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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 Montenegro**  
**on 29 January 2025**

**Report of the Government of Montenegro on the recommendations for immediate action from the Sixth Evaluation Report on Montenegro by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

(January 27, 2025)

In line with its Constitution, Montenegro is a civil, democratic and ecological state of social justice, based on the rule of law, which holds to the highest esteem the principles of multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, and multicultural tolerance, equality and unity of diversity. As postulated in the newly adopted Strategy for Minority Policy for 2024-2028, the integration of minorities represents a key element in building inclusive, prosperous and stable multiethnic societies, and is vital for strengthening social cohesion and promoting social justice.

The promotion of diverse cultures, traditions and languages in Montenegro is at the cornerstone of the new Strategy. One of its key specific goals includes the commitment of the Government towards enhancing equality and strengthening the rights of ethnic and religious minority groups in the areas of education, employment, language use, as well as right to information of ethnic minorities. The Strategy for Minority Policy and its accompanying Action plan for 2024-2025, *inter alia*, envisage support for minority languages through programs for linguistic revitalization, as well as support for cultural centers and associations as important segments of a proactive policy towards the preservation of minority identities.

In this regard, Montenegro extends its appreciation for the preparation of the Sixth Evaluation Report on Montenegro by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The relevant authorities have already started addressing some of the recommendations outlined in the report. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights is pleased to report the following information regarding the recommendations for immediate action: **a. Introduce Romani into formal education in cooperation with the speakers; b. Develop and implement a coherent strategy for the basic and further teacher training for the teaching in/of Romani in cooperation with the speakers; c. Introduce Romani in official use in at least one local self-government unit, where the Romani speakers have their highest concentration.**

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The recently adopted Minority Policy Strategy 2024-2028 and the Action Plans for 2024 and 2025 envisage various measures to facilitate integration within the Montenegrin society as a whole, which have been developed and defined through an open and participatory approach. These also include activities that inform the public about the importance of preserving minority languages, including Romani, and promote cultural creativity in minority languages in Montenegro.

The key objective of the "Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021-2025" is to improve the socio-economic and legal position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro, through building an inclusive and open society based on fighting and eliminating all forms of discrimination, anti-Gypsyism and poverty. The Strategy, which was adopted in September 2021, includes several key areas of action, including the area: Culture, Identity and Information. The most relevant measures under this area include the standardization of the Romani language, as the most important institute of culture and

identity of this community, and the organization of educational programs in the field of Romani studies for all persons interested in the identity, culture, language and literature of Roma and Egyptians. The new Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians is going to be drafted in 2025, together with international partners, including the Council of Europe. The Working Group for the preparation of this Strategy is expected to be formed in the 2nd quarter of 2025.

The established minority councils in Montenegro carry out activities that promote the free use of minority languages, publications in minority languages, periodicals, cultural-linguistic, literary creators in the languages of minorities and other minority national communities. Every year, the Fund for the Protection and Exercise of Minority Rights, within the Public Competition for the allocation of funds for financing projects to support the activities referred to in Article 36, paragraph 1 of the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, allocates funds for projects for the preservation of minority languages in Montenegro.

The Center for Preservation and Development of Minority Culture, in accordance with its program, promotes publications in minority languages of minority peoples and other minority national and cultural events that contribute to the preservation of minority languages. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, in accordance with the Decision on the Allocation of Funds to the NGO Sector, supports projects/programs that contribute to the activities focused on preservation and improvement of the use of minority languages.

The local self-governments where minorities or other minority national communities represent a significant or major part of the population, promote and use minority languages in official activities in accordance with the Laws, and promote minority languages as part of the cultural heritage of a particular minority community.

The lack of Roma people who received education in Romani prevents, for the time being, the introduction of Romani in official use in self-government units where the Romani speakers have their highest concentration. The Montenegrin authorities are committed to continuing efforts in order to find adequate modalities to resolve the issue and fully implement the recommendation.

The lack of educated personnel for teaching Romani is also a key obstacle to the development of a coherent strategy for teacher training for the teaching in/of Romani. To address this problem, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with the Faculty of Philology in Niksic, Montenegro, is currently considering options for introducing a master level program for Romani, using the experiences and successful practices of some of the member states of the Council of Europe. In the initial phases, it is planned to invite guest lectures from the region to hold classes, until the first generation finishes the program and is able to assume the lecturing positions.

In addition, taking into consideration that all previous attempts to standardize the language have not yet yielded adequate results, as well as the fact that a significant part of the Roma population does not actively speak the Montenegrin language, the special emphasis in the upcoming period will be placed on the production and broadcasting of shows, as well as publishing, literature and magazines in the Roma language. The education programs are intended for people from the Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as all persons working on various programs related to Roma and Egyptians. The aim of these programs is to develop and preserve the awareness of the Roma and Egyptian communities of their own origins, identity, language, literature and culture. In addition, the goal is for all those who work in any manner with the Roma community to get acquainted with these aspects, but also to contribute to countering

prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma and Egyptians in the broader community and develop awareness of their identity, language and culture.

At the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Human and Minority rights developed a Program entitled Fight against antigypsyism and all forms of discrimination against Roma and Egyptians. The Program will be accredited next year, to be followed by the organization of comprehensive trainings.

On November 5, 2024, the first court interpreter for the Romani language in Montenegro made a solemn declaration in the cabinet of the Minister of Justice. This historic moment, important for the judicial system and the Roma community, took place on the International Day of the Romani Language, which further emphasized the importance of improving access to justice and respect for human rights of members of the Roma population in Montenegro.

In the period since the adoption of the Sixth Evaluation Report, Montenegro continued to fund projects aimed at promoting the Roma language in Montenegro, including through the following initiatives:

- **Project: The Impact of Language on Preschool and Primary Education** - 100-200 children of preschool and school age in Podgorica, in institutions attended by Roma and Egyptian children, were surveyed in 2022 on the topic of how much it would mean to them to attend lessons in the Roma language.
- **Web information portal on gender related rights in Romani** was set up in 2022 for six months.
- **Project: Roma Language Workshops for School and Preschool Age** - Six workshops were organized for the children of preschool and primary school age on the topics: the origin and importance of language; easy use of language in dialogue; about children's literature in the Romani language.
- NGO "Budo Tomović" organized events about Roma culture, including reading of Roma poetry.
- The Center for the Preservation and Development of Culture of Minorities of Montenegro published in 2022 two issues of the journal for culture, literature and science "Kod". In both issues, special attention has been paid to Roma culture and identity. New stories and poems in the Romani language have also been published. Both issues were printed in circulation of 200 copies.
- The Roma Glossary was published in 2024 by the Center for the Preservation and Development of Culture of Minorities of Montenegro and it includes the basic determinants about the Roma culture, but also the culture of other ethnic minorities often associated with the Roma, but who do not share their ethnic identity. A promotion of the Glossary was held in Bijelo Polje, where a significant number of members of Romani community resides. On that occasion, 40 copies of the Glossary were distributed.
- The Public Institution Center for the Preservation and Development of Minority Culture of Montenegro has published the Dictionary of the Romani-Montenegrin and Montenegrin-Romani Language in 2023, authored by Dr. Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić. This is a pioneering project, since it is the first dictionary to be written in the dialect spoken by the Roma in Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is aligned with the needs of Romani speakers in these countries. It contains around 10 thousands determinants, illustrated sentences and short examples with grammar of Romani and instructions for use contained in the introductory part of the Dictionary. The dictionary will be an indispensable tool in learning the Romani language, studying, presenting and preserving the culture and identity of the Roma in Montenegro. It will also have the function of a reliable shield against assimilation and loss of identity recognition.
- **Marking the World Day of the Romani Language** - On November 5 2023, the World Day of the Romani Language, the Ceremonial Academy of the Romani Language was held in Podgorica in KIC "Budo

Tomović". On this occasion, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with the Roma Council, the Delegation of the European Union, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Capital City of Podgorica, organized a special cultural and artistic program. On November 1, 2024, to mark the World Day of Romani, the Public Institution Center for the Preservation and Development of Minority Culture organized a forum "Education of Roma population through the known practices" – How well we know each other.

- **Marking the World Day of Roma** – On April 8, 2023, the Public Institution Center for the Preservation and Development of Minority Culture, in cooperation with the Roma Council of Montenegro, organized forum "Language and Culture of Roma in Montenegro."
- The NGO "Alfa Centar" implemented a project "Promotion of inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in cultural and social life of local community," which included several activities, including four thematic lectures for about 200 pupils of secondary school in Nikšić; visit of 15 young members of Roma/Egyptian population to the institutions of culture in Nikšić; three-day artistic workshop and organization of a local contest for the best story about Roma culture.
- **The Handbook for media and digital literacy in Romani** was published in June 2024 by the Agency for electronic media of Montenegro and the OSCE Mission in Montenegro. The Handbook provides comprehensive guidelines for the development of media and digital literacy, information about the safe use of Internet, advice on perceptions towards media content, as well as support for parents, guardians and educators of children about digital technologies. The aim of the Handbook in Romani is to contribute to the reduction of gap between Roma community and the rest of the society and to enable a more equal access to information and digital resources.

In the same period, several steps were taken to increase the number of associates assisting Roma and Egyptian population in different spheres of life. Today, 21 associates, members of the Roma and Egyptian population, are involved in the field of health care, social protection and employment, as well as 26 associates in the field of education. They act as a link between state institutions and the community itself in order to overcome the problem of the language barrier, but also to help their community, in order to exercise their rights that belong to them by law. In October 2024, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation amended bylaws to increase the number of social inclusion mediators, which resulted in the halving of ratio of RE pupils per one mediator – instead of previous 75, now each mediator assists 35 pupils.