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# Minorities and Minority Languages in a Changing Europe

Conference on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Framework  
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European  
Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France  
Palais, room 1

18 – 19 June 2018

## Panel Session: Minority Languages and Education in Multilingual Societies, 19 June 2018

Jan Sisko, Austria

### General Information about the situation in Austria

- Department is responsible for pedagogical aspects of minority schooling
- The legal basis of minority schooling in Austria are the Minority-Schooling-Acts for Carinthia and for Burgenland regarding ethnical groups of Slovenes, Hungarians, Romanies and Croats
- In total approximately 8300 pupils are concerned in the school year 2017/18
- Majority is attending primary schools, consuming bilingual education, meaning the language of instruction is German and the respective minority language used to approximately the same extent.
- Other concepts, with less time of instruction in the minority language are also existing, mainly used in secondary schools

### Current issues

- Many issues are related to reforms which target the entire national school system, but have to be modified regarding the specific situation of minority schools. A few examples:
  - The emphasis on competences: Working groups developed descriptors as well as teaching materials for various age groups
  - Restructuring educational authorities on a regional level: A long-term dialog has been initiated to keep communication upright between various stakeholders during the process
  - Digitalisation: Different types of online-platforms, supporting teachers in minority-languages are online in Carinthia and in Burgenland

### Structured dialogue

- There is a structured dialogue of stakeholders on various levels, called “Forum Minority-schooling”, which is meeting once a year since 2016.
- The Forum is a result of a participation process, involving basically the same stakeholders, which participate in the Forum now:
  - Minority representatives
  - Relevant federal and local authorities
  - Teacher-training institutes and universities
  - High level representatives of the educational system

- It aims to
  - Open a dialogue on current issues
  - Enhance cooperation and exchange between the stakeholders and particularly the representatives of Burgenland and Carinthia
  - raise questions regarding the pedagogical aspects of implementing educational reforms or relevant laws

#### Exhibition on minority schooling

- Questions related to Identities play a crucial role for members of ethnical groups. Especially when it comes to the decision, whether to participate in minority-schooling or not
- To address those questions, the ministry contracted the democracy centre of Vienna, to develop an exhibition covering topics such as history, legal and linguistic aspects regarding minority-schooling
- Currently, the exhibition is mainly shown in Burgenland and has already been in about 35 places