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**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**Information Document  
on the implementation of the  
Recommendations for Immediate Action  
based on the 6th monitoring cycle**

**Submitted by Croatia**

**on 14 September 2021**

RESPONSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA TO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION AS CONTAINED IN THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES BY THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The Government of the Republic of Croatia is fully committed to continuing the fulfilment of undertakings arising from the ratification of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the information on the implementation of recommendations for immediate action as contained in the Sixth Report by the Committee of Experts on the Application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by the Republic of Croatia is presented below.

In regard to recommendations for immediate action relating to the use of individual minority languages (Czech, Hungarian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovakian and Ukrainian) in regional and local authorities and the extension of their equal and official use to additional municipalities:

Article 12 of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (Official Gazette *Narodne novine*, No. 155/02, 47/10, 80/10 and 93/11 – hereinafter: CARNM) stipulates that equal co-official use of the language and script used by members of a national minority is guaranteed on the territory of a local self-government unit where members of the national minority constitute at least a third of the overall population of the unit. In addition, the Article stipulates that equal official use of the language and script used by members of a national minority is also guaranteed when this is enshrined in international agreements which, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, constitute part of the legal order of the Republic of Croatia, or stipulated in the statute of a particular local or regional self-government unit in accordance with the special law on the use of the languages and scripts of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia.

Requirements for the official use of national minority languages and scripts, which ensure their equality with the Croatian language and Latin script in accordance with the law, are regulated in detail by the Act on the Use of the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (*Narodne novine*, No. 51/00 and 56/00 – correction).

According to the official results of the 2011 Census, the legal requirement for the introduction of equal co-official use of the Serbian language and script, i.e. that members of the Serbian minority account for the third of the overall population, was met in 23 local government units, in particular, in the municipalities of Krnjak, Vojnić, Donji Lapac, Vrhovine, Udbina, Šodolovci, Jagodnjak, Erdut, Dvor, Gvozd, Donji Kukuruzari, Biskupija, Cijlžane, Kistanje, Ervenik, Markušica, Trpinja, Negoslavci, Borovo, Gračac and Plaški, and in the towns of Vukovar and Vrbovsko.

The legal requirement for the introduction of equal co-official use of Czech was met in the Municipality of Končanica, of Slovakian in the Municipality of Punitovci, and of Hungarian in the Municipality of Kneževi Vinogradi.

In addition, the above legal requirement was also met for Italian in the Municipality of Grožnjan-Grisignana.

Local and regional self-government units report on the regulation of individual rights on a yearly basis through the E-System for Monitoring the Implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, in accordance with the Act on the Use of

the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia, and on their application in practice.

Some units which are not required to introduce equal official use of national minority language and script, due to the fact that the members of the national minority do not account for a third of the overall population, have also introduced and regulated that right through their statutes for the entire territory of the unit or for individual settlements. Specifically, this right i.e. the equal co-official use has been introduced in some local government units in the Istria County for the language and script of the Italian national minority, in the Town of Daruvar and the Municipality of Dežanovac for Czech language and script, in the municipalities of Ernestinovo, Bilje and Tordinci for the Hungarian language and script, and in the Municipality of Kneževi Vinogradi for the Serbian language and script.

Regarding the use minority languages and scripts in proceedings before the administrative bodies of local and regional self-government units, it was reported through the e-System that this right was invoked only by the members of the Italian national minority, while in case of other languages parties were instructed on the right to use the language and script of their national minority, but they waived the right.

Therefore, the exercise of the right to equal co-official use of the languages and scripts of national minorities is dependent on the share of members of a national minority in the population of a self-government unit on the one hand, and the regulation of the right through the statutes of self-government units on the other, taking into account the cooperation between local and regional self-government units and members of national minorities, as well as the interest expressed by individual national minorities for achieving bilingualism.

In regard to recommendations for immediate action relating to education in minority languages (in particular, Boyash Romanian, German, Istro-Romanian, Italian, Ruthenian, Slovakian, Slovenian and Ukrainian):

The right of national minority members to education in their language and script is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (*Narodne novine*, No. 56/90, 135/97, 8/98, 113/00, 124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85/10 and 05/14), the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and the Act on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities (*Narodne novine*, No. 51/00 and 56/00). Education in the languages and scripts of national minorities is an integral part of the overall education system, and the main educational policy documents refer, *inter alia*, to this segment of the education system. Education in the languages and scripts of national minorities is delivered in primary and secondary schools through classes in the languages and scripts used by relevant national minorities in the manner prescribed by the programme of the competent ministry on education in the languages and scripts of national minorities.

It is important to mention that national minority members can propose and select the teaching model and programme themselves in accordance with the valid law, taking into account pupils' interests and the available teaching staff and organisational possibilities of educational institutions.

The Ministry of Science and Education will support the introduction of the Romanian language and culture in the educational system under Model C provided that there is interest for this among members of the Romanian national minority. The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities provides for the possibility of introducing the teaching of the Romanian language and culture (Model C), as for any other national minority which expresses the desire for learning the native language and culture, if and when the union/association of the

Romanian national minority in Croatia expresses such interest on the basis of the interest expressed by pupils.

In the academic year 2019/2020, German language and culture classes were attended by 209 pupils in 3 primary schools, and the Ministry of Science and Education grants the establishment of minority language and culture classes upon receipt of applications by schools which organise the additional language and culture classes in cooperation with minority associations, including those of the German national minority. The *Ivan Goran Kovačić* Primary School in Čepić (Istria County) cultivates the Istro-Romanian dialect and has made significant efforts for years to protect it as an important intangible cultural good of the Republic of Croatia. The status of intangible cultural good was granted to Istro-Romanian by the decision of the Ministry of Culture of 27 September 2007, pursuant to the Act on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods, and it was entered in the List of protected cultural goods of the Croatian Cultural Goods Register. Istro-Romanian has been declared as a protected language in accordance with the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. In the branch school in Šušnjeva, Istro-Romanian is taught as an extracurricular activity for 1st to 8th graders, for the purpose of protecting and revitalising the Istro-Romanian dialect.

The Croatian educational system guarantees the freedom of expression and use of one's native language and script to members of all national minorities. The Ministry of Science and Education supports any initiative for enabling minority language classes on a voluntary basis in the schools of towns and municipalities where the language and script of the relevant national minority is in co-official use. Therefore, minority language classes, including the classes of Italian, in schools which deliver education in Croatian can be organised under models A, B and C. In 2019/2020, a total of 3,230 children/pupils of the Italian national minority were included in one of the three educational models. The Ministry of Science and Education allocates funds for the printing, additional printing and translation of textbooks, and makes continuous efforts, in cooperation with the publishers developing the textbooks, to improve and level the conditions of education for members of all national minorities. In line with Article 15 of the Act on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities, schools with education in the languages and scripts of national minorities may use textbooks from the countries of ethnic origin, primarily for teaching the native language (Czech, Hungarian, Serbian and Italian, but for other subjects, too), subject to approval of the Ministry of Science and Education.

Overall, in the academic year 2019/2020, 80 pupils of the Ruthenian national minority, 445 pupils of the Slovakian and 169 of the Slovenian national minority were taught under Model C in primary schools, as well as 40 pupils of the Slovakian and 67 of the Slovenian national minority in secondary schools. Furthermore, Ukrainian language and culture classes (Model C) were attended by 87 primary school pupils in 2019/2020, and the Ministry of Science and Education supports the introduction of the Ukrainian language and culture in secondary schools should such a need arise. Currently, verified preschool programmes are available for Czech, Hungarian, Serbian and Italian minority, and the Ministry of Science and Education supports the introduction of new programmes in accordance with the needs of individual national minorities and the possibilities of preschool institutions.

In regard to recommendations for immediate action relating to the introduction of television and/or radio programmes in minority languages on a regular basis (Boyash Romanian, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian):

The Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT) broadcasts programmes for national minorities on its radio and television channels in accordance with its legal obligation as a public

service broadcaster, and national minority members speak solely in their minority languages in the programmes.

The HRT portal [www.hrt.hr](https://www.hrt.hr) includes the website <https://manjine.hrt.hr>, which is entirely dedicated to minorities.

Its contents are concerned with the customs, traditions and religions of the national minorities in Croatia as well as their everyday issues.

It should be emphasized that the Croatian Radiotelevision is preparing episodes of a children's show translated into Romani Chib and Boyash Romanian.

In regard to the participation of national minorities in the media:

Under Article 63 of the Electronic Media Act (*Narodne novine*, No. 153/09, 84/11, 94/13, 136/13), the Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media is a fund of the Agency for Electronic Media. The source of financing of the Fund is ensured by the provisions of the Electronic Media Act and the Croatian Radiotelevision Act (*Narodne novine*, No. 137/10, 76/12, 78/16, 46/17, 73/17 and 94/18) – 3% of the monthly resources from licence fees collected by the Croatian Radiotelevision. Under primary and secondary legislation, one of the categories in which broadcasters may apply for funding is “National minorities in Croatia”.

For example, for 2020, the Agency for Electronic Media awarded funds amounting to HRK 1,788,506.41 from the Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media to TV and radio broadcasters, non-profit providers of electronic publications and non-profit providers of audiovisual programmes in the category “National minorities in Croatia”. The total amount of the funds awarded for the production and publication of such programmes depends on the applications of broadcasters i.e. the number and quality of proposed programmes. Within the predetermined categories, broadcasters are free to decide which subtopics/minorities they wish to address in the programmes they propose in their applications, in accordance with the provisions on editorial freedom and responsibility. We have taken note of the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts, and will communicate them in the course of trainings for broadcasters on the topics which may be included in applications for resources from the Fund.

Specifically, the Agency for Electronic Media, among its other regular activities, organises trainings for broadcasters, as we already reported. Among other activities, we would like to mention that, in 2020, the Agency started a project of fostering excellence in journalism by awarding grants to journalists for their works and research on the topics of public interest from the areas of culture, health, local community topics, ecumenism and religion, human rights, position of women in society, topics of interest to minorities in society, children and youth, education, sport, economy, international relations and the European Union. This project is especially aimed at inspiring journalists to additional dedication to and in-depth research of topics of public interest, strengthening the critical capacity and social impact of electronic publications, broadening the number of topics and relevance of the content of electronic publications, truthful reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquake in Zagreb in 2020, professionalization of journalistic work in electronic publications, rewarding and motivating journalists to produce top authorial work, and strengthening the autonomy of journalists.

In addition, to protect the rights of national minorities, the Government of Croatia adopted the Operational Programmes for National Minorities for the Period 2021-2024 at its meeting of 30 December 2020, along with the Operational Programme for the Protection and Improvement of the Existing Level of Rights of All National Minorities and operational

programmes for individual national minorities, which include activities relating to the use of their native language and script, both privately and publically as well as their co-official use, education in the languages and scripts of national minorities, access to mass media and the provision of media services in the languages and scripts of national minorities.