European Commission

The Teaching of Regional or Minority Languages in Schools in Europe

Eurydice Report

Education and Training

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FOREWORD

The harmonious co-existence of many languages in Europe is a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity, one of the cornerstones of the European project. The EU has 24 official languages and 3 alphabets, some of them with a worldwide coverage. Some 60 other languages are also part of the EU's heritage and spoken in specific regions or by certain groups.

Language competences are at the heart of the ambitious vision to develop a well-functioning European Education Area. Being able to speak different languages is necessary for studying and working abroad. What is more, learning languages enables people to discover different cultures and to broaden their perspectives.

In May 2019, the Council of the European Union adopted a Recommendation for a comprehensive approach to language teaching and learning. The European Union and its Member States are committed to increasing the level of ambition for language learning in school. This includes literacy in the language(s) of schooling as well as the acquisition of two additional languages. In line with the Recommendation, learners may wish to include less widely taught and learned languages in their personal language portfolio.

Many interesting pedagogical approaches can be found in bilingual regions and multilingual classrooms around Europe. All countries have different degrees of linguistic diversity and different ways of managing this diversity. This report by Eurydice, the European Union's network of national units for education analysis based in all Erasmus+ programme countries, focuses on measures taken by education authorities to support the teaching of regional or minority languages in school. It also highlights a selection of projects co-funded by the European Union programmes Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, which promote and support the teaching, learning and circulation of such languages.

This snapshot of current national policies related to regional or minority languages shows us that measures are being implemented at national, regional and local level, sometimes even at school level. In this context, the European Union has the role of bringing policy makers from these different levels together with education practitioners, to examine ways to reach the overarching EU objectives for language learning. There is a lot to learn from the creativity and experience that exists at different levels of government!

The linguistic landscape in Europe is a complex, multi-layered and colourful web of different languages and dialects. I am delighted that the European Union can provide an opportunity to showcase how this rich cultural diversity is being supported and maintained.

Tibor NAVRACSICS

Commissioner responsible for
Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

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COUNTRY CODES

EU/EU-28	European Union
BE	Belgium
BE fr	Belgium – French Community
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czechia
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
UK-ENG	England
UK-WLS	Wales
UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
UK-SCT	Scotland
	EEA and candidate countries
AL	Albania
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CH	Switzerland
IS	Iceland
LI	Liechtenstein
ME	Montenegro
MK	North Macedonia
NO	Norway
RS	Serbia
TR	Turkey

For more information on the ISCED classification, see http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf [accessed June 2019].

INTRODUCTION

Europe is often described as a rich mosaic of languages. All these languages have different statuses: they may be national or official languages, regional or minority languages or languages spoken by people from migrant backgrounds. Regional or minority languages are usually connected to a specific geographical area in a given State, although a few of them, known as non-territorial languages, cannot be linked to a particular geographical area. In the EU, an estimated 40 to 50 million people speak a regional or minority language (European Parliament, 2016).

In the EU, an estimated 40 to 50 million people speak a regional or minority language.

In many European countries, there are regional or minority languages that have official status. This means that they are used for legal and public administrative purposes in a specific area of a given State, alongside the State language (which has official status throughout the entire country). Policies and initiatives adopted by public authorities, notably in the area of education, are key contributing factors to language vitality in private and public spaces. There are several indicators of language vitality (European Parliament, 2017) such as the number of speakers (in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total population of a given State), the governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including its official status and use, and the availability of materials for language education and literacy.

The importance of linguistic diversity is enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union. Regional and minority languages are part of the European Union policy landscape on learning about diversity and language learning. The Recommendation of the Council of the European Union of 22 May 2019 ([1]) on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages recognises the value of learning and maintaining any language which is part of a person's individual interests and circumstances. It recognises the vast linguistic diversity in Europe and encourages Member States to increase the level of ambition for language learning in school.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) of the Council of Europe is a major legal instrument in the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in Europe. This European convention entered into force on 1 March 1998. To this day, 25 Member States have ratified the Charter ([2]). By ratifying the Charter, these Member States not only commit to fundamental principles and objectives for the preservation of the languages concerned, but also to concrete actions in certain areas of public life (e.g. in education).

Through funding programmes such as Erasmus+ or Creative Europe, the European Union supports language learning and linguistic diversity particularly through mobility programmes, cooperation projects and the support for European Capitals of Culture. Under these programmes, many successful projects promote learning and the visibility of regional or minority languages in Europe.

([1]) Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, pp. 15-22.

([2]) Please see the Council of Europe's website: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/signatures-and-ratifications [Accessed June 2019].

Regional or minority languages: Languages that are 'traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population'; it is different from the state language(s) (Council of Europe, 1992). As a general rule, these are languages of populations that have their ethnic roots in the areas concerned or have been settled in the regions concerned for generations. Regional or minority languages can have the status of an official language, but by definition, this status will be limited to the area in which they are spoken.

Non-territorial languages: A language used by nationals of the state which differs from the language or languages used by the rest of the state's population, but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof. (Definition based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992)). For example, Romany is a non-territorial language.

This Eurydice report provides an overview of existing policy efforts across Europe that support the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools. It consists of three main parts, which are as follows:

- references to regional or minority languages by top-level education authorities in official documents (national curriculum or education programmes, national assessment or examination documents, or recommendations that encourage schools to offer tuition in these languages);
- some policies and measures on teaching regional or minority languages that are in place in the different European education systems; and
- some projects funded by the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes that support the learning of regional or minority languages.

The first two parts of the report draw on information collected by the Eurydice Network. The focus is on school education (primary and secondary education) in public and government-dependent private schools. Some policy examples, however, might have a broader scope that may include pre-primary education, for instance. These two parts cover 34 European countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme ([3]). The reference year for the presented data is 2018/19. The last part covers EU-funded projects in the fields of school education, vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning. In addition, it includes some projects in the cultural and creative sectors, and the audio-visual sector.

([3]) In other words, it includes 26 of the 28 Member States of the European Union as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Bulgaria, Greece, Liechtenstein and Norway did not participate in the data collection.

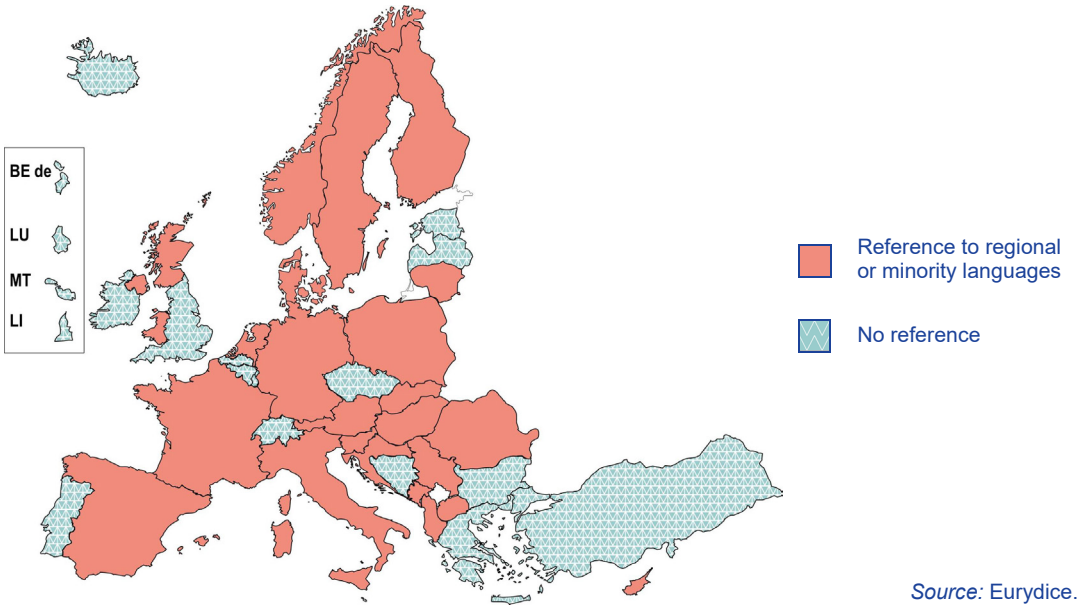
REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENTS

Education authorities have an important role to play in protecting and promoting regional or minority languages. The teaching of these languages takes place within a school curriculum, which can promote language teaching to varying degrees. Language-friendly schools take advantage of learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds to increase students' cultural and language awareness. They foster a favourable climate for the learning of languages (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017). The 2019 Council Recommendation on languages recommends that Member States 'apply comprehensive approaches to improve the teaching and learning of languages at national, regional, local or school level as appropriate' ([4]). One way to achieve this, as proposed by the Council Recommendation, is to support the development of language awareness, notably by valuing linguistic diversity and using it as a learning resource.

Figure 1 shows that in the majority of education systems, top-level education authorities refer to regional or minority languages in official documents.

In the majority of education systems, top-level education authorities refer to regional or minority languages in official documents.

Figure 1: Reference to specific regional or minority languages in official documents issued by top-level education authorities, relating to primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34), 2018/19



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Top-level education authorities mean the highest level of authority with responsibility for education in a given country, usually located at national (state) level. However, in Belgium, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, the *Communautés, Länder, Comunidades Autónomas* and devolved administrations, respectively, are responsible for all or most areas relating to education. Therefore, these administrations are considered as the top-level authority for the areas where they hold responsibility. When these authorities share responsibility with the national (state) level, then both are considered to be top-level authorities.

Country-specific note

Bulgaria, Greece, Liechtenstein and **Norway**: Data from reference year 2015/16. See European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe – 2017 Edition*. Brussels: EACEA Eurydice.

([4]) Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 17 .

These references may be in the national curriculum or education programmes, in national assessment or examination documents, or in recommendations that encourage schools to offer tuition in these languages. They might take the form of small-scale measures implemented in a selected number of schools or that affect all schools in a particular geographical area.

In some cases, it may be only a general reference to regional or minority languages and not to specific ones. In Czechia, for instance, members of national minorities have the right to be educated in their own language, and a right to Content and Language integrated Learning (CLIL). This is also the case in Croatia where members of national minorities have the right to be educated in their own language. However, only some of the minority languages that are taught in schools in Croatia are specifically mentioned in the official documents; the other languages are referred to in general terms. Curricula and support documents are not available or have not been developed or adopted for all the minority languages that are taught in schools in Croatia.

Education authorities across Europe refer to more than 60 regional or minority languages in their official documents.

Education authorities across Europe refer to more than 60 regional or minority languages in official documents (see Figure 2). The number of languages, however, varies a great deal between education systems. This variation can be explained not only by different political commitments to preserving and promoting regional or minority languages, but also by the specific linguistic landscape of each country. For instance, Luxembourg has three State languages (French, German and Luxembourgish), but no regional or minority languages.

Official education documents in six countries (France, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Serbia) refer to more than ten languages, with official documents in Poland and Serbia covering the highest number of languages (15). In six other countries (Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Sweden and North Macedonia), the number of regional or minority languages referred to ranges from five to ten.

Figure 2: Regional or minority languages specifically referred to in official documents issued by top-level education authorities, relating to primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34), 2018/19

		BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL
No reference		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●						●		●		●	
Cypriot Maronite Arabic	acy															●						
Belorussian	bel																	●				
Bosnian	bos																					
Breton	bre												●									
Bulgarian	bul																			●		
Catalan/Valencian	cat											●	●		●							
Corsican	cos												●									
Kashubian	csb																					
Czech	cse													●								
Welsh	cym																					
Danish	dan							●														
German	deu						●								●			●		●		
Greek	ell														●					●		
Basque	eus											●	●									
Faroese	fao						●															
Finnish	fin																					
Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish)	fit																					
Kven	fkv																					
French	fra														●							
Gallo	fra												●									
Franco-Provençal	frp														●							
Frisian	fry							●														●
Futunian	fud												●									
Friulan	fur														●							
Scottish Gaelic	gla																					
Irish	gle																					
Galician	glg											●										
Hebrew	heb																					
Croatian	hrv														●					●		
Hungarian	hun													●								
Armenian	hye															●				●		
Italian	ita													●								
Greenlandic	kal						●															
Karaim	kdr																					
Lithuanian	lit																					
Ladin	lld														●							
Macedonian	mkd																					
Low German	nds							●														
Occitan	oci											●	●		●							
Polish	pol																	●		●		
Creole	rcf												●									
Romany	rom													●						●		
Romanian	ron																			●		
Lemko	rue																					
Rusyn	rue													●						●		
Vlach	rup																					
Russian	rus																	●				
Scots	sco																					
Slovak	slk													●						●		
Slovenian	slv														●					●		
Sami	sme																					
Albanian	sqi														●							
Sardinian	srd														●							
Serbian	srp													●						●		
Tahitian	tah												●									
Tatar	tat																					
Melanesian languages	tpi												●									
Turkish	tur																					
Ukrainian	ukr													●						●		
Wallisian	wls												●									
Sorbian	wen							●														
Yiddish	yid																	●				
Other (dialects)												●	●							●		

Figure 2 (continued): Regional or minority languages specifically referred to in official documents issued by top-level education authorities, relating to primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34), 2018/19

		AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
No reference				●						●					●	●	●	●					●
Cypriot Maronite Arabic	acy																						
Belorussian	bel		●																				
Bosnian	bos																		●	●		●	
Breton	bre																						
Bulgarian	bul				●																	●	
Catalan/Valecian	cat																						
Corsican	cos																						
Kashubian	csb		●																				
Czech	cse		●		●																	●	
Welsh	cym										●												
Danish	dan																						
German	deu		●		●		●																
Greek	ell													●									
Basque	eus																						
Faroese	fao																						
Finnish	fin								●												●		
Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish)	fit								●														
Kven	fkv																				●		
French	fra																						
Gallo	fra																						
Franco-Provençal	frp																						
Frisian	fry																						
Futunian	fud																						
Friulan	fur																						
Scottish Gaelic	gla												●										
Irish	gle											●											
Galician	glg																						
Hebrew	heb		●		●																		
Croatian	hrv	●			●														●			●	
Hungarian	hun	●			●	●	●															●	
Armenian	hye		●																				
Italian	ita				●	●																	
Greenlandic	kal																						
Karaim	kdr		●																				
Lithuanian	lit		●																				
Ladin	lld																						
Macedonian	mkd																					●	
Low German	nds																						
Occitan	oci																						
Polish	pol																						
Creole	rcf																						
Romany	rom	●	●		●		●	●	●											●		●	
Romanian	ron																					●	
Lemko	rue		●																				
Rusyn	rue						●															●	
Vlach	rup																			●		●	
Russian	rus		●																				
Scots	sco												●										
Slovak	slk		●		●																	●	
Slovenian	slv	●																				●	
Sami	sme							●	●												●		
Albanian	sqi																		●	●		●	
Sardinian	srd																						
Serbian	srp				●														●	●			
Tahitian	tah																						
Tatar	tat		●																				
Melanesian languages	tpi																						
Turkish	tur				●															●			
Ukrainian	ukr		●		●		●															●	
Wallisian	wls																						
Sorbian	wen																						
Yiddish	yid		●						●														
Other (dialects)																						●	

Explanatory note (Figure 2)

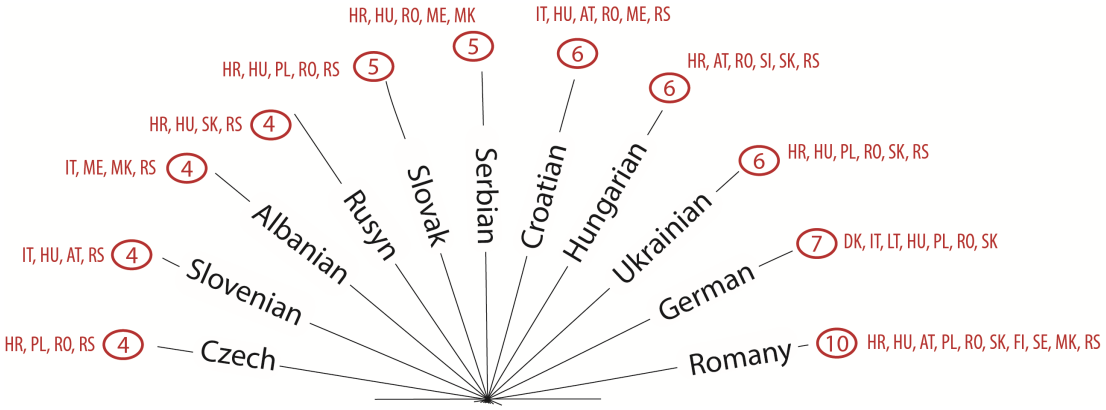
Top-level education authorities: see Figure 1.
This figure does not make any distinction between educational levels, education pathways, or types of schools. In some countries, the languages mentioned might be offered in schools in some regions only.
Languages are listed according to their ISO code (ISO 639-3 standard). Dialects that have no code are marked as 'other' and explained in the country-specific notes below.

Country-specific notes

Bulgaria, Greece, Liechtenstein and **Norway**: Data from reference year 2015/16. See European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe – 2017 Edition* Brussels: EACEA Eurydice.
Spain: In addition to Spanish as the official language, some Autonomous Communities have a co-official language. In these cases, the education authorities establish their own model for teaching their official languages. Others: Bable and Aragonese.
France: Melanesian languages: drehu, nengone, païci, aïje. Other: the regional languages of Alsace and Moselle (including German and its dialectal variants).
Hungary: Other: Boyash, a dialect of Romanian.
Austria: Two documents issued by the central education authorities make explicit reference to the teaching of minority languages in schools: the Act on School Education for Ethnic Minorities in Burgenland (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für Burgenland*) sets out the requirements for teaching Hungarian, Croatian (Burgenland-Kroatisch) and Romany; and the Minority Schooling Act for Carinthia (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für Kärnten*) covers the teaching of Slovene in the minority areas.
Serbia: Other: Bunjevac.

As Figure 3 shows, the languages most often referred to are, in most cases, languages of kin-States situated in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe (German, Croatian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Serbian, Czech, Slovenian and Albanian). Specific historical and political circumstances have shaped the linguistically diverse landscape of this particular region of Europe. Romany is a non-territorial language that has been spoken in Europe since the Middle Ages. People speaking Romany are spread across several European countries (European Parliament, 2018).

Figure 3: Regional or minority languages according to the number of countries referring to them in official education documents, relating to primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34), 2018/19



3 Bosnian, Bulgarian, Catalan/Valencian, Greek, Armenian, Italian, Occitan, Sami, Yiddish

2 Belorussian, Basque, Finnish, Frisian, Hebrew, Polish, Romanian, Vlach/Aromanian, Russian, Turkish

1 Cypriot Maronite Arabic, Breton, Corsican, Kashubian, Welsh, Danish, Faroese, Meänkieli (Tornedalen Finnish), Kven, French, Gallo, Franco-Provençal, Futunian, Friulan, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Galician, Greenlandic, Karaim, Lithuanian, Ladin, Macedonian, Low German, Creole, Lemko, Scots, Sardinian, Tahitian, Tatar, Melanesian languages, Wallisian, Sorbian

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure shows the regional or minority languages, and the number of countries (in red oval shapes) referring to them in their official education documents. The upper part of the Figure, which shows the languages most often referred to, also indicates the countries concerned (using the countries' codes). For similar information regarding the languages mentioned in the lower part of the Figure, please see Figure 2.

Official education documents: official documents issued by top-level education authorities.

No distinction is made between educational levels, education pathways, or types of schools. The languages mentioned might be offered in schools in some regions only.

Country-specific notes

See Figure 2.

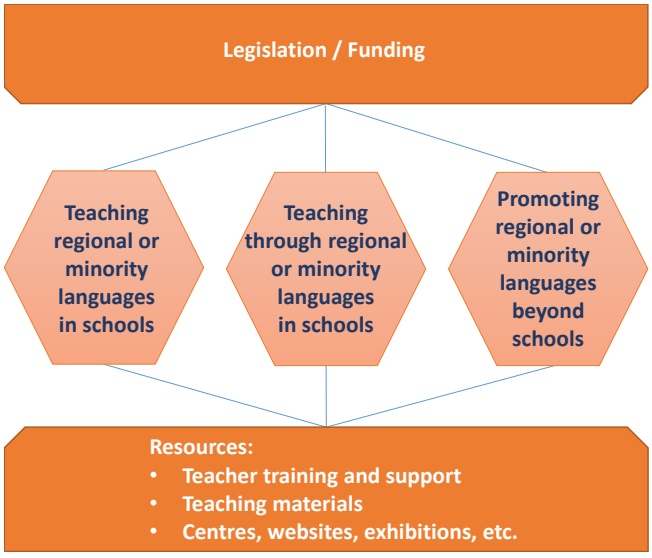
Many regional or minority languages, however, are associated with one single country in Europe. This is for instance the case of Sorbian (DE), Corsican (FR), Frisian (NL), Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CY), and Welsh (UK-WLS).

POLICIES AND MEASURES ON REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGE TEACHING

Having looked at the different regional or minority languages referred to in official documents issued by top-level education authorities across Europe, this section now presents some specific policies and measures related to the teaching of regional or minority languages ([5]).

The teaching of regional or minority languages in schools requires a political and financial commitment.

Figure 4: Areas addressed by policies and measures on regional or minority language teaching, 2018/19



Source: Eurydice.

The policies and measures gathered in this report can be grouped in different categories (see Figure 4). Many policies and measures focus on the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools. In some countries, regional or minority languages may be used as the language of instruction for some or all other school subjects. In a few cases, regional or minority languages are promoted beyond schools, which can encourage the use of these languages by students and society in general. A necessary condition for the promotion of regional or minority languages both in and outside of schools is the existence of legislation and funding for this purpose. This kind of political and financial commitment is crucial for ensuring the availability of resources to implement regional or minority language teaching. Such resources include training and support for regional or minority language teachers, relevant teaching materials and additional resources, such as cultural centres, websites, exhibitions, etc.

([5]) For this data collection, Eurydice National Units were asked to provide two examples of policies or measures on the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools. This overview presents only a selection of these examples.

Legislation/funding

In order to support the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools, some European education systems, such as those in France, Lithuania, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, have developed a legal framework to encourage or guarantee this instruction.

Case study: France – Legal changes promoting regional language teaching

As a result of changes in the legislation, regional language teaching has been encouraged and supported since September 2017. The non-compulsory curriculum has been enriched with new optional courses and the existing schemes are now more flexible:

a) a second foreign or regional language ('Regional languages and cultures') in grade 6 (these two languages are then taught for up to 6 hours per week); b) regional languages and cultures in grades 6 to 9, up to 2 hours a week.

Moreover, a recent reform concerning the last two years of general and technical secondary schools as well as the current baccalaureate, lead to a new course called 'Foreign and regional languages, literatures and cultures'. This course consisting of 4 hours per week in grade 11 and 6 hours in grade 12, complementing a language course that students are already following, will be offered in several regional languages starting in 2019/20.

In some education systems, the competent authorities provide extra funding for regional or minority language teaching. This is the case, for example, in Italy, Poland and Finland.

Case study: Italy – Funding for regional or minority language projects

The Ministry of Education promotes and supports project initiatives developed by schools, thereby encouraging collaboration between school networks trying to promote regional or minority language teaching. To this end, it publishes annual intervention and funding plans for national and local projects in the study of languages and cultural traditions of linguistic minorities. The Ministry provides schools with guidelines to design their projects and establishes criteria for the evaluation of projects.

Teaching regional or minority languages in schools

As already presented in Figures 1 and 2, official documents in most of the European education systems specifically refer to the teaching of regional or minority languages. In practice, this means that they may have a curriculum or education programme for one or more regional or minority languages, which may be compulsory for students from a minority background or those living in specific geographical areas.

Many European education systems have a regional or minority language curriculum or education programme.

Case study: The Netherlands – Policy on Frisian language teaching

Since 2014, Frisian language has been offered as a compulsory subject in primary schools in the province of Friesland. Schools can ask for an exemption if less than 5 % of pupils at a school have a Frisian background. At secondary level, Frisian language is compulsory in the first year. Afterwards, it becomes an optional course. Secondary schools in Friesland are required to offer Frisian language as an elective subject;

however, they can get a dispensation if they do not have enough teachers with the required qualifications to teach this subject.

In some countries, such as Germany, Poland and North Macedonia, regional or minority language teaching includes, apart from language instruction, the teaching of the history and culture of some of the minority communities.

Case study: Poland – Core curriculum for regional or minority languages

The core curriculum for regional or minority languages exists as a separate document, which is, along with the core curricula for all other school subjects, part of the general regulation for all types of schools. The core curriculum for regional or minority languages has been continuously extended. The current core curriculum that has been implemented since the school year 2017/18 covers all education levels from pre-primary to upper secondary level. Some new elements include more emphasis on the cultural component in the teaching of regional or minority languages. Accordingly, learning a language of a national or ethnic minority aims to provide students with linguistic, literary and cultural competences as well as with an awareness of their own national or ethnic identity.

In Romania, for example, in addition to a curriculum, a syllabus for national exams and a baccalaureate examination syllabus for regional or minority languages have been developed.

Teaching through regional or minority languages in schools

In addition to teaching regional or minority languages in schools that operate in the main language of instruction, a number of education systems have schools in which all or most school subjects are taught in a regional or minority language. This is the case, for example, in Slovenia where there are schools providing education in Italian and bilingual schools providing education in Slovenian and Hungarian, or in Montenegro where schools provide education in Albanian.

Case study: Germany – Danish and Sorbian minority schools

The children of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein can attend government-dependent private schools (*Ersatzschulen*) instead of the general education schools of the public sector, as long as the educational objectives of these schools essentially correspond to those of the school types provided for in the Schleswig-Holstein education act. Lessons in these alternative schools are taught in Danish.

Similarly, children and young people of Sorbian descent in the settlement area of the Sorbs in Brandenburg and Sachsen, in particular, have the opportunity to learn Sorbian or Lower Sorbian language at Sorbian or other schools; and they are also taught in the Sorbian or Lower Sorbian language in certain subjects as well as at certain grades or levels of education.

In some education systems, for example, in the United Kingdom (Scotland), the education authorities have an obligation to provide education through regional or minority languages. In the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), there is a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of education through Irish.

In other cases, there are specific policies for encouraging the development of schools providing instruction through regional or minority languages. For example, legislation in Croatia enables schools teaching in the language and script of a national minority to be established for a smaller number of students than that prescribed for schools teaching in the Croatian language and script.

In addition to providing education in regional or minority languages in schools, the additional aim of schools providing education through regional or minority languages is to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of minority communities.

Schools providing education through regional or minority languages aim to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of minority communities.

Case study: Finland – The Sámi and Sámi language speakers

By providing education in the Sámi language, the particular objective is to support students to grow into their language, culture and community and to give them an opportunity to embrace the Sámi cultural heritage. As students learn to use the language in a manner that is characteristic of their community, their membership and participation in the community are strengthened. The education develops students' appreciation of their personal linguistic and cultural background and their understanding of its significance for themselves, the community, society and other indigenous peoples alike. The students are guided to understand and appreciate also other languages and cultures.

In addition to providing instruction through regional or minority languages, standardised assessments in regional or minority languages have been developed, for example, in Romania and the United Kingdom (Scotland). In the latter case, National Standardised Assessments in Gaelic-language schools were introduced from December 2018, so that students in these schools experience parity with their English-medium peers in the range of assessment opportunities made available to them.

Promoting regional or minority languages beyond schools

In some education systems, efforts to teach regional or minority languages in schools are related to initiatives aimed at promoting these languages in society more generally. This is the case, for example, for the Frisian language in the Netherlands, or for Gaelic and Scots in the United Kingdom (Scotland).

Case study: United Kingdom (Scotland) – National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023

The National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023 is the work of *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, endorsed by the Scottish Government. The Plan builds on existing measures to support the promotion and use of the Gaelic language in society. The central purpose of this Plan is to encourage and enable more people to use Gaelic more often and in a wider range of situations. The key messages, aims, priorities and new commitments contained in the Plan all contribute to achieving the increased use of Gaelic.

Top-level education authorities also support regional or minority language teaching by providing teacher training, teaching materials and other teaching and learning resources.

Teaching resources for regional or minority languages

In order to promote regional or minority language teaching, top-level education authorities also provide schools and teachers with additional forms of support. This includes initiatives related to teacher training, the provision of textbooks and other teaching material, as well as resources such as regional or minority language centres, websites and exhibitions.

Teacher training and support

In a number of education systems, for example, in Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden, top-level authorities strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills for regional or minority language teaching through relevant training seminars.

Case study: Cyprus – Training seminars for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic language teachers

The Ministry of Education and Culture supports the organisation of training seminars for teachers of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic. For example, for Armenian, three teacher training programmes were implemented during the school year 2017/18. All three of them were addressed to the 19 teachers who teach subjects in Armenian at the primary schools of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol, as well as the gymnasium in Nicosia. It involved training sessions, classroom observations and mentoring. In the final stage, there was a formal evaluation of all the teachers. For Cypriot Maronite Arabic, several training sessions are provided each year for teachers (e.g. by the University of Cyprus in June 2016 and 2017).

In many instances, the teacher training promoted by education authorities is for fully-qualified teachers. However, in some cases, for example in the United Kingdom (Wales), an additional objective is to foster student-teachers' capacity to teach through the medium of Welsh in initial teacher education.

In some education systems, the competent authorities support individuals to gain qualifications to work as regional or minority language teachers. In Hungary, for example, a scholarship is provided for higher education students preparing to teach as a minority educator in pre-primary institutions.

Teaching materials

In several countries, the top-level education authorities support schools and teachers by ensuring the availability of relevant textbooks and teaching material for regional or minority language teaching. This is, for example, the case in Slovenia, Sweden, Albania and Serbia.

Case study: Sweden – Teaching materials for regional or minority languages

The Swedish National Agency for Education has been tasked with producing teaching materials and providing support for regional or minority language teachers. A priority area is material for students who have little knowledge in the language. The teaching materials have been produced in close collaboration with experienced mother tongue teachers. Södertörn University College and Uppsala University have contributed with linguistic expertise. The Sámi School Board, representatives of mother tongue teachers in national minority languages and representatives of the national minorities have provided valuable input.

Centres, websites and exhibitions

Other initiatives promoting the teaching and development of regional or minority languages that can be found across Europe include nationally supported resource centres. Examples of these include the NeRok – Minority Roma Methodological Educational and Cultural Centre in Hungary, or the Office for the support and development of education in the language of minorities set up within the Ministry of Education and Science in North Macedonia.

Case study: Hungary – NeRok Minority Roma Methodological Educational and Cultural Centre

The Minority Roma Methodological Educational and Cultural Centre is a network of institutions. Although it was established to support the infrastructure and methodology necessary for minority education in the county of Baranya, some of its services are provided nationwide. In order to promote social inclusion and the understanding of cultural differences, the Centre provides training for teachers and professionals working in the field of social affairs, in partnership with the University of Pécs and Miskolc. As a methodological support centre, it equips professionals with modern tools so that they can prepare up-to-date presentations and develop learning materials.

Further support for regional or minority language teaching may be offered through dedicated websites or exhibitions, as is the case, for example, in Austria.

Case study: Austria – Exhibition: 'The Austrian minority school system – Linguistic diversity and history'

Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Education, the Democracy Centre Vienna has created a travelling exhibition to strengthen the identity of Austrian ethnic minorities and build historical awareness about them. The exhibition imparts knowledge about minority politics and minority rights. Advocating values such as acceptance, appreciation and respect, the recognition of an increasingly diverse society, multilingualism as well as fighting prejudice against all groups in society are additional important objectives of the exhibition. The exhibition can be ordered free of charge, and mainly serves schools in Burgenland and in Carinthia.

Large scale-initiatives/programmes

Finally, some policy initiatives are highlighted below that are particularly comprehensive insofar as they cover many of the aspects mentioned above. One of them is the Operational Programme for National Minorities 2017-2020 initiated by the Croatian Government to protect and improve the existing level of rights for all national minorities, including Serbian, Italian, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Albanian and Roma national minorities. The Operational Programme entails a wide range of actions relating, in particular, to the provision of education in regional or minority languages, cooperation with minority community representatives on the drafting of curricula and key documents, and the provision of teaching materials, etc.

Other large-scale initiatives include the strategy Cymraeg 2050, and the Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-2021 developed by the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Strategy Cymraeg 2050 aims to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Case study: United Kingdom (Wales) – Strategy Cymraeg 2050 and Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-2021

The Welsh Government published a strategy in 2017 to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, in support of its vision for a thriving Welsh language in Wales and for Wales to become 'truly bilingual'. The strategy 'Cymraeg 2050' aims to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050 based on the following three themes:

- increasing the number of Welsh speakers;
- increasing the use of Welsh; and
- creating favourable conditions for the use of Welsh in terms of infrastructure and context.

The Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-2021 sets out the Welsh Government's plan for the development of compulsory Welsh-medium and Welsh language education in support of the Cymraeg 2050 aims. Moreover, it supports the Government vision to enable all learners to develop Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life. The plan includes five objectives and key actions to be delivered by 2021:

1. Curriculum, assessment and pedagogy: develop a new Welsh language curriculum that inspires learners to learn and use the Welsh language.

2. Enrichment and experiences in Welsh: opportunities to use Welsh in a range of contexts, the school environment and outside education.

3. Workforce planning, professional learning and leadership: actions to support the teaching workforce to deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh and Welsh as a subject, and to develop children and young people's appreciation of the Welsh language, its literature and history, and its relevance to their everyday life in contemporary Wales.

4. Planning Welsh-medium education: plan for an increase in the number of learners in Welsh-medium settings, in parallel with the planning for the introduction of a new Welsh language curriculum.

5. Excellence, equity and well-being: ensure that all learners have equal access to Welsh-medium education and experience the best opportunities to develop their language.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Supported by the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe funding programmes, many successful projects promote learning and the visibility of regional or minority languages in Europe. Projects can be found in the fields of school education, vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning, as well as in the cultural, creative and audio-visual sectors.

Below are some examples of recent European projects and initiatives on teaching and using regional or minority languages. The projects include Erasmus+ school education partnerships, projects promoting staff or youth mobility, eTwinning partnerships, and projects developed under the Creative Europe programme.

Erasmus+ school education partnerships

Minority languages, good travelling companions (2015-2017)

Participants: Belgium (Flemish Community), Spain (Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco) and Italy (Sardinia)

Objectives:

- Gather knowledge on other minority and/or endangered languages in Europe, on their sociolinguistic situation and the policies promoting their survival.
- Increase the use of minority languages in school and in everyday life.

Activities:

- Linguistic quiz on knowledge about minority languages.
- Information and research on minority languages in Europe and around the world.
- Radio programmes on minority languages.
- Questionnaires for host families to find out about the local language situation.
- Recording popular songs in the minority languages.
- Corpus of expressions in the three minority languages.

More information:

https://sites.google.com/site/3minoritylanguages/

Gaelic Occitan together for language users through united roots and experiences (2014-2017)

Participants: Ireland, France and the United Kingdom (Scotland)

Objective:

- Enhance and develop the teaching of a minority language and the promotion of a regional culture.

Activities:

- Transnational training seminars and study visits.
- Creation of an educational toolkit.
- Design of a quality book of photographs from the Occitan and Gaelic regions.
- School exchanges between French, Irish and Scottish pupils.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2014-1-FR01-KA201-008464

School education-staff mobility

Aprendizaje lingüístico y cultural (Language and cultural learning, 2015-2017)

Partners: Spain and Norway

Objectives:

- Promoting awareness of different cultural backgrounds and extending it to the entire educational community.
- Assessing the importance of the different languages in the EU (Spanish and English) including 'minority languages' (Catalan and Norwegian) as a heritage to respect.
- Develop new ways and methodologies in foreign language teaching.

Activities:

- Teacher training.
- Observation of lessons and good practices.
- Classroom practice in collaboration with the teacher in charge, job shadowing.
- Work sessions with members involved in establishing assessment benchmarks.

More information:

- https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2015-1-ES01-KA101-015121
- http://www.insbruguers.cat/projectes/intercanvi-amb-noruega

Gwriziou hag eskell, des racines et des ailes, wings and roots (2014-2015)

Partners: France and the United Kingdom

Objective:

- Learn in a language different from the native tongue through the medium of a non-linguistic subject taught in Breton or in English, and compare two regional languages.

Activities:

- Exchange with correspondents on what makes cultural identity.
- Send teachers on an Erasmus+ training period.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2014-1-FR01-KA101-001361

Trois langues, un chemin (Three languages, one path, 2014-2015)

Partners: Ireland and France (Urrugne)

Objectives:

- Discover language-teaching methods that help teachers develop in their profession.
- Greater motivation of students, better implication in cooperative work and improved knowledge of different cultures and languages.
- Teachers will enhance their expertise in teaching thanks to their contact with other education systems.
- The school will open to the outside world, will approach families and improve the collaboration between departments.

Activities:

Teacher exchange to share teaching experiences and materials.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2014-1-FR01-KA101-001669

Twinning projects

Greek-Griko. Your language sounds familiar

Partners: Greece and Italy

Objective:

- Collaborate with partners to discover the origin and the evolution of 'Griko', a minority dialect spoken in some villages in Southern Italy.

Activities:

- Create a glossary with common every day phrases in Griko.
- Create an online game based on Greek and Italian culture.

More information:

https://twinspace.etwinning.net/25161/home

Celtic Cousins

Partners: Ireland and France

Objectives:

- Explore similarities and differences in respective Celtic cultures.
- Teach each other Irish and Breton.

Activities:

- Communicate with each other, sing songs in Irish and Breton, and write a storybook and an e-book together incorporating Breton and Irish and a common Celtic theme.

More information:

http://www.gaelscoilmhuscrai.ie/blog/category/etwinning

Youth mobility

Kernow-Breizh (2016)

Partners: France and the United Kingdom

Objectives:

- International youth exchange to revitalise the minority languages Breton and Cornish.

Activities

- Learn to design and organise cultural discovery workshops to get to know the cultural heritage of Cornwall and Brittany as well as learning the languages.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2016-1-FR02-KA105-011253

Creative Europe

Other words-Literary circuit for small and minority languages (2015-2019)

Partners: Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Slovenia and North Macedonia

Objective:

- Create a network of creative placements for minority or lesser-used language writers, cooperating with cultural agents.

Activities:

- Artistic placements and translations, sharing experiences from different territories.
- Mobility of writers and their works through long literary residencies.
- Mediation activities in their host country such as conferences or workshops for the general public, activities promoting reading and writing for children and young people and collaborating with a local artist.

More information:

- www.donostiakultura.com
- https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/559469-CREA-1-2015-1-ES-CULT-COOP1

(Re)Discovering Europe (2017-2018)

Partners: Croatia, Italy, Romania, North Macedonia and Serbia

Objectives:

- Speak about Europe from a minority perspective through theatrical language.

Activities:

- Co-production of the play 'The Mountain Giants' by Luigi Pirandello.
- Educational programme 'Incubators of theatre knowledge'.
- Artistic workshops 'From Pirandello to Brexit'.
- Audience development programme 'Performative kitchen cooking diversity'.
- Scientific research on participation of minorities in culture in European cities.
- Tour five cities with the play while they organise artistic and educational activities.

More information:

http://hnk-zajc.hr/

European Bibliodiversity for Young Readers (2015-2017)

Partners: Slovenia

Objective:

- Establish the comparative frame of overlooked discourses in children's literature, to emphasise similarities and differences in treating themes and motives, literary characters, forms and genres, but also reflections on their translation.

Activities:

- Publish, promote and contextualize ten high quality European literary works of minority and/or less known children's literatures, most of them written in less used languages and awarded at the national and international level.
- Translation of leading authors from Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Iceland, Hungary, Ukraine, Portugal into Slovenian.
- Book presentations, press conferences, interviews, book reviews, scientific articles.

More information:

- http://www.malinc.si/sl/o-nas/
- https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/ce-project-details/#project/561217-CREA-1-2015-1-SI-CULT-LIT1

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The Teaching of Regional or Minority Languages in Schools in Europe

This Eurydice report provides a short overview of policy efforts made across Europe in support of the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools. It firstly presents the reference made to regional or minority languages by top-level education authorities in official documents. It then illustrates some of the policies and measures related to the teaching of regional or minority languages that are in place in the different European education systems. This is followed by an overview of some of the EU-funded projects and initiatives aiming to support the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools in Europe.

The Eurydice network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice.

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