comment on this. With respect to Italian in Slovenia, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Slovenian authorities to stimulate the provision of translated Slovenian textbooks mainly for secondary education.

#### Level ii / level iii

In Burgenland in Austria, most available teaching materials focus primarily on Croatian language education. There is a shortage of materials in Croatian for other subjects. German books are mostly used, and bilingual teachers prepare their own materials or use books from the republic of Croatia. One major teaching aid for secondary education is a special dictionary which gives words in German, in the local variant of Croatian and in the official language of Croatia. In Carinthia in Austria, individual bilingual teachers and groups of teachers have developed teaching materials and textbooks for bilingual education. As all schoolbooks are subsidized in Austria, the school authorities have provided translations of German language textbooks. However, these materials have become rather outdated for some subjects, especially in secondary education, because authorities find it too expensive to renew the materials regularly.

In the Netherlands, textbooks in Frisian are available for language and reading instruction (Taalrotonde), for spelling in the upper grades (Skriuwtaal), biology, geography, history, music and religious education. Educational programmes on television and radio are produced and transmitted by the Frisian Broadcasting Company in cooperation with the Centre for Educational Advice in Friesland. Two Frisian youth magazines complement the instructional materials. The national Institute for Curriculum

Development (SLO) developed a curriculum model for Frisian at secondary school level. For the lower grades of secondary education, a Frisian-language method (Flotwei Frysk) is available.

The Committee of Experts observed a lack of suitable teaching materials for the teaching of history and culture of minority groups in Burgenland, which is one reason to conclude that the undertaking for the teaching of history and culture is not fulfilled. Concerning Frisian in the Netherlands, the Committee found that only 26% of the schools possess teaching materials that comply with the attainment goals. Furthermore, the Committee observed that efforts are made to develop Frisian language materials for subjects such as environmental studies, history and cultural education, but that they do not have sufficient information to conclude upon the fulfilment of the undertaking of teaching history and culture of the minority group.

#### Level iv

The Brandenburg Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Germany has a small office - the Arbeitsstelle Bildungsentwicklung Cottbus (ABC) - working on Sorbian study books and learning materials. For Upper Sorbian in Germany, the Domowina-Verlag in Bautzen has a school textbook section, which offers over 155 titles for Sorbian lessons and Sorbian instruction. In Sweden, the Sami School Board produces Sami Textbooks and teaching aids but has not been able to keep up with demands. Sami teaching materials produced in Norway and Finland are also used.

The only comments expressed by the Committee of Experts on teaching materials in these three countries concern a lack of teaching materials for Sami languages and Sami-related subjects in secondary education in Sweden.

#### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should:

- encourage the development of teaching materials for teaching the regional or minority language based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR);
- provide suitable teaching materials for each adopted educational model, in which the levels of the CEFR are incorporated;
- provide sufficient high-quality teaching materials in the regional or minority language for teaching other subjects;
- provide high-quality teaching materials covering the history and culture of the regional or minority language speakers;
- ensure that textbooks contain sufficient information on the history and the culture reflected by the regional or minority language;
- ensure that the history and culture reflected by the regional or minority language presented in a positive way.

### **3.4 Teacher training**

Within the Charter, one specific undertaking deals with the training of teachers to teach the regional or minority language. The undertaking is described as follows:

- g) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party.

We studied the information available on teacher training in the countries. Relevant details and comments from the Committee of Experts are summarised in this section, resulting in several recommendations.

#### Level i

In Slovakia, teacher training in Hungarian is provided at the university in Nitra. In 2004, a new faculty was established at this university: the Faculty of Central-European Studies. One of its main tasks is to train and produce teachers for nationality schools. It organises teacher training for junior section Hungarian teachers. The Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Komárno is responsible for training Kindergarten and junior section primary school teachers. There are four majors within the scope of teacher training. The language of instruction is Hungarian, with the exception of some subjects, which are taught in Slovak or English. None of the universities offer further studies for regional or minority language teachers.

In Slovenia, Italian teacher training is provided in the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana (four-year independent or combined course) and the Faculty of Education in Koper (four-year perfecting course). Art graduates are formally equipped to teach Italian at all levels. The Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska offers a perfecting course designed for primary teachers who are equipped to teach Italian in all areas of the primary curriculum for the first and the second triennium; for Italian - consisting of modern Italian language, literature - and for didactics of early Italian language learning. Students receive their Bachelor of Arts degree in Primary Grade Teaching with an additional certificate for second language teaching in the second triennium in primary schools. Italian language teachers receive an additional statement that the license also applies to the first triennium of schools in the bilingual area. In addition, the Education Institute of Slovenia is the largest provider of in-service teacher training in Slovenia. Within this institute, consultants for Italian teaching provide permanent in-service training of Italian teachers at all levels. They organise refresher courses, seminars, meetings with Slovene and Italian experts on linguistics and introduce approaches and teaching techniques congruent with new curriculum programmes. As a rule, each teacher may spend five days per school year on professional refresher courses. Although refresher courses are not compulsory and take place on Saturdays or in holidays, the majority of teachers attend courses regularly. Teachers that attend refresher courses are assigned points that favour their professional promotion.

Primary school teachers in Catalonia in Spain must have teaching qualifications, which they are granted after a three-year university course. Official certificates for Catalan teaching are also required, because The Law on Language Standardisation in Catalonia (1983) states teachers must know both official languages. Teacher training curricula must ensure that students acquire sufficient mastery of Catalan and Spanish. The Omnium Cultural and the GAEC run retraining courses in Catalan for teachers, since the level of Catalan required of teachers is higher every year. To be able to teach Catalan as a subject at secondary level, teachers need a university degree with an additional pedagogical training of one year. Teachers in other subjects who need to use Catalan as a medium of instruction have to prove their written and oral competence.

In the United Kingdom, in primary schools one teacher is allocated to a class and is responsible for teaching the whole curriculum. In English medium schools in Wales, frequently a teacher trained to teach Welsh is designated to teach Welsh as a second language throughout the school. Teachers are required to have a Qualified Teaching Status (QTS), for which they must attend an undergraduate Initial Teacher Training course, lasting two to four years, or a postgraduate course (Postgraduate Certificate of Education) at a higher education institution. Students can apply for courses at the primary level or at the secondary level. It is a requirement that all courses are operated in conjunction with partner schools. In secondary schools, specialist teachers teach specific subjects, for which they have a relevant degree.

There are currently eight higher education institutions that offer initial teacher training in Wales, of which seven allow students to undertake some or all of their study through the medium of Welsh.

The Committee of Experts concluded that Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom have fulfilled the undertaking concerning teacher education. The Committee is very positive about the fact that there are several institutions in the United Kingdom offering initial teacher training courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status in which Welsh is used as medium of instruction in a variety of subjects. Furthermore, the Committee highlights the fact that the UK has grant schemes supporting continuing development for teachers in using Welsh.

Level ii / level iii

In Austria, the teachers for bilingual German-Croatian education are trained at a Teacher Training College in Eisenstadt. This institute also organises 'working experience places' and seminars for teachers of Croatian from all types of schools. Special courses for bilingual education and intercultural learning are offered by the University of Klagenfurt.

All teachers at bilingual primary schools in Carinthia are qualified with the standard qualifications, but also gained additional qualifications for bilingual teaching and Slovene language teaching, which takes two additional semesters (1 year) at training college. Teachers receive continuing training, which is compulsory for 15 hours per year.

Teachers for lower secondary schools also receive training at a Teacher Training College. They qualify in two subjects, which they later teach according to the subject teacher system in schools. The Teacher Training College in Klagenfurt runs courses for future teachers teaching Slovene as a subject. In-service

training for teachers is completed on a voluntary basis. The Federal Pedagogical Institute organises in-service training for all teachers at all types of schools. The Pedagogical Institute in Klagenfurt offers special courses for teachers working in Slovene. The Institute also organises workshops to promote exchanges between teachers throughout the province and with teachers from Slovenia. Teachers who did not study Slovene at Teacher Training College can do this later at this Institute.

In Friesland in the Netherlands, there are two teachers colleges for primary schools teachers that offer Frisian as a subject. At one college, Frisian is not obligatory, but all students are invited to follow three Frisian modules in order to obtain the formal certificate required to teach Frisian in primary schools. At the other college, all students must attend a course of lectures on Frisian in the first two years of their four-year training programme. There are separate lessons for Frisian and non-Frisian speaking students. Frisian is optional in the third year and by following the complete programme, students obtain the formal certificate for teaching Frisian in primary education. The materials of the Centre for Educational Advice in Friesland for Frisian as a subject and medium of instruction are central to the students' programme. In addition, students learn about various aspects of the status and use of Frisian and issues in bilingual education. Most students obtain the certificate for teaching Frisian in primary schools, but this does not always imply a satisfactory command of the Frisian language.

For teaching Frisian in secondary education, training is available on two levels. A Grade-Two certificate is required for the lower levels and lower school types of secondary education. A Grade-One certificate is needed for the higher levels of secondary education. Both certificates can be obtained at non-university teacher-training institutes with special in-service training programmes. The Grade-One certificate which students attain after this training has the same status as a master's degree in Frisian from a university.

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking concerning teacher training fulfilled in Austria, both with respect to Croatian and Slovene. The Committee does, however, express its concerns about language proficiency in Croatian and Slovene as demonstrated by teachers. Training programmes must spend more hours on the teachers' language skills. Concerning Slovene, the Committee also observed a shortage of bilingual teachers. In the Netherlands, the undertaking is partly fulfilled. The Committee observed that efforts were made in the field of teacher training, but considers the measures taken so far insufficient.

#### Level iv

In Germany, the University of Potsdam offers an additional course in Lower Sorbian, among other reasons to qualify teachers with an official qualification for teaching Sorbian in the lower classes and other people interested in teaching Sorbian in the first and second level. In Saxony in Germany, primary school teachers and subject teachers of Sorbian receive their training at the University of Leipzig.

In Sweden, there is no specific teacher training programme for Sami teachers; they have studied Sami as a subject at university. Teacher training for education in Sami is offered at the Technical University of Lulea

The Committee of Experts concluded that the undertaking concerning teacher training is fulfilled with respect to Upper Sorbian in Germany, because of the active policy to improve language skills of teachers - realised by offering courses and releasing teachers from their teaching duties. The undertaking is partly fulfilled with respect to Lower Sorbian in Germany, because there is no Land support for the replacement of teachers during courses. Further training is of a very general nature and does not take teaching level into account. Also, there is a shortage of teaching staff.

The Committee concludes that this undertaking is not fulfilled in Sweden, because hardly any students (none or just one) attend teacher training in Sami while there is a great demand for Sami teachers. The Committee did observe initiatives for new teachers training programmes with specific attention for the teaching of regional or minority languages.

#### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should:

- provide enough teachers for the teaching of regional or minority languages;
- produce teachers who teach the regional or minority language with sufficient skills: both concerning language proficiency in the regional or minority language and concerning knowledge and didactical skills needed for teaching in a multilingual setting;

- provide high-quality initial teacher training focused both on didactics of high-quality teaching in a multilingual setting and on language proficiency in the regional or minority language;
- provide for further teacher training courses focused on bringing knowledge and skills related to didactics of high-quality teaching in a multilingual setting up-to-date;
- provide further teacher training courses focused on improving the teachers' language proficiency in the regional or minority language;
- provide teachers with opportunities, for example replacement during training, to attend further training;
- use the Common European Framework of Reference to describe the desired language skills of the teachers in the regional or minority language;
- guarantee that only teachers who are qualified to teach the regional or minority language are employed to teach the regional or minority language;
- organise teacher training abroad if no relevant facilities for teacher training exist in the state.

### **3.5 Inspectorate**

Within the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, there is one specific undertaking dealing with the inspection of education in the regional or minority language. The undertaking is described as follows:

- i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

The available information on supervision and inspectorate in the countries mentioned in this report was studied. Relevant details and comments from the Committee of Experts are summarised in the next section, resulting in several recommendations.

#### Level i

In Slovakia, the State School Inspectorate has the task to supervise professional training and education in primary and secondary schools. The State Inspectorate checks compliance with the law and teaching levels. According to the law, the pedagogical supervisor of Hungarian schools has to know the language of education of the visited schools, but the law is not followed systematically.

In Slovenia, the inspectorate is managed by the Chief Inspector for Education. Inspectors carry out supervision, but their authority is limited by law. When it is necessary to establish or assess a certain fact during supervision, educational experts are employed.

In Spain, Catalonia has its own state inspection service, which is responsible for checking whether the education system is in line with requirements determined by the Generalitat. Since 2000, the Social Council of the Catalan language has been in charge of evaluating the objectives and results of the Autonomous Community and of drawing up a yearly report.

#### Level ii / level iii

Burgenland in Austria has a special office for minority education within the schooling department of the provincial government. Two representatives of the Croatian-speaking minority sit on the provincial inspection board as well as on the district school inspection boards. Specialised inspectors are qualified to inspect bilingual education.

In Carinthia in Austria, a special department within the Regional School Board is responsible for the inspection of bilingual schools. This department prepares annual reports, which are made public and which include detailed information with respect to the activities and developments in the field of bilingual education, as well as extensive statistical documentation. There are two inspectors who specifically supervise bilingual education.

In the Netherlands, the General Government's Inspectorate is responsible for the supervision of the implementation of educational policy. The inspectorate formally checks the quality of education by visiting schools and by studying school information and school plans. The Inspectorate reports to the Minister of Education and gives advice.

#### Level iv

The Minister für Bildung, Jugend und Sport des Landes Brandenburg in Germany is responsible for education. The minister has a Schulamt in every district of the Land to coordinate education, pedagogical goals and main points of the educational programme.

Saxony in Germany has regional inspections (Regionalschulämter) that form intermediaries between the schools and the ministry. The Saxon Kultusminister is the highest authority in the domain of education.

In Sweden, the National Education Agency is required to monitor the development of bilingual and mother tongue instruction for national minorities. Concerning education in Sami, a special Working Group, set up by the Norbotten County Administrative board, has to ensure that measures are implemented at regional level. The Group reports to the Government once a year.

The judgments expressed by the Committee of Experts on this undertaking illustrate two key elements of a supervisory body. Firstly, there must be a supervisory body or special inspectors within a supervisory body with the specific responsibility to monitor the teaching of regional or minority languages. The inspectors must be competent in the field of minority education. Secondly, the supervisory body must publish periodic reports on education in the regional or minority language.

### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should:

- set up a supervisory body or appoint special inspectors within a supervisory body who specifically monitor education in and through the regional or minority language;
- guarantee that the supervisory body includes inspectors who have a thorough knowledge of the regional or minority language and the characteristics of high-quality instruction in a multilingual setting;
- give a supervisory body the task to publish periodic reports on the quality and the results of education concerning the regional or minority language.

## **3.6 Legal position**

A well-defined legal position of the regional or minority language in general and more specifically of the regional or minority language in education are important prerequisites for the status of the regional or minority language and for the role of the regional or minority language in everyday life and education. This paragraph presents information about the legal position of the regional or minority language in all eight countries studied for this report. It also contains remarks from the Committee of Experts concerning legal positions.

### Level i

In accordance with the School Act in Slovakia, education in kindergartens, at primary and secondary levels is possible in the languages of minorities, too. Article 3 describes that members of the Hungarian nationality have the right to be taught in their own language to an extent which is appropriate to the interest of their national development. In compliance with the 5/1999 law, pupils attending primary and secondary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction are given bilingual certificates of their education.

The constitution of Slovenia stipulates that Slovene is the official language of Slovenia, and that Hungarian and Italian are also considered official languages in the areas of Italian and Hungarian national minorities. The constitution guarantees members of the Italian group the right to use their mother tongue, to develop mother tongue culture and to establish, among other organisations, education in the mother tongue. The implementation of these rights is financially and morally supported by the Republic of Slovenia. The rights of the Italian community in the field of education are further defined in the 'Law on special rights of Italian and Hungarian ethnic groups in the area of education and instruction'. All educational institutions operating in the ethnically mixed areas are obliged by law to operate in both official languages.

In Catalonia in Spain, the 1979 Statute of Autonomy proclaimed Catalan as Catalonia's own language and co-official with Castilian or Spanish. The Autonomous Government, the Generalitat of Catalonia, has to guarantee normal, official use of both Catalan and Spanish. Catalonia has full autonomy with respect to education.

The Welsh Language Act (1993) in Wales in the United Kingdom established the Welsh Language Board and the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality in Wales. The function of the Welsh Language Board is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Concerning education, the Board has a strategic responsibility for the promotion and development of Welsh medium education. In 1998, a National Assembly for Wales was established, which has powers for secondary legislation, allowing them to make changes to the education system in Wales and to make decisions about the distribution of finances to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) from within the Welsh budget. As a result of the 1980 Education Act, funding was allocated to LEAs to support Welsh medium education. Each of the 22 local authorities in Wales decides its policies within the parameters of the Education Acts and determines the level of funding allocated to education. The LEA's role is to support and monitor schools and ensure high standards of educational provision and achievement.

Level ii / level iii

Croatian is a regional or minority language in the Austrian Burgenland. Croatian language rights in Austria only apply for Austrian citizens living in six of the seven districts of the Burgenland. In Carinthia, Slovene is a regional or minority language. The minority rights for Slovenes are also based on territorial principles.

The Austrian Constitution, the State Treaty of 1955 and the Law on Ethnic Groups of 1976 regulate language use, but do not contain specific rights for individuals or ethnic groups. The absence of any coordinated language planning and policy in Austria very often leaves questions about language use and language planning to party politics, which has resulted in numerous different laws and regulations concerning language use. As public language use is regulated by a complex set of laws, it is difficult to know exactly when and where Croatian or Slovene can be used.

In Burgenland, overall legislative authority and responsibility for primary and secondary education rests with the Federal Ministry for Education and Science. Education in regional or minority languages is an integral part of the Austrian education system. The most recent law (1994) provides for tuition in Croatian in all provincial schools, classifying 29 local primary schools and two secondary schools as bilingual German-Croatian schools. The possibility of tuition in Croatian was extended to the whole education system within the province. The number of pupils required for the introduction of Croatian as an optional subject is seven and in some cases only five. The law of 1994 does not define the extent of regional or minority language instruction, nor does it prescribe curricula or general educational goals and standards for regional or minority language schooling.

Within the defined area in Carinthia, bilingual education is offered in different forms. Since 1989 it has also been possible to organise bilingual education outside the described area, where there is a sustained need. In 2000 a Ministry of Education, Science and Culture was set up, which has exclusive responsibility for basic education at all levels, except nursery schools. Next to the Federal Ministry, District School Boards (political districts) and Provincial School Boards (Länder) were established. School Boards at the different levels are also responsible for minority education in Slovene.

In the Netherlands, Frisian has an official status, but this national recognition is not expressed in a special law. Current language policy regarding the Frisian language is based on the Frisian Language and Culture Covenant, an agreement between the central and the provincial governments. The Covenant describes the desire to enable citizens, local authorities, organisations and institutions to express themselves in Frisian. It states that both provincial and central government are responsible for preserving and reinforcing the Frisian language and culture. According to the Covenant, the province of Friesland determines policies on Frisian and ensures their execution, where the state provides the province with the means to do so. The central government controls education by means of laws, decrees and regulations on - for example - compulsory subjects, examinations and organisational aspects. The province of Friesland does not have direct legislative or executive power in education.

Concerning Croatian in Burgenland, the Committee of Experts concluded that since the ratio of teaching in German and Croatian is not defined by law, in practice the teaching of Croatian is sometimes limited. For Frisian in the Netherlands, the Committee observed that the position of Frisian and the quality of the Frisian lessons are not sufficient to fulfil the undertaking at level ii (integral part of education). There are no legally binding minimum standards for Frisian, nor is there a prescribed minimum number of teaching hours in Frisian in secondary education.

Level iv



In Brandenburg in Germany, the Brandenburg School Law of 1996 provides pupils in the Sorbian area with the right to learn Sorbian and to be taught in Sorbian in subjects and grades which are yet to be arranged. Schools in the Sorbian area have to pay attention to the history and culture of the Sorbs as well.

In Saxony in Germany, the Saxon Law on Education (1991) sets out the legal rights of the Sorbs to have Sorbian as a subject and as a medium of instruction. Furthermore, all schools in Saxony have to teach a basic knowledge of Sorbian history and culture. Sorbian schools are established in places with a sufficient number of pupils to form Sorbian classes.

In Sweden, the individual municipalities have the main responsibility for primary and secondary education. A special board, the Sami School Board, is responsible for the operation of the Sami schools. The Sami School Board is appointed by the Sami Parliament, a popularly elected government body, whose mission is to examine issues dealing with Sami culture in Sweden. Sami schools are funded by the State. The Board has total responsibility for school operations, its political steering and finances. A municipality can decide with the Sami School Board to arrange integrated Sami education in compulsory schools for which the municipality then receives State funding.

With respect to Upper Sorbian in Germany, the Committee of Experts concluded, that there is no strict legal framework concerning a minimum number of pupils required for Sorbian education.

### *Recommendations*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should:

- ensure the parental right to opt for education in the regional or minority language (as a subject and as a language of instruction) within the area where the regional or minority language is spoken and the minimum number of pupils required for organising such education;
- legally prescribe minimum standards for lessons in the regional or minority language and a minimum number of teaching hours;
- legally guarantee continuity in teaching the regional or minority language at least during compulsory education;
- guarantee a transparent division of responsibilities concerning regional or minority language education between the central, the provincial and the local authorities.

## **4 Summary of recommendations**

### **4.1 The study**

The study was aimed at providing a description of minimum conditions and minimum provisions required to establish minimum standards for language education. For this purpose, the position of ten regional or minority languages in compulsory education was studied in eight countries, selected because they have ratified article 8 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The undertakings listed in article 8 of the Charter can be ratified at four levels that illustrate the position of the regional or minority language in education. Since the level of ratification has huge implications for all educational aspects related to regional or minority language instruction, per level two or three countries were selected for this study. An additional reason for choosing these countries lies in the fact that Mercator Education has published dossiers on minority language education concerning the ten minority languages in the eight countries involved, providing detailed information about education with respect to the minority language in the specific country.

The country reports, presented by the countries as Treaty Parties of the Charter, and the evaluation reports of the Committee of Experts that are part of the monitoring cycle of the Charter, the Mercator dossiers and the Euromosaic country reports are used for a description of the position of the regional or minority language in compulsory education for each of the ten regional or minority languages. For each regional or minority language, the description concerns:

- the level of ratification;
- the number of users of the regional or minority language;
- education goals;
- educational models;
- time investment (subject and medium of instruction);
- teaching materials;

- reach of education in regional or minority language (incl. decline or increase);
- evaluation / examinations;
- teacher qualifications;
- teacher training;
- the inspectorate;
- the legal position and authority.

These themes agree with the core criteria that are necessary for the fulfilment of the undertakings within the Charter as formulated in the document entitled “the Committee of Experts’ evaluation practice concerning the implementation of Article 7 (1) f, g as well as article 8 (Education) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” (Council of Europe, 2006).

The complete country descriptions are attached to this report as appendices. Chapter 3 of this report summarises the descriptions per theme and per level of ratification and describes recommendations for formulating minimum standards. Some themes from the country descriptions are combined in chapter 3, for example teacher qualifications and teacher training. Due to a lack of reliable information, it was decided not to include the area of evaluation / examination in chapter 3 – even though an important area is concerned here.

The next paragraph describes the coordinating recommendations per theme. For the rationale behind the recommendations and a complete overview of the recommendations, chapter 3 should be studied. For some themes, the coordinating recommendations are supplemented with information from several reports of the Council of Europe concerning the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Common European Framework of Reference and the European Language Portfolio.

## 4.2 Recommendations

### *Educational models*

The competent authority should write a description of the ratification levels in terms of possible educational models, the number of teaching hours *in* and *of* the regional or minority language and finally the target population (all pupils in areas with regional or minority languages or only regional or minority speakers).

The Member States of the Council of Europe should ensure that the teaching in or of the regional or minority language provides the basis for its effective transmission and involve families in the transmission of the regional or minority language. They should ensure that the education system provides continuity for education in the regional or minority language and that it is available throughout the territory where that language is currently used. They should determine a minimum number of pupils needed for the establishment of a language class and teach the regional or minority language as part of the curriculum. They should describe the position of the regional or minority language in education both in terms of the regional or minority language as a subject and in terms of the regional or minority language as language of instruction (educational models), the number of teaching hours within the models, and the target population. They should ensure availability of the different models for regional or minority language education and to guarantee continuity in the teaching and learning of the regional or minority language.

Concerning the amount of time spent on regional or minority language education, the country evaluations of the Committee of Experts can be translated into a specific description of the amount of time spent on education in or of the regional or minority language at each level of ratification. On the basis of the Committee of Experts’ reports adopted so far, one could infer that Countries that ratified the Charter at level i should guarantee that both primary and secondary schools use the regional or minority language as language of instruction for more than 50% of teaching time. When countries ratify the Charter at level ii, these countries should provide a substantial part of education in the regional or minority language. Based on the reports adopted so far, for primary schools, this has implied more than six hours a week of regional or minority language education. On the secondary school level, the Committee of Experts sees a substantial part as at least 30% of regional or minority language-medium schooling. Countries that ratify at level iii (integral part) can provide regional or minority language education integrated with history, music, arts in primary schools or as a subject of its own right. In secondary schools, an integral part implies that the regional or minority language should be offered as a compulsory subject (Mulder, 2006).

In a hearing between the Language Policy Division (DG IV-Council of Europe) and the Committee of Experts, education experts emphasised that the quality and outcome of education is as important as the

quantity of teaching. Furthermore, these experts point out that there is not one generally applicable best educational model, because circumstances greatly vary between countries. They advise looking at the practicability of educational models in the specific community and offering several models to the community that take into account the needs and wishes of the minority speakers.

#### *Education goals*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should use the Common European Framework of Reference for the description of the education goals in the regional or minority language.

Numerous countries already use the Common European Framework of Reference to describe goals for language education. Chapter 3 described the example of Slovenia, where goals of education are clearly related to the different levels within the Framework. Another example is the Netherlands, where projects have been carried out with regard to the continuity of the teaching of Frisian as a first and as a second language, both in primary and secondary education. As a result of these projects, concrete descriptions in terms of “can-do” statements are available for both Dutch and Frisian as a first and a second language. These descriptions can be used for further analysis and descriptions of quality requirements with regard to the education of and in the regional or minority language.

#### *Teaching materials*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should provide sufficient high-quality teaching materials for teaching the regional or minority language based on the Common European Framework of Reference.

#### *Teacher training*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should provide enough teachers for teaching the regional or minority language with sufficient skills: both concerning language proficiency in the regional or minority language and concerning knowledge and didactical skills needed for teaching in a multilingual setting.

#### *Inspectorate*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should set up a supervisory body or to appoint special inspectors within a supervisory body who specifically monitor education *in* and *of* the regional or minority language, who publish periodic reports and have knowledge of the regional or minority language and characteristics of high-quality instruction in a multilingual setting.

#### *Legal position*

The Member States of the Council of Europe should ensure the parental right to opt for education in the regional or minority language (as a subject and as a language of instruction) within the area where the regional or minority language is spoken and the minimum number of pupils required for organising such education. Minimum standards for lessons in the regional or minority language should be described, as well as a minimum number of teaching hours.

### **4.3 Concluding remarks**

Regional or minority language education is embedded in the general language policies of the Council of Europe, which aim to promote plurilingualism, linguistic diversity, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship and social cohesion. Regional or minority language acquisition is an element in all these aspects. Regional or minority languages deserve special attention, but the context of the general European language education policies should always be taken into account.

This study's findings as well as the recommendations in the evaluation reports of the Comex indicate that a sufficient and adequate basis exists to set common goals and minimum standards for education in regional or minority languages. It would be valuable for the Council of Europe to further develop policies along these lines and this issue into account for the work programme of the bodies responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the Charter in the second decade of the Charter's existence.

In its comments on a hearing with the Committee of Experts, the Council of Europe Language Policy Division describes the need to highlight the benefits of bilingual education and considers a network of bilingual schools important for highlighting these benefits and for providing information on suitable models for regional or minority language education and its effectiveness. It also signals a need for reliable data on language proficiency and the language of instruction in schools as well as on the educational infrastructure required for education in the regional or minority language, and also on the quality of

education. This implies more research, and more specifically comparative research between countries that also offer information for schools and policy makers.

In addition to the opportunities of relating goals of regional or minority language education to the Common European Framework of Reference, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) also holds possibilities for structuring regional or minority language education and embedding regional or minority language acquisition in language learning in general. The ELP is a tool to promote plurilingualism, pluriculturalism, and learner autonomy that values the full range of the learner's language and intercultural competence and experience, regardless of whether this is acquired within or outside formal education. Each ELP consists of a language passport, a language biography and a dossier. The Passport provides an overview of an individual's proficiency in different languages, on the basis of the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference. The Biography consists of goal-setting and self-assessment checklists. The Dossier offers the learner opportunity to document materials that illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport. At the moment, approximately 80 Portfolios have been validated and accredited by the Council of Europe.

Local and regional authorities have a valuable role to play in raising awareness of these tools among educational authorities.