

# Protection and promotion of regional or minority languages: promising practices across Europe

2015-2020



Council of Europe Secretariat  
of the European Charter  
for Regional or Minority Languages

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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# CONTENTS

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<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RATIONALE: SETTING THE SCENE</b>	<b>7</b>
Methodology	8
What is meant by promising practice?	9
What are key factors of success?	11
How to transpose a practice	12
<b>EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICES</b>	<b>15</b>
Encouragement of multilingual tolerance and use of regional or minority languages by children and youth	15
Resilience of non-territorial language speakers	17
Revitalisation of languages and transfrontier co-operation	19
Face-to-face and online teaching for speakers and non-speakers	21
Digital culture	22
<b>MANAGING AND WORKING IN REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES</b>	<b>27</b>
Advising public authorities on matters pertaining to regional or minority languages and compliance with the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	27
<b>USE OF REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</b>	<b>29</b>
Online education	29
Covid-19 related information, health advice and individual support	31
<b>PROMISING PRACTICES IN VIEW OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES</b>	<b>35</b>
Bilingual toponymy	35
Awareness raising of minorities and their languages as expressions of cultural wealth	36
<b>ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF REGIONAL, MINORITY OR MAJORITY LANGUAGES AND GROUPS OF LANGUAGES OR DIALECTS MENTIONED IN THE BOOKLET</b>	<b>37</b>

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# Acknowledgements

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# Rationale: setting the scene

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**T**here are many initiatives, programmes and interventions offered by states and non-governmental bodies across Europe that support the implementation of the right to employ regional or minority languages in several fields of activities by the speakers of regional or minority languages. However, this right is not always available nor consistently applied in all Council of Europe member states. One existing barrier to the wider use of regional or minority languages as protected by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148) is a lack of awareness of practices that can be transposed to different contexts.

To help stakeholders bridge this gap and enable them to set up new projects, this booklet highlights essential factors for promising initiatives taken over five years from 2015 to 2020, considered likely to lead to efficiency and effectiveness in promoting and protecting European regional or minority languages. By giving examples of existing practices, this publication intends to support the legal professionals, policy and decision makers, front-line professionals and volunteers who seek to implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter “the Charter”) or advocate for an anti-discriminatory and open approach to the multilingual heritage of Europe, regardless of a state being party to the Charter or not.

Many Council of Europe legal texts apply to all 47 member states of the Council of Europe (which includes all EU member states), notably the European Convention on Human Rights. In its judgments, the European Court of Human Rights notes that there is an emerging international consensus recognising the special needs of minorities and an obligation for member states to protect minorities’ security, identity, and lifestyle,<sup>1</sup> for example on the basis of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, or the Charter. Both instruments and the case law by their respective

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1. See Court judgments: *Chapman v. the United Kingdom*, Application no. 27238/95, judgment of 18 January 2001, section 93; *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, Application no. 57325/00, judgment of 13 November 2007, section 181; *Muñoz Díaz v. Spain*, Application no. 49151/07, judgment of 8 December 2009, section 60; *Ádám and Others v. Romania*, Application nos. 81114/17 49716/18 50913/18 52370/18 54444/18 54475/18 , judgment of 13 October 2020, section 94.



monitoring bodies aim at safeguarding the interests of the minorities themselves but also at preserving a cultural diversity that is of value to the whole society in each contracting party. Moreover, the Council of Europe acts as a whole in favour of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to use their first language(s) and receive education in this(these) language(s). This booklet is part of the Council of Europe's approach and action to preserve cultural diversity and prevent discrimination based on personal identity and/or language preference.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was prepared in order to identify promising practices relating to regional or minority languages which were implemented between 2015 and 2019. The information collected was complemented in 2020 by examples of good practice in the measures taken by the Council of Europe member states in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

The aim of the research was to collect data on the projects carried out by the recipients of the questions or those in which they were participating. Participants responded to five main questions providing information on who delivered the example, why the initiative was taken, and where, when, and especially how it was carried out, including the concrete impact of the practice, its benefits and added value.

The management of a practice remained at the core of the questionnaire for the reason that acceptance of the practice remains the first and most important element of and precondition to the success of any new proposal in any context, notably with regard to minorities' rights. Another focus was on the feasibility in terms of time, techniques, technologies, economics and human resources. Respondents were asked to describe essential requirements for the practice they had decided to present as a success.

Selected practices were considered promising because they were based on working methods and incentives that had been effective at delivering expected outcomes. The idea is that, with proper processes, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. In other words, practices presented below have adopted the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing the task of preserving and developing a language according to identified needs of regional or minority language speakers.

In selecting the examples to be included in the booklet, preference was given to those that appeared in practice to have been successful in various countries. However, while every care was taken to ensure that the practices included were accurately described, it was not possible to verify the practice in question on the spot. In this respect, the authors take no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Practices-related hyperlinks and people's professional contact details were kindly provided by the contributors or researched on public web pages. Web and e-mail addresses, as presented in the selected examples are included to enable peer exchanges and/or facilitate access to further information. The overall goal is to encourage knowledge sharing across Europe for the benefit of regional or minority languages and their speakers.

### What is meant by promising practice?



A promising practice is an approach that has demonstrated positive outcomes in protecting and promoting regional or minority languages and helped the speakers and the authorities achieve their joint goals. It is replicable, containing elements capable of stimulating other stakeholders to develop processes adapted to their contextualised needs.

Promising practices are initiatives that worked well in a concrete context, persisted over time, and generated expected results by means of joint, consensual and planned efforts by stakeholders in response to identified needs within a language group and/or in a defined territory. The practices reflect the need to manage resources effectively and efficiently, be they human or material. As such, they contain invariant elements that can be repeated and transposed in a different context to confront similar challenges.

Flowing from the idea that active participation of the target audience is a precondition for a promising practice, three interconnected dynamic elements should be pointed out to build a practice around:

- ▶ identifying current needs of potential beneficiaries;
- ▶ understanding a particular context to be changed;
- ▶ seeking a balanced partnership between stakeholders.

One might think that if a practice is designed by its direct beneficiaries, namely the regional or minority language speakers, it is more likely to be adapted to their particular needs and to work efficiently and effectively in the area where they live. In the opinion of several decision makers at national or local level,

the direct beneficiaries are better able to put in place a practice or policy that best suits them, because they are most intimately involved. However, to initiate a language policy, there is a clear prerequisite for tools, resources and skills which, in the light of the Council of Europe standards, should be provided by the competent authorities to the direct beneficiaries of minority language policies and practices. These authorities are multiple: they can be a government institution, a school, a university, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), and so on.

NGOs are a key partner in the implementation of a practice. They may step in to fill the gaps left by public authorities, or indeed be the organisers or catalysts of a promising practice, through their close contact with and representation of the direct beneficiaries. Examples where they provide resources, human or financial, are therefore also highlighted here – as long as they contain the essential elements. However, it may be that NGOs require input from national and/or international partners to build capacities and really enable the transposition of such promising practices.

The third principle above – “seeking a balanced partnership between stakeholders” – highlights the element of collaboration between stakeholders. Initiatives taken only by national authorities risk not corresponding with expectations on the ground. By appealing to local stakeholders and working collectively, the practice will be successful, as it will be anchored in the field, and will impact people’s lives in the long run. A promising practice is the result of the collaboration between the direct (RML speakers and their associations) and indirect beneficiaries (public authorities as well as other stakeholders in society and members from the majority or various minorities), in a defined territorial, cultural and socio-economic context. Put simply, for the impact of a practice to be positive, it must be adapted to the context in which it is implemented.

Promising practices from the booklet have several of the following characteristics:

- ▶ they were well executed and met their goals;
- ▶ reached the appropriate target audience or a good proportion of the desired target audience;
- ▶ were acceptable to implementation partners;
- ▶ have the potential to be implemented and sustained over time;
- ▶ have the potential to be reproduced in other places.

## What are key factors of success?



Based on the practices included in this booklet, there are shared elements which indicate the success of a given practice: it is built with wide consensus, mobilising the target audience and expanding on existing knowledge – alongside efficient resource management.

In view of all the answers received, a practice to be promising requires:



In terms of **time**, little time was needed for implementation in around 50% of cases, but in all cases expert guidance in several steps was essential to accelerate the process.



Concerning technical and **technological feasibility**, 100% of cases used simple and inexpensive technologies that are widely accessible in the majority of Council of Europe member states. In only 25% of cases, some technological innovation was necessary at the level of implementing entities.



As regards **financial means**, half of the examples necessitated recurring investments, and the return on investment was clearly favourable in 25% of cases, while in 50% it was difficult to determine, and the remaining 25% had no positive tangible or measurable return. Concerning cost-effectiveness, for 50% of collected practices this was not known from the beginning. Consequently, investors had easily reached a consensus on expenses in 50% of cases where costs were able to be fixed in advance.



With reference to **human resources**, all practices were based on traditional roles of stakeholders and existing knowledge of involved staff members who had however, in some cases, to be trained in new tasks and challenges because of the multidisciplinary nature of practices carried out. Of the received practices, 25% required considerable staff input; a hierarchical management was necessary in 75% of practices and managers played an important role in initiating and continuing the practice over time. In all cases, participation of stakeholders was easily acquired, following negotiations and networking.



In connection with the results of the analyses of received answers to the questionnaire, the most striking success factors for promising practices are:

- ▶ responsiveness to identified needs;
- ▶ complementarity between partners and stakeholders;

- ▶ acceptance of expert guidance;
- ▶ acknowledgement of acquired culture and staff knowledge;
- ▶ use of understandable and simple tools and methods;
- ▶ measurable time of implementation;
- ▶ clearly defined costs and specified possible return on investment;
- ▶ smooth, participatory management;
- ▶ commitment of all partners on the nature and the quality of the results.



The quality of a promising practice lies in its essential characteristics of inspiring and helping others in taking new initiatives adapted to another or similar contexts. The proposed identification of key elements characterising successful practices is intended to help the smooth transposition of practices across Europe.

## How to transpose a practice

To transpose a successful practice, it is necessary to analyse and understand its particular context and core elements, which should be brought out and discussed between stakeholders of the successful practice and those who wish to initiate a new practice based on the chosen example.

A practice is promising because it can be modelled and potentially transposed to other contexts. It is a benchmark to inspire other stakeholders and their practices. Transforming initial experience into transposable expertise is a challenge since contexts across Europe are not comparable. Each national or regional background leads to different practices; consequently, each experience is necessarily contextualised.

Transposing a practice is like translating from one language to another: the original speech is adapted to the target language, so that the content is understandable to the new reader from a different context. The language changes but the essential element, the meaning of the content, remains the same. For a practice to be transposed effectively, it is necessary to find the structural elements, which do not depend on the context, with a view to adapting it to the new beneficiaries. Any transposition therefore requires identification of invariants/core elements in the diversity of practices, that is to “decontextualise” necessarily local experiences in order to “recontextualise” them into other milieux.

In fact, it is not the practice itself that is transposable, but its modelling. This means that transposing a practice requires a kind of negotiation that is based on a voluntary process and freedom of choice of the best suitable elements by new stakeholders.

There are several tools that can be used to transpose a practice, including:

- ▶ networking;
- ▶ external benchmarking;
- ▶ strategic planning.

This means finding – and using – the best ways of working to achieve the practice's objectives. It involves keeping up to date with the ways that successful stakeholders operate and measuring ways of working against their methods. The whole process is about learning from and through the experience of others.

Replicability is a characteristic of the chosen examples of practices that follow, whose key elements have been sufficiently understood. The extracted essentials can serve other beneficiaries or stakeholders as an information resource that can assist them in decision making, programme planning and setting up new projects. This transfer of knowledge should involve multiple social, organisational, political and legal entities working together in a common interest for information exchange within Europe.

Even if a practice can be assessed by readers as unique to a particular setting or audience, it was considered that it contains principles or ideas that could be applied in other contexts.





# Examples of promising practices

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**W**hen choosing the examples below, the first task was to find out what made these practices work in their context. Consequently, the selection that follows includes a brief outline of the context in which the practice was effective. Every example is a model in the sense that it contains key factors of success and as such has elements which can be easily replicated.



## Encouragement of multilingual tolerance and use of regional or minority languages by children and youth

### Summer camps

*Ruotsinsuomalaisten Keskusliitto Sverigefinska Riksförbundet* – RSKL (National Association of Finns in Sweden) organises each year a one-week summer camp in Finnish for Swedish children aged from 7 to 15 who have a Finnish background. Finns have official status as a national minority and Finnish is an official national minority language in Sweden. This guarantees the Finnish group certain linguistic rights in the country as a whole, but especially in the so-called “administrative areas of the Finnish language”.

Finnish children and youth run the risk of missing out on knowledge of the Finnish language. Therefore, RSKL has committed itself to arrange different events for children such as karaoke, dance activities or children’s annual summer camp. The summer camp takes place in Axevalla, in south-west Sweden, at the Axevalla Folk High School where children play, have fun, and do various activities using Finnish in a natural environment; there were 80 participants in June 2019. Children make new friends, feel encouraged to use Finnish in everyday life and develop their Finnish and Swedish identity by learning more about Finnish and Swedish culture. This multidisciplinary camp (Olympics, talent shows, moviemaking in Finnish) is prepared in several steps and, with their agreement, is financed from the RSKL funds, which are based on state funding and membership fees.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.rskl.se](http://www.rskl.se), [info@rskl.se](mailto:info@rskl.se)



## Programmes on national television

Recently, Croatian national TV (HRT – *Hrvatska radiotelevizija*) has been broadcasting children's shows in languages spoken by Roma children living in Croatia. Episodes of popular series have been translated and dubbed into Romani Chib and Boyash Romanian so that children can get to know their cheerful heroes better and relate with them. HRT operates as a provider of public broadcasting services, and Croatia makes available independent funding in accordance with the Croatian Broadcasting Company Law and the State Aid Rules for Public Broadcasting Services. In carrying out its activities, HRT is independent of any political influence and commercial interest. The project of introducing programmes in Romani Chib and Boyash Romanian was realised in co-operation with UNICEF, the United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide.

**Additional information and contact:** <https://juhuhu.hrt.hr/emisija/23/epizode-na-romskom-i-bajaskom>

## Finno-Ugrian Days

Finno-Ugrian Days, celebrated annually since 1928 in Estonia, Finland and Hungary, have developed into one of the most important series of cultural and educational events that acquaint the wider public with Finno-Ugric people and strengthen the ties between them, as well as raise their own cultural self-awareness. Over the last few years, Finno-Ugric events have also been organised for, and with the participation of, the speakers of Finno-Ugric languages spoken in the Russian Federation such as Karelians (Republic of Karelia), Komi (Komi Republic), Udmurts (Udmurt Republic), Mari (Mari El Republic) and Mordvins (Moksha and Erza Republic of Mordovia).

In 2020, the events also took place in the Russian Federation in a quite different and much more modest way than in the past. The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the organisation of festivals and concerts, which were either completely cancelled or took place online.

At the beginning of that year, the project Perm Branch, which secured 2 million roubles from the Russian federal project Creative People, was only partially realised. However, in Kudymkar, the capital of the Permi-Komi district, extensive cultural days of the Udmurt Republic were held, during which theatre companies and various creative groups performed, exhibitions were opened, films were viewed and workshops were held.

The main organisers were libraries and universities. For example, the Department of Baltic Languages at Petrozavodsk National University participated in the project *Pride is a Mother Tongue* launched in the Komi Republic. The aim of all the Finno-Ugric autonomies and republics of the Russian Federation is to increase the interest of young people in studying the languages and cultures of the Finno-Ugric people. Finno-Ugric scientific-practical conferences and language camps for young people are organised every year by the Udmurt youth public organisation *Shundy* from the Udmurt Republic.

**Additional information and contacts:** NGO Fenno-Ugria Institution in Estonia: <https://fennougria.ee/ulevaade-nii-tahistati-hoimupaevi-soomes-ungaris-ja-vene-foderatsioonis/>; <https://eng.fennougria.ee/8225-2/>, [info@fennougria.ee](mailto:info@fennougria.ee); Mercator – European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning: [www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional\\_dossiers/Udmurt\\_in\\_Russia.pdf](http://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional_dossiers/Udmurt_in_Russia.pdf); Department of Baltic Languages at Petrozavodsk National University: <https://petrsu.ru/en/structure/752/kafedrapribaltijskof>; [finsdep@petrsu.ru](mailto:finsdep@petrsu.ru)

See in addition an inclusive initiative in Slovenia, a literature open-call “In co-existence” by the Association of Roma Information and Scientific Research Centre of Slovenia – *Anglunipe*: <https://anglunipe.si>



## Resilience of non-territorial language speakers

### Učimo in družimo se skupaj! – Let’s Learn and Hang Out Together!

To reduce social distance between different communities in Slovenian society, the project *Učimo in družimo se skupaj!* (Let’s Learn and Hang Out Together!) was set up to bring together Roma<sup>2</sup> youth, as well as other youth from different minorities and from the majority. Participants were invited to collaborate and get acquainted with different cultures, languages and identities. This gives prominence to Roma culture and Romani language in society as a whole.

2. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

Before starting, the initiators held interviews with Roma and other youth to tailor their project to the needs of the direct beneficiaries and to increase interest in such a project from the outset. The project was first financed by a mixture of Slovenian government funding and international funds, and strongly supported afterwards at the local level as well as by the Union of Roma Community in Slovenia, an umbrella organisation of 11 Roma organisations. Because of its multidisciplinary nature, the project requires guidance from linguists, historians, journalists, technicians and so on, and engagement via social media.

It consists of a Romani language and Slovene language weekly radio programme from Ljubljana, various workshops, summer camps and meetings as well as written publications such as a Romani-Slovene 200-page dictionary. The Union of Roma Community in Slovenia is part of the European network of Roma organisations which has a strong interest in publishing a multilanguage dictionary including Romani-English, Romani-German, Romani-Italian, Romani-Romanian, Romani-Serbian and vice versa.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.anglunipe.si](http://www.anglunipe.si), [drustovo.anglunipe@gmail.com](mailto:drustovo.anglunipe@gmail.com)

## Romani language standardisation by academia

In many countries, Romani studies are offered at university level, but two universities seem to enjoy special recognition by associations that represent Roma people: INALCO (*Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales*, University Sorbonne Paris Cité, France) and Department of Latin Philology of the University of Barcelona (Spain). Both universities have contributed to the standardisation of Romani, while the University of Barcelona has developed a method and textbook to teach Romani. At INALCO, Romani can be learnt, in face-to-face courses or online, with the programme R.E.D.-RRROM: Restoring the European Dimension of Romani Language and Culture. Learners at INALCO can use 18 auxiliary languages such as English, French, German, Greek, Polish, Romanian, Russian or Spanish, and obtain university degrees. According to *Fundación Secretariado Gitano – FSG* (Gypsy Secretariat Foundation), qualifications from the above-mentioned universities are of great value and can be used in various countries. FSG is an intercultural social organisation that contributes to achieving full citizenship of Roma people and promoting their equal treatment, and the recognition of cultural identity of Roma in Spain and in the European context.

**Additional information and contacts:** [www.gitanos.org/](http://www.gitanos.org/); [fsg@gitanos.org](mailto:fsg@gitanos.org); [www.inalco.fr/langue/rromani](http://www.inalco.fr/langue/rromani); [www.red-rrom.com/home.page](http://www.red-rrom.com/home.page); <http://stel.ub.edu/llati/es>

See in addition other approaches to standardisation of Romani: European Commission-funded project QUALIROM which has developed teaching materials: <http://qualirom.uni-graz.at/>; [www.ecml.at/TrainingConsultancy/QualiRom/tabid/1693/language/en-GB/Default.aspx](http://www.ecml.at/TrainingConsultancy/QualiRom/tabid/1693/language/en-GB/Default.aspx); Council of Europe Curriculum Framework for Romani: [www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/romani](http://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/romani)



## Revitalisation of languages and transfrontier co-operation

### Sámi Giellagáldu – the Nordic Resource Centre for Sami Languages

The objective of the project Sámi Giellagáldu, which ran for three years (2015-2018), was to revitalise and future-proof the Sami languages. It aimed to contribute to maintaining the languages of Sami populations as a vibrant expression of their cultural richness, past and present, through means of cross-border co-operation. Each Sami language had specialised language personnel (one to two persons) working on updating terminology and standardising existing terms. The aim was to transform the Sami languages into languages of the everyday: to be used on social and traditional media and in everyday conversations.

This initiative was originally financed via project funds, which came to an end after three years in 2018. Subsequently, though, three Sami Parliaments from Finland, Norway and Sweden themselves financed the project, providing regular, sustainable funding to the initiative. Methods such as this are of particular use where strong structures for minority participation already exist and are trusted by the minority language speakers.

In Finland, Norway and Sweden, co-operation between the respective Sami Parliaments has had a concrete impact on the modernisation and standardisation of each of the Sami varieties – Inari, Lule, Skolt, North and South. The result of this project was 4 131 new words and 362 new standardisations.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.giella.org](http://www.giella.org), [etunimi.sukunimi@samediggi.fi](mailto:etunimi.sukunimi@samediggi.fi)

See in addition *Hiruko Ituna*, a collaboration agreement on linguistic policies and promotional activities concerning the Basque language as signed between regional authorities in France and in Spain in 2017 for four years (until 2021); management is ensured by Euskarabidea – Basque Language Institute of the Government of Navarre (Pamplona/Iruña), the Basque Government Ministry of Culture and Linguistic Policy (Vitoria-Gasteiz), and the French Public Office of the Basque Language (Bayonne/Baiona):

[www.euskarabidea.es/castellano/euskarabidea/convenios/entre-el-gobierno-de-la-comunidad-autonoma-vasca-el-gobierno-de-navarra-y-la-oficina-publica-del-euskera-de-iparralde](http://www.euskarabidea.es/castellano/euskarabidea/convenios/entre-el-gobierno-de-la-comunidad-autonoma-vasca-el-gobierno-de-navarra-y-la-oficina-publica-del-euskera-de-iparralde).

## Sanna e-Kkamp - revitalisation of Maronite Arabic

Since their ratification of the Charter in 2002, the Cypriot authorities have made concerted efforts to revitalise Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA), including implementing an action plan on the revitalisation of CMA, following Council of Europe recommendations to this effect. The process of revitalisation and codification has been ongoing for over a decade but was adapted to the new challenges posed to teaching and learning in 2020.

To this end, the Sanna e-Kkamp 2020 was organised online from 3-7 August 2020 for different levels of ability. Normally, this takes place in person with around 80 participants (made up of children and youth) in Kormakitis and is an opportunity to teach Maronite language and culture. In 2020, the language camp took place via Moodle (an open-source learning platform) and teleconferencing software. The activities usually carried out were adapted to these tools, and to be more effective via online learning. The classes were led by two teachers.

The experience benefited the learners, who still got to have their language camp, albeit in a modified form, as well as teachers who are native speakers of CMA to increase their technical skills. This has meant that the methods for teaching CMA have been developed and adapted for what is anyway an increasingly digitised learning environment. In that way, greater numbers of young people who cannot normally attend the camp – for instance if they live abroad – had access to the experience too.

**Additional information and contact:** [Υπενθύμιση – Πρώτο Sanna e-Kkamp 2020](#)



## Face-to-face and online teaching for speakers and non-speakers

### Anveatsä armăneashti! – Learn Aromanian!

*Armăn* (Aromanian) is in danger of disappearing as its speakers are spread over several countries of the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> The objective of the project *Anveatsä armăneashti!* which was implemented in 2015-2016 was to increase the number of speakers via an online platform (akin to Duolingo), with English as an auxiliary language for the learners. The project was initiated by *Fara Armănească dit România – Fâlcarea Bucuresht* (the Arman Community in Romania – Bucharest branch) and funded in particular through EEA grants from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.<sup>4</sup> The project had some additional long-term results such as educational materials for children and adults, traditional costumes, and 20 audiobooks with various cultural content in Aromanian such as poems, traditional and modern music, theatre plays and songs for children.

**Additional information and contact:** <https://eeagrants.org/>; <http://anveatsaarmanneashti.com/invata-online>; [fara\\_romania@yahoo.com](mailto:fara_romania@yahoo.com)

### Ep! Escolta i parla and VxL – Voluntariat per Llengua Virtual - oral Catalan courses

The *Ep! Escolta i parla* (Ep! Listen and Speak) project aims to teach the Catalan language to those who have no proficiency in Romance languages, especially immigrants arriving in Catalonia, and it includes a focus on youth. It concentrates on the practicalities: what non-speakers of the Catalan language need to know in order to get by when they arrive in Catalonia. The organisers realised that the existing programmes did not offer this practical approach and did not make allowances for persons who were illiterate or without knowledge of Romance languages. Expertise in teaching regional or minority languages was required by those carrying out the project; in addition, 11 regular staff were necessary, including the three co-ordinators, three teachers, a sound expert, language expert, a publication manager, a web-content manager and

- 
3. Aromanian, also known as Macedo-Romanian, is spoken in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey. It has an official status as a minority language exclusively in some parts of North Macedonia and is recognised to some degree in Albania.
  4. The EEA grants and Norway grants aim at reducing social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and strengthening bilateral relations with 15 EU countries in central and southern Europe.

a web designer. There were, additionally, many outsourced roles, including the speakers of the material and actors in videos. The Government of Catalonia provided the means for this project.

Another project that supports the oral practice of Catalan all over the world is *VxL – Voluntariat per Llengua Virtual* (VxL – the Volunteers for Virtual Language Learning). It is based on working in pairs, consisting of a volunteer who speaks Catalan fluently, and an adult learner who has an elementary knowledge of the language and wishes to acquire fluency. VxL offers two modalities: the face-to-face programme which started in 2003, with the interaction taking place somewhere that both participants have previously agreed upon, and the virtual one which started in 2017. Virtual VxL was thought to meet the needs of many people who wanted to practise Catalan but could not follow the face-to-face module due to their place of residence (sometimes outside Catalonia), professional reasons or other personal circumstances. The basic operating element of the Virtual VxL is the same as that in the face-to-face meetings. The minimum commitment is 10 hours (preferably one hour per week); each user can meet one or more Catalan speakers, so that a volunteer can help more than one learner and a learner can practise with more than one volunteer. The costs of implementing this initiative are not very substantial: it is managed online from Catalonia (Spain) by 22 activating agents who work at various centres for Catalan language normalisation scattered throughout the Spanish territory. Around 10 000 face-to-face or virtual pairs are carried out each year with user-friendly technology. The database applied has required, however, an important initial investment, and over the years, improvements and maintenance actions entailing some expenses were needed. The Directorate General for Language Policy, the Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia and the Consortium for Language Normalisation promote this activity.

**Additional information and contact:** [https://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/aprendre\\_catala/ep-curs-oral-catala/](https://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/aprendre_catala/ep-curs-oral-catala/); [www.vx1.cat/virtual](http://www.vx1.cat/virtual); <https://web.gencat.cat/ca>



## Digital culture

### Inclusion of Frisian in Google Translate and Microsoft Office

The aim of the project was to implement for free the use of Frisian in digital language tools to increase the use of the language and avoid a so-called “digital language death”. It aimed also to expand the number of languages

from which, and into which, one might translate Frisian (from only Dutch to others). Through doing this, the language also became available in Microsoft Office, the spellcheck function of which assists those who wish to write in Frisian. The aim was also to give greater visibility to Frisian internationally.

In order to do this, the Province of Fryslân contacted Google to persuade them of the need to offer this service. They then gathered translations from English to Frisian through community networks, organising events in which the community could participate. They also launched advertising campaigns to raise awareness of the initiative and get further contributions. Through these events and contributions, nearly 1 million words were translated. These translations were then validated by professional translators, before being presented to Google.

The practice also means that Frisian is available on Google Translate and in the Microsoft Office suite of programmes as a spellchecker too. According to Article 8 of the Charter on education, a state party should provide teaching on the written as well as the oral language. In Fryslân this is of particular importance, where few speakers of Frisian know how to write it. This practice therefore provides the necessary assistance to such speakers.

The substantial costs came from hosting community events, which the Province of Fryslân covered. Other costs, including technical and support needs, were at Google's expense. The process took around one year from conception to result.

**Additional information and contact:** <https://www.fryslan.frl/home>; <https://blog.google/products/translate/translate-community-and-sietske-poepjes/>

### **Sarean Euskaraz 2018 – digital culture day in Basque**

The use of digital technologies and culture is widespread and attractive to youth in Spain but mainly in English and/or in Spanish. To demonstrate that the Basque language can be seen in the same way as other modern everyday languages, the Government of Navarre, through Euskarabidea-Instituto Navarro de Euskera, organised in 2018 a digital culture day in Basque for young people. On that occasion, around 500 participants aged between 14 and 18 received advice on accessing social media or other IT applications, tools and programmes. There were 1 006 participants in total from 13 schools. Those who had been trained in advance (390 people) by the Association Euskal Wikilarien Kultura Elkarte on how to write and edit articles for Wikipedia uploaded their texts, and the best of them obtained awards at the Sarean Euskaraz 2018 digital culture day. Young people could also attend workshops on making music,



projection mapping, building Android applications, etc. The event as a whole was organised following a public tender. The contract with the chosen bidding company served to pay for the premises at the Baluarte Congress Centre in Pamplona/Iruña, the related staff and speakers, an information virtual and physical space, IT equipment such as computers, mobile phones, projectors, screens, 3D printers, Raspberry Pi and Arduino boards.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.sareaneuskaraz.eus/albistek/lang/es](http://www.sareaneuskaraz.eus/albistek/lang/es); [www.euskarabidea.es/](http://www.euskarabidea.es/), [euskarabidea@navarra.es](mailto:euskarabidea@navarra.es)

See in addition the Digital Language Survival Kit, produced following a survey detailing digital linguistic diversity in Europe (Basque in Spain, Breton in France, Karelian in Finland and Sardinian in Italy) and the related EU project aimed at promoting the use of regional and minority languages in wider contexts and indirectly to their preservation and revitalisation, under the Erasmus+ programme DLDP (The Digital Language Diversity Project) by a consortium of: the Italian National Research Council and Institute for Computational Linguistics “Antonio Zampolli” – CNR-ILC, Italy; the European Language Equality Network – ELEN; Karjalan Kielen Seura – KKS, Finland; Elhuyar Fundazioa – ELH, Spain; Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz – Forschungs- und Lehrbereich Sprachen Nordeuropas und des Baltikums – JGU-SNEB, Germany:

[www.dldp.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DLDP\\_Digital-Language-Survival-Kit.pdf](http://www.dldp.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DLDP_Digital-Language-Survival-Kit.pdf)

## Web resources for learning Cornish and Manx Gaelic

The two websites, [www.learnmanx.com](http://www.learnmanx.com) and [www.cornish-language.org](http://www.cornish-language.org), offer a wide range of regional or minority language-learning resources. These involve listening, speaking, reading, and writing exercises, through a range of media. The most useful element of these sites is to group the resources together, making them a one-stop shop for regional or minority language learning.

Both sites also take a broad view of minority language learning, providing a range of resources which engage with new technologies. The Cornish website contains links to radio and other programmes either in the minority language or concerning the minority language, for instance the Cornish-language news on BBC Radio Cornwall, as well as to books and magazines produced in Cornish. The Manx website provides further innovative resources such as spoken dictionaries, podcasts, and cultural videos on YouTube. An app for Apple and Android devices is also planned for the near future.

Both sites are run by NGOs (registered charities Culture Vannin (Manx) and the Cornish Language Fellowship) and rely to some extent on charitable contributions to maintain them.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.learnmanx.com](http://www.learnmanx.com); [www.cornish-language.org/resources](http://www.cornish-language.org/resources); [kowethasanyeth@gmail.com](mailto:kowethasanyeth@gmail.com)





# Managing and working in regional or minority languages

## **Fagor Taldea and Emun Koop.E. – Basque language in private innovative companies**

Fagor Taldea is a group of eight industrial companies working co-operatively and employing around 10 000 people, active in the region of Debagoiena (Spanish Basque country) in the following sectors: automotive, machine tool, aerospace, hotel and catering equipment, solar energy and industrial property. Each of the eight companies is internationalised and has to work on language management. The Basque language is co-official in the region, and the public administration provides, to some extent, subsidies for Basque normalisation projects. Based on the willingness of the companies' workers who were using the Basque language, a medium-term project on standardising language resources (2017-2020) was launched by Fagor Taldea in collaboration with the Basque consultancy company Emun Koop.E. A special effort has been made to adapt the Basque normalisation process to the governance model of the companies, especially to the governance model of Fagor Taldea. Since the Basque normalisation plan is an important long-term social transformation, Fagor Taldea invests substantial funds every year. The objective of the project is that every worker in Fagor has the choice to work in Basque.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.fagor.eus/?lang=en](http://www.fagor.eus/?lang=en); [www.emun.eus](http://www.emun.eus)



**Advising public authorities on matters pertaining to regional or minority languages and compliance with the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

## **Niederdeutschsekretariat – Low German Secretariat**

The *Niederdeutschsekretariat* supports the Federal Council for Low German in organising and managing the protection and promotion of the Low German language as spoken in Germany. This is a way to provide long-term, sustainable

support to a regional language, and was copied from the existing policy which applied to Germany's four recognised national minorities.

It functions as a liaison office for associations of Low German speakers, in particular with federal institutions. It observes the parliamentary work of the Bundestag, with the interests of its speakers in mind, and administers the Federal Council. It also engages in public relations for the regional language. The Secretariat employs one person on a part-time basis of 80%; travel and office costs are covered by the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.niederdeutschsekretariat.de](http://www.niederdeutschsekretariat.de);  
[info@niederdeutschsekretariat.de](mailto:info@niederdeutschsekretariat.de)

## Compliance Framework – implementation of the Charter to Irish by local authorities

Since 2016, Ulster University (UK) and *Conradh na Gaeilge* (Gaelic League, Ireland) have been partners on a research project to oversee the use of the Irish language by local councils in Northern Ireland. The Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and *Conradh na Gaeilge* documented together how commitments made by the United Kingdom Government in relation to the Irish language have been implemented by local governments in Northern Ireland. The leading partner in the project was *Conradh na Gaeilge*, founded in 1893, which is an Irish language non-governmental organisation with extensive links to the community and a core interest in the protection and promotion of the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The second partner from the civil society was CAJ, founded in 1981, which is a non-governmental organisation promoting and monitoring the UK's compliance with international human rights standards.

The report was published in 2019 entitled *Comhairlí Áitiúla, Dualgais agus an Ghaeilge: Creatlach Comhlíonta* (Local Councils, Obligations and the Irish Language: A Framework for Compliance). It sets out the actions that can be reasonably expected of local councils in light of their specific remits and roles. It can serve as a model in other state parties to the Charter that have taken commitments under Part III of the Charter to some languages present on their territories. It can also serve, for the purposes of national and international monitoring, as a form of “stocktaking”, which can show which obligations are being fulfilled, and which may still require further steps for full implementation.

**Additional information and contact:** *Conradh na Gaeilge*: <https://cnag.ie/en/>; [www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/modern-languages-linguistics/quality-impact/irish-language-rights](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/modern-languages-linguistics/quality-impact/irish-language-rights)

# Use of regional or minority languages during the Covid-19 pandemic



## Online education

### Article 8 of the Charter – Education

Of the 47 Council of Europe member states,<sup>5</sup> 22 provided at least partial online education in regional and/or minority languages during the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in spring 2020. According to the surveys carried out by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)<sup>6</sup> and the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion (CDADI),<sup>7</sup> 17 countries where some action was taken are state parties to the Charter.<sup>8</sup> Estonia, France, Italy, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation are Council of Europe member states that have not yet ratified the Charter but can be added to the list of countries in which languages other than the state language(s) were taught to some extent during the 2020 public health crisis.

The availability of online courses in regional and/or minority languages can be considered a benchmark in inclusive educational policies. In almost 60%

5. The 5th bulletin by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) highlights the survey by Fundación Secretariado Gitano, "Impact of Covid-19 on the Roma population" and provides information on efforts made in various EU member states to secure Roma children access to online education. Although the bulletin does not refer to Romani or other languages spoken by Roma people, it gives an overview of the educational situation of Roma children during the time of the 2020 public health crisis. See [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2020-coronavirus-pandemic-eu-bulletin-roma\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-coronavirus-pandemic-eu-bulletin-roma_en.pdf).
6. [www.fuen.org/en/article/Do-You-Speak-Corona-Updated-survey-report-for-43-minority-groups-in-25-European-countries](http://www.fuen.org/en/article/Do-You-Speak-Corona-Updated-survey-report-for-43-minority-groups-in-25-European-countries), July 2020.
7. "Covid-19: an analysis of the anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion dimensions in Council of Europe member states", September 2020. See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/committee-antidiscrimination-diversity-inclusion/publications>
8. Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

of the state parties to the Charter mentioned above, but in only 47% of all Council of Europe member states, public authorities were active and responsive to the demand from the speakers of at least some regional or minority languages used in their territory. Eight central governments (in Croatia, Estonia, Italy, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and Ukraine), two regional authorities (in Austria and Russian Federation), as well as three local governments (in Estonia, Finland and the Slovak Republic) organised online mother-tongue education (online classes, lessons broadcast by national digital or non-digital TV channels or online teaching methods), depending on the split of power among public administration entities. It should be noted that the role of individual teachers and schools has proved to be of the utmost importance, if not essential, in ensuring that pupils and students have access to education in their own language during the outbreak.

The role that speakers' associations can play in such situations was, for example, taken up extremely well by the Swiss non-profit organisation Lia Rumantscha, an umbrella organisation for all people and organisations of the Romansh language. Its mandate under public law is to sustain the Romansh language and culture with financial support from the Swiss federal state and the Graubünden/Grigioni/Grischun canton where Romansh is spoken. At the level of both the canton as a whole and local or diaspora communities, the Lia Rumantscha works to preserve the legal status of Romansh as a language and encourages its consistent use in schools and public administration. In the trilingual canton of Graubünden/Grigioni/Grischun, the Romansh language is under increasing pressure although it has an official status at cantonal level. In 2020, after the start of the containment measures and in just one week, Lia Rumantscha converted 20 language courses, for a total of around 90 learners, from face-to-face lessons to online training, and remained active without interruption.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch); [curs@rumantsch.ch](mailto:curs@rumantsch.ch)

*Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszcze Zrzeszenié* (in Polish: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie – ZKP; in English: Kashubian-Pomeranian Association) remained continually active in 2020, despite some disruptions and delays, for example, in releasing its monthly magazine *Pomerania*. Its April edition was published as usual with an educational addendum *Najô Ûczba*, but because of the closure of schools, it focussed its attention on how best to provide online education of/in the Kashubian language, which is recognised as a regional language in Poland. The educational addendum to *Pomerania* helps teachers, parents and students in their work and efforts to teach and learn Kashubian. Having realised that one third of children learning Kashubian were lacking personal computers or were

sharing one single home computer with their relatives, the association and one of its numerous partners, Inspirational Examples Foundation (*Fundacja Inspirujące Przykłady*), launched a successful fundraising campaign to mitigate pupils' difficulties. Thanks to rapidly received donations from individuals and some Polish businesses, the organisers of this action were able to help four small schools teaching Kashubian in the countryside. The selected schools have received new or second-hand but well-working IT equipment for their Kashubian pupils, with adequate programmes included to teach and learn the language.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.kaszubi.pl](http://www.kaszubi.pl); [biuro@kaszubi.pl](mailto:biuro@kaszubi.pl); <http://inspirujaceprzyklady.org.pl/o-fundacji>; [fundacja@inspirujaceprzyklady.org.pl](mailto:fundacja@inspirujaceprzyklady.org.pl)

## Overall outcome

During 2020, distance education responded to identified needs and proved to be very convenient for some users of regional or minority languages, depending on their ability for independent learning. Financial support and/or qualified expertise were actively sought by those concerned. This unprecedented situation triggered a new way of thinking, acting and behaving at all levels of responsibility. At least digital forms of education ensured continuity of schooling throughout the pandemic and national lockdowns. However, it should be underlined that this continuity can only be ensured when there is a focus from states and other stakeholders on the most vulnerable or economically disadvantaged, to guarantee that all students, including regional or minority language speakers, have equal access to the tools they need to receive education. Moreover, it is now clear that digital education can usefully complement the educational offer whenever and wherever necessary, including the teaching of regional or minority languages in schools and outside the formal school system.



### Covid-19 related information, health advice and individual support

(Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services, Article 11 – Media, Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities, and Article 13 of the Charter – Economic and social life)

In spring 2020, of the 47 Council of Europe member states, 26 provided Covid-19 related information, health advice and services, including emergency hotlines



in some regional or minority languages. According to the surveys carried out by the FUEN and the CDADI (see above under Article 8), of the 26 member states, 18 are states parties to the Charter<sup>9</sup>. Eight others (Azerbaijan, Belgium, Estonia, France, Georgia, Italy, Latvia and Russian Federation) can be added to the list of countries where languages other than the state language(s) were used to inform minority language speakers about the 2020 public health crisis and measures taken by the authorities. In total, in 55% of the Council of Europe member states, resolute action was taken in some regional or minority languages to better include their speakers in society.

In response to an increased number of calls when the first Covid-19 infections in Europe were reported, some public authorities increased the capacity of existing emergency hotlines in official state language(s) by setting up call centres in minority languages. Thus, speakers of the following languages have been able to reach a hotline in their own language: Croatian in Austria, Turkish in Azerbaijan, Serbian in Croatia, German and Russian in Estonia, Swedish in Finland, Frisian in Germany, Ladin in Italy, Russian in Latvia, Hungarian in Romania, Basque and Catalan in Spain, and Welsh in the United Kingdom.

Media, both in print and online formats, were the main providers of formal information on the pandemic and related safety measures introduced in the regions where regional or minority language speakers live. In Poland, since March 2020, German speakers have been able to receive information in German on national rules from one of their main newspapers and websites, the *Wochenblatt.pl – Zeitung der Deutschen in Polen*. Where there has been no access to digitised information or media, readers have been encouraged to ask for help from better equipped family members or their closest neighbours. The newspaper is financially supported, on a regular basis, by the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration (MSWiA) as well as by the German Institute for Foreign Relations (IFA).

**Additional information and contact:** <http://wochenblatt.pl/aktuelle-informationen-zum-coronavirus-aktualne-informacje-o-koronawirusie/>; [media@vdg.pl](mailto:media@vdg.pl)

Comprehensive guidance on coronavirus (Covid-19) has been appearing in Welsh on the official website of the British Government ([gov.uk](http://gov.uk)) since spring 2020. Several web pages contain up-to-date information for individuals and businesses in Wales as well as useful links for those living in Wales, in particular those who use the Welsh language daily. Among other elements, information

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9. Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

provided enables people to find out what financial support schemes they may be eligible for, how to make their workplace Covid-secure, and to learn how to apply for a grant if they are self-employed. It contains links to the web pages of the Welsh authorities.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-wales.cy](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-wales.cy); <https://llyw.cymru/>

With financial support under the joint European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey II and “Romacted” action, the Council of Europe Office in Tirana (Albania) has published a booklet on Covid-19 in eight languages spoken in South-Eastern Europe such as Aromanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Romani and Serbian. The booklet prepared through the information provided in Albanian by the Institute of Public Health in Albania, contains important information on Covid-19 safety measures, updates on the rules of the Government for the everyday life and more. It was handed to Roma, Serbian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Vlach, Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin minorities in Albania, and further disseminated to speakers of all languages concerned, which are spoken throughout the region as official or minority languages. The booklet can be used by majority and minority populations in many countries during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/covid-19-and-human-rights](http://www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/covid-19-and-human-rights); Covid-19 outbreak, information in minority languages – Newsroom (coe.int); [informtirana@coe.int](mailto:informtirana@coe.int)

Within the framework of the information campaign on the pandemic, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine together with the Ministry of Health of Ukraine developed recommendations for the prevention of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in 13 national minority languages covered by the Charter: Belarusian, Bulgarian, Crimean Tatar, Gagauzian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Romani, Russian, Slovak and Yiddish. The translation was made with support from the Council of Europe project Protecting National Minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine, and made public in May 2020.

**Additional information and contact:** [Info on Covid-19 zip file](#); [kyiv@coe.int](mailto:kyiv@coe.int)

Even during the pandemic restrictions, Sorbian associations upheld social ties and cultural events in Lower and Upper Lusatia in Germany. These associations

function under the umbrella of the non-profit league of the Lusatian Sorbs, Domowina (“Home” in Sorbian; German name of the league: Domowina Bund Lausitzer Sorben; Sorbian: Zwjazk Łužiskich Serbow; Lower Sorbian: Zwězk Łužyskich Serbow). During the lockdown period, young people speaking Sorbian could exchange via Skype and Facebook; they established a Facebook group “Help in Sorbian land in corona times (I am looking for/offering/need help)” and have organised shopping assistance for the elderly in their neighbourhood. A few days after the end of the spring lockdown in May 2020, Domowina ran a Covid-secure public event to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its refoundation after the Second World War. On this occasion, people wore face coverings with a Sorbian motif. The league has succeeded in fulfilling its mission to preserve, develop and promote Sorbian culture, language and tradition as well as to support the self-confidence of the Sorbs and their associations. By its actions during the Covid-19 outbreak, Domowina has further united Sorbian and Wendish people living in Germany.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.domowina.de/dsb/start/](http://www.domowina.de/dsb/start/); [sekretariat@domowina.de](mailto:sekretariat@domowina.de)

## Overall outcome

In the areas where Covid-19-related information and support were available in regional or minority languages, speakers could make better-informed decisions with regard to their health condition and gain more confidence in the public authorities, minority media and active speakers’ associations. Proactive action by stakeholders reassured those who felt acutely alone and alienated from the majority population during physical distancing periods.



# Promising practices in view of the acceptance of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

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## Bilingual toponymy

France has signed but not yet ratified the Charter. Given that certain Charter provisions, prior to ratification, already comply with the French legal order, several local authorities have decided to apply selected provisions falling within their competences. In co-operation with the Council of Europe Secretariat, the municipality of La Petite Pierre/Lützelstein (European Collectivity of Alsace) decided to implement a provision of the Charter, Article 10.2(g), which concerns “the use or adoption, if necessary, in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages”. In 2016, the local council adopted for all streets a co-official name in German (standard form or dialect such as Alsatian), in addition to the name in French. In most cases, the local authorities chose the German. The traditional street or locality names appear in standard German as in the historical maps and in the cadastre. For streets having no traditional name (for example in newly constructed neighbourhoods), translations of the French name or names in the local dialect were used. Due to their co-official character, these names can be used in all domains including addresses, administrative forms and maps, and they appear on each street name sign in the same size. The local authorities have also introduced bilingual place name and other topographic signs and signposted commonly used names of private houses in both languages. In addition to topographical names, the municipality introduced bilingual signage for all public buildings (town hall, library, cultural centre, historical/tourist buildings) as well as bilingual road traffic signs.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/home](http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/home); [minlang.secretariat@coe.int](mailto:minlang.secretariat@coe.int)

## Awareness raising of minorities and their languages as expressions of cultural wealth

Georgia has committed itself to ratifying the Charter but has not yet done so. From 2015-2017, the Council of Europe/EU project Civic Integration of National Minorities in Georgia and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages carried out activities contributing to the implementation of standards enshrined in the Charter. To combat negative stereotypes about national minorities, in 2017 the Council of Europe, in co-operation with national authorities and national minorities, developed the image brochure *Minority languages in Georgia – Expressions of cultural wealth* which portrays each national minority and its contributions. Among such contributions, the brochure shows religious and historical buildings related to national minorities. In order to make this cultural heritage and the related minority languages also visible in public, the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the State Agency for National Heritage Protection and the Tbilisi Development Fund, has signposted buildings built by persons belonging to national minorities in Georgian, the respective minority language and English. The signage is accompanied by minority-specific guides and demonstrates to the Georgian public that several widely known buildings, especially in Tbilisi, have been contributed to by persons belonging to national minorities. The image brochure and the guides have also been distributed to all secondary schools in Georgia to be used as complementary teaching materials. These measures have contributed to implementing the standards contained in Articles 7.3, 8.1(g) and 12 of the Charter.

The Republic of Moldova has also committed itself to ratifying the Charter but has so far only signed the treaty. In the framework of the Council of Europe/EU Joint Programme Protecting Minorities and Minority Languages in Georgia, Moldova and Belarus, in 2018 the city of Chişinău installed *directional signs pointing to buildings having a link to a national minority in the state language and the minority language concerned*, adding a reference to the Charter on each sign. The signposts were, *inter alia*, placed along Chişinău's prestigious central street Bulevardul Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt, which created sustainable visibility for almost all of Moldova's regional or minority languages to be covered by the Charter. One of the languages used was Yiddish, making Chişinău *one of the few cities using this language in public signage*. This measure has contributed to implementing the standards contained in Articles 7.3 and 12 of the Charter.

**Additional information and contact:** [www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/home](http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/home); [minlang.secretariat@coe.int](mailto:minlang.secretariat@coe.int)

# Alphabetical index of regional, minority or majority languages and groups of languages or dialects<sup>10</sup> mentioned in the booklet

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- |                     |                                |   |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Albanian         | 20. German, including Alsatian | 37. Romani                              |
| 2. Aromanian        |                                | 38. Romanian, including Boyash Romanian |
| 3. Basque           | 21. Greek                      | 39. Romansh                             |
| 4. Belarusian       | 22. Hungarian                  | 40. Russian                             |
| 5. Bosnian          | 23. Irish                      | 41. Sami languages                      |
| 6. Breton           | 24. Italian                    | 42. Sardinian                           |
| 7. Bulgarian        | 25. Karelian                   | 43. Serbian                             |
| 8. Catalan          | 26. Kashubian                  | 44. Slovak                              |
| 9. Cornish          | 27. Komi                       | 45. Slovenian                           |
| 10. Crimean Tatar   | 28. Ladin                      | 46. Sorbian                             |
| 11. Croatian        | 29. Latvian                    | 47. Spanish                             |
| 12. Maronite Arabic | 30. Low German                 | 48. Swedish                             |
| 13. English         | 31. Macedonian                 | 49. Turkish                             |
| 14. Estonian        | 32. Manx Gaelic                | 50. Udmurt                              |
| 15. Finnish         | 33. Mari                       | 51. Ukrainian                           |
| 16. French          | 34. Montenegrin                | 52. Welsh                               |
| 17. Frisian         | 35. Mordvinic languages        | 53. Yiddish                             |
| 18. Gagauzian       | 36. Polish                     |   |
| 19. Georgian        |                                |   |

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10. In some countries, some languages are considered dialects while other countries recognise them as regional or minority languages, territorial or non-territorial. See the [list of languages protected by the Charter](#) and the [list of states having signed and/or ratified the Charter](#).

The minority languages traditionally used in Europe, including some of the 79 regional or minority languages covered by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, are in danger of disappearing. Their preservation requires the will and determination of many public and private stakeholders: the speakers themselves, but above all the authorities in charge of language policies, as well as the bodies and services in daily contact with the public, such as public transport, medical services, schools, sports and cultural venues, banks and shops.

There are many initiatives in Europe in favour of lesser-spoken languages. They are undertaken at local or national level, but their examples are not sufficiently known beyond national borders. The aim of this publication is to make readers aware of what others are doing and what can work in their own language environment.

This publication contains examples of practices that could encourage different stakeholders to exchange and launch similar initiatives in other contexts. Europe's linguistic heritage is presented as a living phenomenon, evolving with the times in the face of the digitisation of social links or the Covid-19 pandemic.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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