

Strasbourg, 31 March 2014. The protection of national minorities and their languages continues to enjoy a high level of legal recognition in Ukraine, says the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In respect of the *Russian* language, most undertakings chosen by Ukraine under the Charter are fulfilled or partly fulfilled. However, several of the Charter undertakings still need to be implemented for the Belarusian, Bulgarian, Crimean Tatar, Gagauz, German, Greek, Hungarian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Slovak and Yiddish languages.

Ukraine is a State Party to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Council of Europe's convention for the protection and promotion of national minority languages. The Charter applies in Ukraine to the Belarusian, Bulgarian, Crimean Tatar, Gagauz, German, Greek, Hungarian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak and Yiddish languages. An independent Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter.

In light of its recent evaluation report on Ukraine (ECRML (2014) 3) and following consultations with experts on-the-spot, the Committee of Experts underlines in a statement that the protection of national minorities and their languages continues to enjoy a high level of legal recognition in Ukraine. Certain recent improvements can be noted with regard to the use of some minority languages in the media.

In respect of the *Russian* language, most undertakings chosen by Ukraine under the Charter are fulfilled or partly fulfilled. Some shortcomings may still be observed concerning the use of Russian in the fields of judiciary and administration.

As far as the other aforementioned minority languages are concerned, however, several of the Charter undertakings still need to be implemented in practice.

In the field of *education*, Ukraine has a long-standing tradition of monolingual and bilingual schools operating in minority languages. Teaching in minority languages does, however, not exist in practice for all minority languages.

Except Russian and to a certain extent Hungarian and Romanian, minority languages are not used by *local and regional authorities*. Particular problems exist with regard to the official use of place-names in minority languages which should be promoted.

The use of Russian before *judicial authorities* is on the whole satisfactory. However, the relevant Charter undertakings are not implemented in practice for the other twelve languages.

During the last years, there has been a general decrease of the broadcasting time in minority languages, which for most of the minority languages had been very limited in any case. Since the adoption of the Committee of Experts' evaluation report, the broadcast time on television has been increased for the Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak languages, but decreased for German.

The Language Law, which has received considerable political and media attention recently, has to a significant extent been inspired by the Charter. At present, this law is *inter alia* being applied to Russian, but not to most of the other minority languages.

It is important that the Ukrainian authorities take active steps so as to ensure the application of the Language Law to all minority languages concerned by the ratification of the Charter. Such steps include, for each language, the identification of local administrative units where the law will be applied.

Link to the Committee of Experts' evaluation report on Ukraine (ECRML (2014) 3):
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/EvaluationReports/UkraineECRML2_en.pdf