



PERSPECTIVES ON MINORITIES

IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA



eds. Nils Erik Forsgård & Lia Markelin

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PREFACE

This volume is based on a Ralf Dahrendorf–Roundtable that was held in Helsinki in May 2018. It was organized in co-operation with the European Liberal Forum. It was supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The topic of the roundtable was “Minorities and Democracy in Northern Europe”.

Many Europeans belong to a minority. The numbers are, however, notoriously unreliable. According to a calculation made in the beginning of the 2000s there are 337 different ethnic and national minorities living in Europe. These minorities comprise over 100 million people.

In this book we have chosen to focus on ethnic or national minorities living in some of the Baltic Sea countries. These countries are Finland, Sweden, (Norway), Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The selection follows no particular idea or ideology - other than perhaps a deep curiosity and a willingness to learn more.

Many, if not most, of the minorities in Europe have some or several of the following characteristics in common. They long for recognition. They long for improved societal visibility. They want their rights to be guaranteed through legislative means. They want to preserve their own cultures and their own languages and dialects. They want to get health care and elderly care and police services in their own languages. Some want representation in the national parliaments and autonomy over their own affairs.

A wish list is nothing but a wish list, however. Many minorities living in Europe today feel unequally treated or even persecuted.

This is particularly true in the eastern parts of Europe where the understanding of democratic rules and practices can differ quite a lot from the practices and perceptions in the western parts of Europe. The issue of the Roma people is, however, a common problem that concerns both western and eastern Europe equally.

The Baltic Sea Region is a kind of border region in Europe. It is also a multi-faceted part of Europe. Countries currently leading different global welfare and happiness indexes share borders with countries still battling grave societal inequalities and socioeconomic challenges. The divides in the area are narrowing, but the border between Finland and Russia still marks one of the deepest socio-economic divides in the world.

The close proximity to Russia has its own role to play in the history of minorities in the Baltic Sea area. Russia doesn't really fit the mold of the other relatively small countries in the region. Russia is a Great Power and a country with an imperial tradition. Its claims as a nation do not stop at its geographical borders. This has consequences for minority politics and policies in many of the Baltic Sea States.

Helsinki, 25.4.2018

Nils Erik Forsgård,

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TURNING STATES INTO NATIONS AND NATIONS INTO STATES

Kjetil Duvold

'We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians'

Massimo D'Azeglio

With the rise of the nation-state, Europe has witnessed a massive change in cultural identities and political loyalties over the last two centuries. Contrary to the romantic vision held by many nationalists, the world is not divided into a fixed set of nations. Distinct groups have obviously been mixing, merging, migrating and splitting throughout history. In Europe alone, hundreds of ethnic groups – many of them potential nation-builders – have been conquered and submerged by other, more powerful groups. Indeed, there are far more examples of European *proto-nations* than existing nations. Some of them have vanished entirely, while others have retained some of their distinctive features and currently enjoy status as ethnic or national minorities.

According to received wisdom, ethno-cultural nationhood plays a more prominent role in Central and Eastern Europe than in the Western parts of the continent. It basically boils down to the following distinction: national identity in Western Europe has predominantly been tied to the territory and institutions of the political community, while the 'Eastern' notion of national identity

has always had a strong emphasis on cultural uniqueness, kinship and organic community – often without the support of institutions and clearly defined territorial borders. The communist regimes supposedly suppressed nationalism and even brought a solution to the ‘nationalities problem’ of Central and Eastern Europe. However, this is clearly a myth. Indeed, communism thrived on nationalism – and nationalism survived under communism.

Minority politics in Europe, therefore, is not always a two-way process. It may also include a third partner. I have in mind the relationship between ethnic homelands, co-nationals in neighbouring states, and the countries of residence. Such triangular relationships, referred to here as *kin-state relations*, tend to be complex and often fraught with instability.¹

A kin minority can also be referred to as a *diaspora group*. ‘Diaspora’ most commonly refers to Jewish communities in the period between the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the creation of the Israeli state in 1948. Other well-known diaspora groups include the scattered Roman communities and for example Armenian, Greek and Italian communities beyond their respective ‘homeland’. It could be defined as ethnic groups lacking territorial base within a given polity – groups not possessing an ethnic ‘homeland’ or residing outside their ‘homeland’. In the latter case, it involves a triadic relationship: the group itself, their country of residence and their country of origin. A diaspora community may have emigrated or faced expulsion. But it may not have moved at all: many Russians, Hungarians, Serbs or Albanians have ended up beyond their ethnic ‘homeland’ due to border changes rather than migration.

To illustrate this variation we can make a simple distinction between *border change* and *group stability* (see Figure 1). Have the borders remained stable or have they changed? Does the minority group in question have a long history of settlement in the region or are they comparatively recent settlers?

Figure 1: Groups and borders

BORDER CHANGES		
GROUP MOBILITY		
	No	Yes
	Yes	
No	Nation-states (i.e. Swedes in Sweden)	Kin-minorities (i.e. Hungarians in Romania)
	Regional minorities (i.e. Welsh in the UK)	Transnational minorities (i.e. Roma in Bulgaria)
Yes	Immigrants (i.e. Turks in Germany)	Émigrés (i.e. Armenians in France)

Source: Duvold, 2010.

The upper-left category comprises various kinds of *indigenous people*: groups possessing a state or a region within a state. It includes eponymous nationalities, like Norwegians in Norway or Germans in Germany, and regional minorities, like Bretons in France or Frisians in the Netherlands.

The bottom-left category contains *immigrant groups*: people who have moved as labour migrants or been forced to move to another country in modern times. They may or may not feel strong attachment to the territory they inhabit, but they are unlikely to consider it as their ‘homeland’.

The bottom-right category includes *émigré communities*: groups that do not possess an ethnic ‘homeland’ anywhere or cannot live there for political reasons. The Jewish population between the expulsion (from the 8th Century BC to the 1st Century AC) and the establishment of Israel in 1948 is a classic example.

Finally, the top-right category comprises *kin-minorities*: geographically stable groups who find themselves in a 'foreign' country after secession, state fragmentation, border revisions or peace settlements. As an example, Hungarians in Transylvania found themselves living in Romania after the border revisions instigated by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon. They are likely to feel strongly attached to the territory they inhabit, but also greater loyalty to their 'kinsmen' across the border than to the state they currently belong in.

The model goes a long way in explaining the variations of ethnic and national groups in Europe. But it nevertheless contains a few ambiguities, which makes it hard to classify certain cases. Let us first consider the Russian population in Latvia, which has existed since the Baltic region became a fully-fledged part of the Russian Empire in the late 18th Century. By 1935 the Russian share of the Latvian population stood at around nine per cent. By 1959 there were more than 26 per cent Russians in the Latvian SSR. But not only did the Russian share of the total population triple in just over two decades: only a small fraction of these Russians had actually lived in the interwar republic of Latvia. The pre-war Russian communities – many of them exiles after the October Revolution – had been systematically broken up by Stalin and replaced by 'Sovietised' Russians. Hence, since the bulk of the current Russians in Latvia do not have roots in the country prior to the Second World War, should it be classified as a comparatively recent immigrant population – on a par with Turks in the Netherlands, Italians in Germany, or Yugoslavs in Sweden? Or should it be considered as a territorially stable group, which recently has been cut off from their 'kinsmen' due to border changes? On the one hand, there is no doubt that most of them settled there quite recently to take up work. In that sense they do indeed resemble labour immigrants in Western Europe. Ethnic Latvians will undoubtedly consider them as immigrants (or even as 'civilian colonisers'). Today even some Russians may see themselves as immigrants. But many more will in all likelihood consider themselves as former Soviet citizens who moved

within the borders of their country. They probably never saw themselves as ‘immigrants’ – not more than a Finn moving from Lahti to Åbo would do. Nevertheless, those who consider themselves as immigrants, or ‘recent’ settlers, might be more willing to accept their minority status and try to integrate in the Latvian society. Those who do not see themselves as immigrants are perhaps less likely to accept their new role as a minority, and may indeed hope for a restoration of the old boundaries. Like for instance the French *pied noirs* after the independence of Algeria, they make up a post-imperial minority: in opposition to the new borders and somewhat forgotten or misinterpreted by the successor of the old, external regime.

Another hard-to-classify case is the Swedish-speaking Finns. In many ways they resemble kin-minorities like the Magyars in Transylvania or the German-speakers of South Tyrol. But there is one major difference here: while the Magyars in Romania have always been more loyal to Budapest than Bucharest, Finland’s Swedish-speakers are clearly oriented towards their country of residence, not some ‘spiritual homeland’ beyond it. And while the South Tyrolese for a long time fought hard to be a part of Austria rather than Italy, the Swedish-speaking Finns – with the exception of the population of Åland – never sought to loosen the ties with Finland. A key reason for this ‘Finnish exception’ is that Swedish-speakers were key actors in building the Finnish nation. Unlike many nation-building projects in Europe, Finnishness was built as a genuinely civic identity, which could be embraced by Finnish- and Swedish-speakers alike.

It is not always a simple task to define a minority group as recent or long-term settlers – as immigrants or kin-minority. Often it comes down to acute self-awareness, ignorance about others and an unhealthy dose of chauvinism. Kosovo is a notorious case in point: in the Albanian narrative, Albanians are descendants of the ancient Illyrians and also the original inhabitants of the region. Serbs, on the other hand, claim that the Albanian presence in their medieval empire was negligible (if not non-existent). Or take Transylvania,

which today is a region within Romania but since medieval times populated by Romanians, Magyars, Székely, Germans, Bulgarians, Armenians, Jews and Roma alike. Both Romanians and Hungarians – the two dominant groups today – are likely to overestimate their own importance and play down the presence of the other. The former will maintain that they are descendants of the ancient Dacians, while the latter argue that this link is false and that the Magyars are the oldest continuous group of the region. Yet another example is the border territories between Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine – all core territories within the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1385–1569). Minority groups stranded in each of the nation-states that eventually grew out of this expansive entity did not ‘fit in’ and have been customarily exposed to assimilation attempts. It is not uncommon to hear for instance that Poles in Lithuania really are ‘Polonised Lithuanians’. The underlying assumption is that Lithuanians must have been the first group to inhabit the territory of Lithuania.

This brings us to a final dilemma of our classification. Minorities that indisputably have long roots in the region they inhabit, but also enjoy ethnic affiliations with an external group. They will obviously not consider themselves as immigrants or ‘recent settlers’, but the host country may dispute their status as long-term settlers. But even if they feel separate from the rest of the population, they may feel equally detached from their external homeland. Not identifying themselves quite as a kin-minority nor as an immigrant group, they may instead opt for a *local* or *regional* identity.

Although the term itself might be of recent vintage, kin-state relations have been around for a long time. The phenomenon is rather straightforward: ethnic boundaries rarely coincide perfectly with state borders and the presence of minorities across the border has caused tensions between states, accusations of ethnic discrimination, and suspicion of disloyal minorities. Needless to stress, it has also led to wars and military interventions on behalf of external minorities, expulsion, and mutual population transfers. 20th

Century Europe is littered with examples of all forms: Stalin had whole ethnic groups forcibly moved from one corner to another in his vast empire; Hitler invaded sovereign neighbours on the pretext of protecting and uniting German nationals (*Volkstumspolitik*); and the Greek and Turkish governments agreed to exchange millions of co-nationals in order to create ethnically purer 'homelands'. After the Second World War, Catholics in Northern Ireland, Turks in Cyprus and even German-speakers in northern Italy fought battles, sometimes bloody battles, to be reunited with their 'kinsmen'.

On the whole, though, the continent experienced relatively few conflicts based on kin-state relations during the Cold War. There are several obvious reasons for this. For a start, many of the formerly so divided states became much more homogenous. Poland is a noticeable but far from unique case in point: millions of Germans were expelled from their homes in postwar Poland (and Czechoslovakia), which removed one long-standing kin-state issue from the European map. Other national groups with potential for pursuing a kin-state agenda, like the Serbs and the Russians, were now united under the same state (i.e. the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). In addition, the communist regimes put a lid on direct expression of ethnic allegiances. The issue certainly did not vanish entirely, but it nevertheless became unacceptable to emphasise ethnic allegiances above class interests.

Across the Iron Curtain, Western Germany had several issues to settle regarding German nationals residing in the Soviet Union and the Soviet satellite states. Considering itself as the only legitimate German state, the Federal Republic of Germany refused to accept the Polish-German border along the Oder-Neiße line, but was hampered by the fact that Germany itself was divided and that Poland the German Democratic Republic had mutually agreed on their common border. Western Germany continued throughout the Cold War to pursue a policy of improving the conditions for their co-nationals in Eastern Europe, although the scope for it was highly restricted.²

National identity in Western Europe has predominantly been tied to the territory and institutions of the political community, while the 'Eastern' notion of national identity has always had a strong emphasis on cultural uniqueness, kinship and organic community – often without the support of institutions and clearly defined territorial borders. An ancient problem in Central and Eastern Europe is that many members of a national community have either been left outside the confines of the state or that significant numbers of 'non-members' have ended up on the inside. Countries as diverse as Russia, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Albania have all faced this dilemma at some point – and often still do. More often than not, they have ended up with both minorities inside their borders and co-nationals beyond. Needless to say, it has created deep inter-ethnic tensions and disputes between states – often with disastrous results. Serbia's attempts to unite territories with significant Serbian population and Russia's revanchist policies towards other former Soviet republics, notably towards Ukraine, are just the two most potent cases in point.

Western European states were, on the whole, consolidated at a much earlier stage; borders to a much smaller degree contested; and cultural standardisation implemented on a more comprehensive scale.³ In short, the territorial model of nationalism left smaller scope for kin-state nationalism. The presence of French-speakers in Belgium or Italian-speakers in Switzerland has not caused conflicts based on this triadic relationship. The same could be said of the Swedish-speakers in Finland, although the Åland Islands were seeking union with Sweden when Finland declared independence from Russia in 1917. A more serious conflict emerged in the late 1950s between the German-speaking minority of South Tyrol and the governments of Italy and Austria. As in the case of the Åland Islands, it was ultimately resolved only after receiving international attention. However, the thorniest and by far most violent example of kin-state nationalism in Western Europe has been played out between the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and

the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland. Ireland's claim on governing all parts of the island, stipulated in its 1937 constitution, was only revoked after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

After the Second World War, a policy of non-interference regarding kin minorities became prevalent among Western democracies. Individual rights came at the expense of collective rights. Indeed, the question of ethno-cultural relations became increasingly marginalised, considered as a diminishing force in the light of modernisation.⁴ However, when the communist regimes fell apart so suddenly towards the end of the 1980s, this almost exclusive focus on individual rights came under challenge. Most urgently, with the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Europe experienced a sudden and radical upsurge in conflicts based on kin-state relations, which led to an unprecedented number of territorial splits and newly independent states. Many of these entities were not in the business of building up just any statehood: they were clearly bent on carving out their own, narrowly defined *national* states, sometimes with rather limited concerns for minority interests.

As a result, the main concern among Western leaders quickly became to prevent these conflicts from escalating. Seemingly at odds with previous practises, it involved a shift away from individualism in favour of active promotion of and support for collective rights. In a parallel fashion, the stronger focus on minority rights can be linked to the emergence of liberal pluralism, which was largely a response to the increasingly multicultural composition of many Western societies.⁵ It also fit like a glove in the liberal international framework – such as the European Union (formerly the EC), the OSCE (formerly the CSCE), and the Council of Europe – which all have tied Western European democracies closer together.⁶

It is worth pondering the latter issue: the similarities between minority politics and identity politics writ large. In politics, there is always a thin line between interests and identities. Traditionally, people tend to vote for a particular party due to their interests, although these interests often are tied up with sympathies, antipathies and party identification. With national minorities, identity politics tend to take priority. Minority parties tend to receive support from a large part of their constituency, regardless of ideological leanings. This is not to argue that supporting an ethnic minority party is not based on interests. But these interests are above all tied up with communal loyalties. In a notable contribution, Alfred Hirschman distinguishes between *divisible* and *non-divisible* issues: Divisible issues are about “more-or-less”, while non-divisible issues are about “either-or”; *what are my interests?* versus *who are we?*²⁷ “Normal politics” in a democracy is primarily about interests, while ethnically, religiously or ideologically fragmented societies wrestle with non-divisible issues related to identities: The Swedish-speaking Finns tend to vote for a liberal party, the Poles in Lithuania for a culturally conservative party, while the Russian-speakers in Estonia and Latvia – and, for that matter, the Catholics in Northern Ireland – opt for more left-leaning parties, while the majority populations of Estonia and Latvia, as well as the Protestants in Northern Ireland, tend to vote for right-wing parties. What they have in common is that they tend to vote for ethnic group interests, possibly at the expense of individual interests. As Western politics is turning increasingly tribal, group-oriented and identity-based, it could be argued that the world of ethnic minority politics is increasingly in line with “politics as normal”.

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NOTES

- 1 Duvold 2015.
- 2 Cordell and Wolff 2007.
- 3 Rokkan and Urwin 1983, Bartolini 2005.
- 4 Kymlicka and Opalski 2001. However, the rise of regional opposition and bona fide separatist movements in several Western democracies in the 1970s should not be forgotten
- 5 Kymlicka 1995.
- 6 Kymlicka and Opalski 2001.
- 7 Hirschman 1995.

SOME CURRENT ISSUES FACING THE INDIGENOUS SÁMI IN THE NORDIC STATES

Lia Markelin

The Indigenous Sámi people of northern Europe live across the four different states of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. This means that four different state frameworks today impact the way Sámi rights are formulated and implemented. Though often perceived as very similar in nature, the Nordic states provide distinct historical and political contexts for dealing with diversity. Simultaneously, there are some over-arching issues shared by Sámi across the Nordic borders. This chapter will explore some of these differences before providing a brief insight into some current common themes. While the local characteristics and responses differ, the common issues discussed here are: 1) securing a future for Sámi languages, 2) securing Sámi rights to land and water and 3) dealing with historical trauma.

As a starting point, it is necessary to acknowledge that the Sámi consider themselves to be an Indigenous people and are also recognized as such by the respective Nordic states. This puts the Sámi partly in a different legal framework from national minorities. Whereas minority rights apply to all minorities, including the Sámi, Indigenous rights apply only to indigenous peoples. The main international documents aiming to secure Indigenous peoples' rights are the ILO Convention 169 (legally binding) and the United

Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (morally binding, ‘soft law’).

Although the meaning of the term ‘Indigenous’ has not been clearly defined, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues¹ use the following criteria:

- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- Form non-dominant groups of society;
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities;
- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.

The last criteria mentioned has become a highly-contested issue particularly in Finland, an issue we shall return to later in the text. So far, however, the Sámi are the only peoples within the EU to have the status as Indigenous even though other groups, such as the Kven of northern Norway, have made similar claims.

Another starting point is the fact that the Sámi no longer are just “the people of the north” – in all three countries a large part of the Sámi live outside of *Sápmi* or the traditional Sámi areas, predominantly in the large cities. For a long time the capital cities of Norway, Sweden and Finland have been considered to be the “largest Sámi villages”, in view of the number of Sámi living in the capitals. This means that the link to the land, language and traditional livelihoods might come under strain in a majority dominated, multicultural, multilingual and non-Sámi environment. But it also means that rights attached to the Sámi areas – such as right to education in your own language – do not apply to a vast number of Sámi children today.

In the map below, towns with notable Sámi habitation are marked; several around the Baltic Sea. Although no specific number exist, the estimation is that there are about 100 000 Sámi people spread across the four countries: roughly 60 000–80 000 in Norway, 20 000–25 000 in Sweden, 10 500 in Finland and 2 000 in Russia. Out of these, about 25 000–30 000 people speak at least one of the existing Sámi languages. There are still nine Sámi languages spoken (see Figure 1), out of which North Sámi is by far the strongest, spoken by roughly 85 % of all Sámi speakers. Some of the languages are not mutually intelligible and neither are all the national languages of the Sámi areas. So although most Sámi speakers today are at least bilingual and often multilingual, English may be the only common language shared between Sámi from different countries. The coloured areas show municipalities of each countries where the Sámi language has official status to which certain rights are attached.

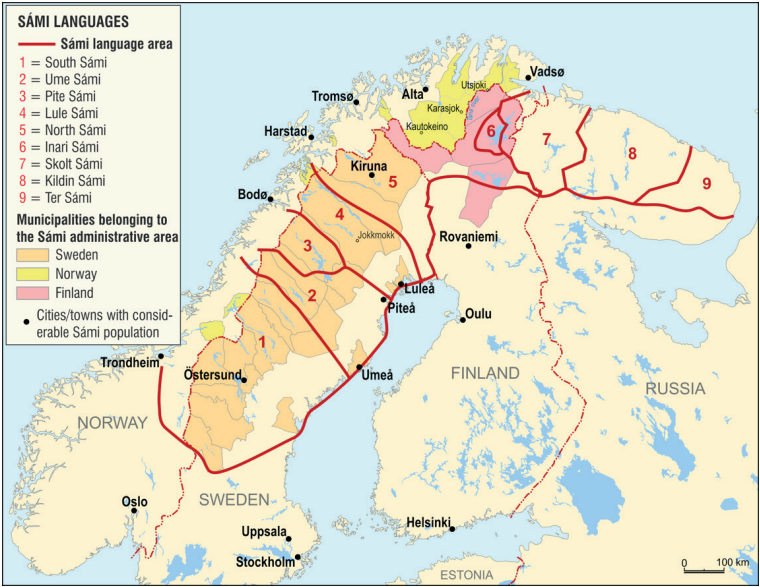


Figure 1. Map of Sámi land (*Sápmi*), including the spread of the Sámi languages and municipalities belonging to the Sámi administrative area 2017. Many towns outside of the Sámi area have a considerable Sámi population.
(Map by: Arttu Paarlahti).

In terms of basic legal frameworks, there are both similarities and differences between the three Nordic countries. The Sámi are today recognised as a people or an indigenous people at constitutional level in all three states. Likewise, all Nordic states are party to the major UN human rights treaties, and played an active role in the process leading up to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. However, there are also national differences. Whereas reindeer herding is an exclusive Sámi right in Norway and Sweden, this is not the case in Finland, where a large part of reindeer herders are non-Sámi Finns. While Sweden and Finland are part of the European Union, Norway is not. Nevertheless, Norway has ratified the same documents by the Council of Europe as Sweden and Finland, i.e. the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994). However, in Norway only the language charter applies to the Sámi, as the Sámi in Norway maintained they are an Indigenous people, not a national minority.

DIFFERENT NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS ²

As mentioned, the Nordic states have quite specific histories regarding their development as multiethnic states – a fact that has influenced the way the countries relate to their Sámi population. Sweden, historically an expansionist power that has not fought a war on its own territories for the past 200 years, became a country of immigration already in the 1930s. This resulted in a tendency to equate minorities with immigrants: For many decades, indigenous Sámi and national minorities such as Finns were often referred to as immigrants, even in state departments. Only the conventions issued by the Council of Europe in the 1990s, as discussed by Jarmo Lainio in his chapter in this publication, prompted proper legal recognition of national minorities and minority languages in Sweden.

From early 20th century, Sámi rights in Sweden were shaped by a policy of “Lapp shall remain Lapp”³ – meaning that only the reindeer herding Sámi were considered “real” Sámi, who should be included in Sámi rights provisions. It was assumed that reindeer herding Sámi should remain nomadic and receive only a basic level of education in tent-like conditions; anything else would be detrimental to their culture. Non-reindeer herding Sámi were to be assimilated into the Swedish culture and language. Naturally, such policies have had a severe impact on Sámi societies and languages in Sweden.

In Finland, on the other hand, a fairly new country that has fought several wars in the past 100 years that affected the economy as well as national identity, two languages (Finnish and Swedish) were adopted as national languages from the beginning. Dealing with diversity, at least in a legal sense, was thus not new when the Sámi demands for recognition grew in the 1960s: the first ever Sámi National Assembly (later the Finnish Sámi Parliament) was founded in Finland in 1973 (Sámi Parliaments in Norway and Sweden were opened 1989 and 1993 respectively). In practice, however, rights have not necessarily been implemented in the manner intended. The trend in Finland has been strong legal frameworks without the proper policy or adequate funding to implement these rights. Finland’s policies towards the Sámi have been somewhat indifferent rather than overtly assimilationist, but nevertheless assimilationist in their consequences: little attention was paid for example to the retention of Sámi languages skills before the 1980s.

Norway, too, is a fairly new country (1905), with a long history of constituting a peripheral part of the Danish kingdom. Perhaps due to a sense of vulnerability from the outside, as well as a need to separate themselves from their neighbouring countries and languages, Norwegian nationalism has been perceived as strong.⁴ During the height of Norwegian nationalism from the mid- 19th to mid-20th century in particular, a well-regulated policy of Norwegianisation was executed, resulting in Sámi and Finnish languages being of-

ficially banned. It became hard, for example, to own land if your mother tongue was Sámi or Kven/Finnish, and children were punished for speaking these languages at school.⁵ So, when a shift in state-Sámi relations happened in the 1970s and 80s, it partly developed into a process of righting old wrongs and polishing a tarnished reputation. Particularly the so-called Alta Affair,⁶ where pictures of violent protests and hunger strikes against the damming of the river Alta were cabled across the world, gained international attention and embarrassed the Norwegian state: severe transgressions on Sámi rights did not sit well with the image of modern Norway as an internationally renowned peace-keeping nation.

Since then, Norway has positioned itself as a forerunner in many issues concerning Sámi rights – at least as far as allocating resources is concerned. *Inter alia*, Norway has the most well-resourced Sámi Parliament of the three, a state-funded Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the largest existing Sámi broadcasting unit and the only available Sámi health centre providing e.g. psychiatric services in Sámi. Norway is also the only country of the three to have ratified the ILO Convention 169 on the rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which they did as the first country in the world in 1989. This is not to say that the Sámi of Norway would not be facing many of the similar challenges as their Nordic counterparts. It does, however, point to the fact that the Sámi have different starting points in the three countries from which to negotiate their rights and resources. This is noted *inter alia* in the positions of the national Sámi Parliaments.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF INFLUENCE

At a national level, the Sámi Parliament is the highest representative body of the Sámi people. Though set up in similar ways with an elected parliament, a board (“government”) and a secretariat, there are some central differences between the Sámi Parliaments in the three countries. Legally, the Swedish Sámi Parliament is the weakest of the three. While the Sámi Parliaments in Norway and Finland are tasked with “any matter that in the view of the Sámi Parliament particularly affects the Sámi people” (Norway) and to “look after the Sámi language and culture, as well as to take care of matters relating to their status as an indigenous people” (Finland), the Swedish Sámi Parliament should only “monitor issues related to Sámi culture in Sweden”.⁷ Also, the Swedish Sámi Parliament is a state body, which is not unproblematic, since the Swedish Sámi Parliament at times has to implement policies that are not in line with Sámi aspirations.

By comparison, the act of the Finnish Sámi Parliament could be seen as the strongest; however, without these rights necessarily institutionalised in practice. For example, although the Act on the Sámi Parliament in Finland states that authorities “shall negotiate” with the Sámi Parliament in all matters that may affect the status of the Sámi as an Indigenous people, this ambition has in practice often fallen short. When comparing the staff and budgets of the three parliaments, it is telling of their relative weight (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of elected members (MPs), approximate number of staff and approximate budget (in euro) for Sámi Parliaments in 2015
(Mörkenstam & al 2016: 16).

	NUMBER OF MPs	STAFF	BUDGET (€)
Sámi Parliament in Norway	39	150	46 m.
Sámi Parliament in Sweden	31	52	21 m. ^a
Sámi Parliament in Finland	21	40	6.6 m.

^a Out of this, about 14 million were earmarked for transfer payments related to the role of the Swedish Sámi Parliament as a government body, e.g. predator compensation for reindeers killed. In Norway and Finland this task is not administered by the Sámi Parliament.

As shown above, the budget of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament is in a league of its own in comparison to its Nordic counterparts: in 2015, it was over twice the budget of the Swedish Sámi Parliament and about seven times that of the Finnish Sámi Parliament. Further strengthening the position of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament is a formalised agreement⁸ with the Norwegian state since 2005 which should ensure Sámi participation in decision-making processes in all matters that affect Sámi interests. There is also a Department of Sámi and Minority Affairs within the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation that is in charge of “formulating and coordinating the state’s policies” towards the Sámi and national minorities, a department with a number of Sámi on its staff, and which is fronted by a Sámi State Secretary. There is, in other words, a certain framework for influence for Sámi in Norway which is not present in Sweden or Finland.

In Finland there is an additional challenge facing the Finnish Sámi Parliament, which is linked to the contested issue of who is a Sámi. In all three countries, the definition of a Sámi in the legal texts of the Sámi Parliaments is based on self-identification and language skills – at least one of your grandparents (or in Norway great-grandparents) should have had Sámi as their first language. In Finland there is an additional way to be identified as someone with the right to vote in the Sámi Parliament election, namely if you are related to someone who was marked as a “Lapp” in old official tax or other records. While the Sámi Parliament wanted this possibility to stretch back only to documents dated in the 1870s or later, this restriction was removed as the law on the Sámi Parliament was passed in the 1990s.

With increasing talks about Sámi rights and a possible ratification of ILO 169 in Finland, the number of people wishing to be included

in the Sámi Parliament on the basis of this definition has increased over the years. The Sámi Parliament has consistently denied applications by people referring to documents older than 1870 (i.e. approximately three generations back), maintaining that the applicants no longer have a living connection to Sámi culture or language. The Highest Administrative Court, where applicants can appeal this decision, for the most part agreed with the Sámi Parliament's decision up until 2015, when the courts admitted 93 new members against the explicit decision taken by the Sámi Parliament. This created strong reactions both inside and outside the Sámi Parliament. Leading human rights experts deemed the decision of the administrative courts as not in line with international law, as it did not respect Indigenous peoples' right to determine who belongs to the community. Some politicians again found it remarkable that the Sámi Parliament would question a decision of the courts.⁹

This process came on the heels of a political crisis between the Sámi Parliament and the Finnish government, as the government at the time had retreated from an already set agreement. After long negotiations between the government and the Sámi Parliament, the agreement was to bring two decisions to the national Parliament (where the government held the majority of seats); One concerning a revision of the Law on the Sámi Parliament, including a clarification of the definition of who is a Sámi (i.e. has the right to vote in Sámi Parliamentary elections), and the other a ratification of the ILO Convention 169. Before the first issue came up in plenary, however, a visible and active campaign against the proposition was fought by Members of Parliament from Lapland. Once the question came up for a vote in the plenary session of the Parliament, it was voted down by an overwhelming majority (162–28); including the government parties. The social democratic party subsequently decided to table the whole issue of a ratification of ILO 169.

As a consequence of such events, the Finnish Sámi Parliament today feels that their legitimacy is being undermined and their right to speak for the Sámi questioned. In a sense, one could say that the

development of Sámi rights in Finland today is heavily shaped by those who feel that they have been left out of the definition of who is a Sámi; and their supporters in the national Parliament. They feel that no major decisions regarding Sámi rights are possible before the issue of who is a Sámi has been resolved. This leaves a sense of treading water in many matters concerning the Sámi in Finland, a state-of-play that helps neither the people inside nor outside of the Sámi Parliament.

SECURING A FUTURE FOR SÁMI LANGUAGES

The Sámi languages have been under pressure for decades and indeed centuries. Today, UNESCO considers all Sámi languages endangered; with the exception of North Sámi in fact *severely* or *critically* endangered. As noted above, strong policies of assimilation were enforced in both Norway and Sweden over decades. By the 1970s the Sámi language in Sweden was already in a weak state;¹⁰ a state of affairs linked to the policy of Sweden to assimilate the non-reindeer herding Sámi, while providing no education in Sámi to either group. In Finland, where policies were more negligent than overtly oppressive, 75 % of all Sámi still spoke Sámi as their first language in 1962. However, 40 years later the situation was the opposite: only 26 % of the Sámi population had Sámi as a first language in 2007.

Education remains the main tool to revitalize and maintain endangered languages. Sámi has been taught in the Nordic schools since the 1980s. Still today, however, the number of Sámi children in Sámi language education remains limited. In 2012 only one third of Sámi children learned the language at school;¹¹ in Finland the number of children learning Sámi at school was about 660 in 2016.¹² One problem is the lack of availability of teaching in and of the language, and the other not learning the language despite access to education.

As noted above, the right to Sámi tuition is tied to the municipalities belonging to the Sámi administrative areas (see Figure 1 above). Where it is not a legal requirement, it is also not automatically organized. In Helsinki, for example, home to a substantial number of Sámi families, there has been no access to schooling in Sámi up until 2018. In addition, a limited number of existing students and/or teachers who command the language can be a very real problem. This shortage can also be used as a convenient reason by authorities that might lack the motivation to initiate and maintain viable education in all Sámi languages. It is mainly for the North Sámi within the Sámi areas that education is at least in some form secured. For example, Norway has been criticised by the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages regarding the lack of teaching in South and Lule Sámi. While the situation is challenging for North Sámi, it is quite critical for many of the lesser spoken Sámi languages.

The other issue is whether existing Sámi education works. In Finland, for example, Finnish law requires that at least 50 % of the education for children whose home language is Sámi must be in Sámi. This means

- a) that children who do not have Sámi as a home language are not automatically entitled to this education, and
- b) that the other half of the education, at least theoretically, can be in Finnish.

At the moment, it is mainly the first six grades that are taught fully in Sámi, whereas the amount of Sámi teaching diminishes in the lower secondary grades. There is no general upper secondary education (*lukio* or *gymnasium*) in Sámi in Finland. Utsjoki is the municipality in Finland with the largest concentration of Sámi speakers. About half the children are Sámi and they have the right to education in Sámi, which means that the school is bilingual Finnish-

Sámi. However, Sámi is mainly used in the classroom, while the language outside of the classroom and with friends is dominated by Finnish. This means that the majority language becomes the strongest language for most children in the bilingual school: i.e. even Sámi children might graduate with a stronger Finnish than Sámi language. This has prompted calls to separate Sámi medium schools from Finnish medium schools, and to ensure that all areas with a sizeable number of Sámi children should have access to such a school.¹³

On the other side of the border in Norway, in comparison, everyone living within the Sámi districts has the right to education in Sámi. There is a separate Sámi curriculum ensuring not only Sámi language but Sámi *content* in all subjects. In Tana, which lies across the border from Finnish Utsjoki, Sámi children have a separate Sámi school that uses the Sámi curriculum. This has proven quite decisive for children's language skills: while only about a quarter of the Sámi children in Utsjoki spoke Sámi with their friends, according to one study, and only half spoke Sámi to their Sámi siblings, the numbers in Tana were 80–90 % for both.¹⁴ This indicates the crucial role of the school for the retention of an endangered language.

The work for a revitalisation of the Sámi languages has never been as active as it is today,¹⁵ neither has the schooling situation been better. And still Sámi children are, to a large extent, growing up knowing the majority language(s) better than the Sámi language. The weaker the knowledge of a language becomes, the harder one must work to carry it on to following generations. The richness of the language used by older generations, often linked to traditional livelihoods, also risks getting impoverished and potentially dying out. Investments made into education – of both teachers and students – will likely be a decisive factor for the years to come.

SECURING SÁMI RIGHTS TO LAND AND WATER

With increasing pressure on land use and resource extraction in the northern regions, an ever-growing concern for the Sámi Parliaments in all three Nordic countries is the issue of rights to land and water. Traditional Sámi livelihoods such as reindeer herding, hunting and fishing require vast land areas and clean waters. Over the past decades especially, the mining and tourist industries have grown significantly, as has the logging of forests and building of infrastructure in the northern areas. Such developments put a strain not only on traditional livelihoods, but on the languages and cultures that these livelihoods have nurtured over centuries. Thus, the need for legal protection for, and the possibility to influence the use of land and water in the Sámi areas, is seen as crucial.

To date, the most significant document aiming to protect Indigenous land use and resist the assimilation of Indigenous peoples is the ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. As mentioned, Norway is the only country of the three to have ratified the convention. Despite the fear in both Sweden and Finland for the consequences ratifying the document might have on land rights – over 90 % of the land in northern Finland is owned by the state, while private ownership is higher in northern Sweden – the implementation in Norway confirms that ratification does not equal a right to the land. Instead, Norway has put in place a regional body (FeFo) in the county of Finnmark (the northernmost county with the largest proportion of Sámi and reindeer herders) where Sámi and non-Sámi representatives have an equal number of seats. (The chair alternates between a representative of the Sámi Parliament and a representative of the County of Finnmark). Thus, Sámi voices are heard but cannot veto any initiatives regarding land use in the area, and few if any land claims made by Sámi to the body have been recognised. Despite repeated recommendations from UN bodies, Norway also has no mechanism or process for dealing with identifying or securing Sámi

land and resource rights outside of Finnmark county (as seen in Figure 1, Sámi areas stretch far down into southern Norway).

Another significant avenue for securing Sámi land rights, at least in theory, is the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which has been laid down in many international documents. According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the adoption of which the Nordic states actively supported, states are required to “consult and cooperate in good faith” with the Indigenous peoples concerned, and “obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them” (Art. 19). FPIC thus constitutes a central element in the right to self-determination and the possibility to shape the future of traditional livelihoods. However, none of the three Nordic states have managed to properly live up to this principle, especially in terms of how rights and access to natural resources are regulated.¹⁶

Recent examples can be found in all three countries. In the summer of 2016 the states of Norway and Finland initiated talks about the need to regulate fishing in the border river of Tana. The Tana river and valley constitute important areas for the local Sámi population, whose livelihood and culture have traditionally been tied to the river. In accordance with national commitments to hear the Sámi in matters that concern them, the Sámi Parliaments took part in the negotiations. As the decisions were made, however, the Sámi Parliaments were excluded from the process and no free, prior and informed consent was obtained. The result was an agreement that on the Finnish side of the border reduced Sámi traditional fishing rights by about 80 %; and the traditional fishing rights of local Sámi who move away (e.g. for higher education) were revoked. According to the Finnish Sámi Parliament, upholding traditional Sámi fishing methods will be more or less impossible, and it might be the end of traditional Sámi fishing culture in the area.

In spring 2018, the Finnish government published a proposal, likewise negotiated with Norway, for building a railroad through

the northernmost Finnish (Sámi) areas up to Kirkenes, Norway, in order to reach the Arctic Ocean through mainland Finland. If this happens, the Sámi Parliament maintains, it is likely to have a severe negative impact on both reindeer herding and other areas of local Sámi culture and livelihoods. Again, however, proper protocols for negotiations with the Sámi have not been followed.¹⁷ As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

Consultation and consent are not a single event, but should readily occur at all stages of a project, from exploration to production to project closure. In addition to consultation and consent, additional safeguards need to be in place in order to ensure that the rights of the Sámi people are adequately protected in the face of natural resource investments. Such additional safeguards include prior impact assessments that focus adequate attention on the full range of rights that may be affected, mitigation measures to avoid or minimize the impact on those rights, fair and equitable benefit-sharing and compensation for impacts.¹⁸

Criticism has frequently been directed at these consultation procedures in all three countries.

In Sweden, the case of *Girjas Sámi Village vs. the State of Sweden* likewise highlighted uneasy elements to the relationship between the Sámi in Sweden and the Swedish state. Sámi land rights in Sweden are to a great extent linked to the system of Sámi villages, which are relatively self-governing entities with exclusive right to reindeer herding. Previously, the Sámi villages also had exclusive control over hunting and fishing in the area, but this right was evoked in 1993, on the day of the first opening of the Swedish Sámi Parliament. As the result of a significant lobbying machine from Swedish hunters' and farmers' organisations, hunting in the Sámi villages has since been open for all, and since 2007 for all EU citizens. In 1999, Girjas

Sámi Village sued the state of Sweden in order to establish who has the right to regulate the hunting and fishing in the mountain areas of this specific Sámi Village. As the district court ruled in favour of the Sámi in 2016, the state appealed to the highest administrative court. While the Sámi village won the case again, the court simultaneously ruled that neither party could claim exclusive rights to fishing and hunting in the area.

While the representatives of the Sámi village maintained the issue was mainly a case of sustainable hunting and land use,¹⁹ the state saw it as a test case for how the issue of ownership should be understood and handled. During the court proceedings, representatives of the state were attacked *inter alia* for repeated use of the old derogatory term “Lapp” instead of Sámi, and for ignoring the status of the Sámi as an Indigenous people.²⁰ The state maintained they wanted to get to the bottom of the rights issue, while Sámi representatives felt they were being undermined, and their role and position in the history of Sweden made invisible.

On the whole, issues of land rights remain the most contentious of all Sámi rights. Very few areas remain where the Sámi constitute a de facto majority, thus all land claims involves non-Sámi populations – and often, in addition, state parties or private companies. Mining is a growing business in the north, and often a test case of how local interests and Sámi rights claims are negotiated. In Sweden the government estimates that the current number of mines in the country will triple by the year 2030. While providing potential economic opportunities for remote areas, it is not easily combined with, for example, reindeer herding. Problematic from a Sámi point of view is the link between land, traditional livelihood, culture and language – even if resource extraction like mining could bring economic opportunities or even compensation, this cannot replace what is potentially lost in terms of culture and identity. As commented by the Sámi Council, the highest non-governmental pan-Sámi body, in relation to Sweden’s periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:

[...] [T]he State party's mining law and policy continues to disregard the fact that the Sami is an indigenous people, and that the reindeer herding pursued by Sami communities is a traditional indigenous livelihood, with rights as such, including the right to property and the right to non-discrimination. [...] The result is that the State party drives Sami reindeer herders off lands in the same way as it does with members of the Swedish population, but with the from a legal perspective highly relevant distinction that where members of the former group can be held largely unharmed through monetary compensation, the latter suffer detrimental harm to their traditional livelihood, and thus to their cultural identity.²¹

In order to streamline the national legal frameworks for Sámi rights, a process of creating a joint Nordic convention on Sámi rights has been in the pipeline for the past decade. The convention would include provisions not only on Sámi governance and self-determination and rights to land and water, but also on languages, culture and education and so on. However, the draft presented in 2017 created strong opinions on all fronts. Some leading Sámi experts felt that the text was watered down to the extent that signing it would be more detrimental than not doing so. The draft convention does not provide steps forward for Sámi land rights, and speaks only of the need to “consult” the Sámi in issues of specific interest to the community. Defenders of the text maintained that even as a documentation of minimum standards, a common document would be of benefit to Sámi rights. In Finland, additionally, strong opposition was voiced by the people who demand that the definition of who is Sámi be resolved first. The outcome of the convention process is as yet unknown.

The last common issue discussed here is the process of dealing with past transgressions. In all three countries, a form of truth and reconciliation process has been initiated, albeit in different ways. Already in 2005 Norway decided to provide compensation for abuse suffered within the residential school system, and in 2017 the national Parliament decided to set up a truth commission. The commission will primarily deal with the consequences of Norwegianisation for both Sámi and Kven. The Finnish Ministry of Justice has opened a similar process. However, if coinciding with repeated failures to respect the views of the Sámi Parliament, as has been seen regarding fishing rights in the Tana river, or a possible railroad through northernmost Finland, the success of such a process could be questioned.²² There has also not been a clearly stated official apology on behalf of the Finnish state for earlier state policies, even though previous president Tarja Halonen did voice an apologetic statement to the Sámi Parliament during her presidency. In Norway both state representatives and the Norwegian king have repeatedly offered their apologies, and affirmed the status of the Sámi as Indigenous by stating that “Norway is a country built upon the territory of two peoples, the Norwegians and the Sámi”.

The experience of residential schools is a common source for trauma for all Sámi areas. A large part of people born in the northern areas between the 1940s and 1960s have experienced boarding schools, which was the main tool for introducing the Sámi into the general education system. For many, this was the first contact with the majority culture and language. Knowing only the Sámi language, children were sent to the majority language schools, where majority culture, food and routines were the norm. In most cases, speaking Sámi or bringing along things from home was not acceptable. Due to long distances, some children could visit their homes only for Christmas and summer breaks. Even though there were positive elements to the boarding schools, many carry memories of

bullying and abuse – mental, physical and sexual abuse – that are still affecting lives today.²³

In Canada, researchers talk about ‘residential school syndrome’, a trauma that can be triggered in adulthood and lead to difficulties in expressing feelings, difficulties in child rearing, problems with alcohol and violent behaviour. If such traumas are not resolved, they can be carried on to children. Health researchers amongst both Sámi and other indigenous groups today point out how stress and trauma can be transferred from one generation to the next: even biological changes have been noted due to stress. One critique regarding the truth and reconciliation process in Canada, which was concluded in 2015, was indeed its focus on the past and residential schools, thereby ignoring the ongoing effects of assimilation and colonialism.

Long-term marginalisation can have significant effects with or without boarding schools. As the previously overt assimilation policies have subsided, lingering stereotypes, negative attitudes, political invisibility and structural discrimination continue to affect people today. Studies among Sámi youth in Norway have shown how a strong connection to your ethnicity, local culture and traditions can function as a source of resilience for young people today. In comparison, ethnic discrimination and feelings of exclusion have been shown to have a severe negative impact on mental health, with an increase in depression, anxiety and behavioural problems. In Finland, for example, the debate about who is a Sámi has been seen to affect whole communities in a negative way, not least young people.²⁴

Sámi communities in all three countries are battling with high suicide rates, with Sámi communities in both Norway and Sweden having experienced waves of suicide amongst young people. In Finland, too, the one doctor working in the Sámi area of Utsjoki has calculated that in Utsjoki alone, current suicide rates are at a level of about six times higher than the Finnish population on average. And this, as she sees it, is only the tip of the iceberg: there is a

great amount of trauma that has not been dealt with. The fact that Norway is the only country with a health centre focused on Sámi mental health, means that a lot of mental issues within the Sámi population is not resolved today. Current projects, such as suicide prevention education in Utsjoki,²⁵ are aiming to address this issue specifically. However, long-term commitment and development within the mental health sector would probably be necessary for more significant positive change.

CONCLUSION

Minority and Indigenous rights have developed significantly in the Nordic states over the past decades. The Sámi are today part of a well-educated and well-to-do Nordic population, unlike their Indigenous counter parts in some other parts of the world. This has, however, happened partly at the expense of Sámi cultures and languages. Both overt and covert assimilation policies have, as we have seen, had long-lasting consequences. The language shift from Sámi to majority languages is in many areas still ongoing. Despite a schooling situation that is better now than it has ever been, a large part of Sámi children are still not receiving education in their own language. A continuous increase in natural resource extraction, tourism and infrastructure in the Sámi areas is adding to the pressures of exposed Sámi livelihoods and cultures.

There are some significant differences in how the three countries of Norway, Sweden and Finland have related to their Sámi populations, resulting in some notable variations today. Currently it is Norway that is in the forefront in terms of allocating resources and funding, and Norway is the only country of the three to have ratified the ILO Convention 169. However, Norway too is seeing challenges relating to Sámi rights, not least regarding recognising Sámi claims to land and waters.

Despite creating the laws and signing the right documents, and despite defending human rights around the world, the noble aspirations of the Nordic states are not necessarily materialised at a local level. As we have seen, both land claims as such but also the aspiration to dialogue and obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples in land issues, often remains unfulfilled. In her latest report on the Sámi area, while discussing the active role Norway, Sweden and Finland assumed in assuring the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli Corpuz noted in 2016 that:

“... all three Governments need to explore ways to ensure that there is policy coherence between the positions they take in international human rights forums and those they take at home. The Special Rapporteur sees that the standards of the final outcome should not be lower than those to which all three States have committed in endorsing the Declaration [on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples] and the outcome document.”²⁶

A Sámi researcher in Finland has suggested that the consequences of accepting the Sámi as an Indigenous people still remain difficult to accept. In this view, the Sámi become a “good minority but a problematic Indigenous people”.²⁷ In other words, minority rights claims such as cultural and linguistic rights are seen as legitimate, or at least potentially negotiable, whereas claims made in the name of indigenous rights – such as rights to land and self-determination in matters concerning the own community – easily become problematic. One might suggest that this is still true for all three countries.

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NOTES

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- 2 Research for this found in Markelin, 2003.
- 3 “Lapp” is the old derogatory word for Sámi.
- 4 Eriksen 1993, Tønnesson 1991.
- 5 Eriksen & Niemi 1981, Minde 2005.
- 6 E.g. Hjortol 2006.
- 7 Mörkenstam & al. 2016: 14.
- 8 Prosedyrer for konsultasjoner mellom statlige myndigheter og Sametinget, 2005 (<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/urfolk-og-minoriteter/samepolitikk/midtpalte/prosedyrer-for-konsultasjoner-mellom-sta/id450743/>).
- 9 Markelin 2017: 44–48.
- 10 Barruk 2008: 21.
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- 17 Finnish Sámi Parliament 15.3.2018.
- 18 United Nations 2016, paragraph 10.
- 19 Jonsson & Wik-Karlsson, 2017.
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- 21 Saami Council (not dated).
- 22 See e.g. YLE 9.1.2018, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10012682>.
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- 25 YLE article 8.3.2018 (“Yksi itsemurha jättää suuren taakan saamelaisyhteisölle – Saamenmaalla poistetaan itsetuhoisia ajatuksia koulutuksen avulla”), <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10105851>.
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THE FIVE NATIONAL MINORITIES OF SWEDEN AND THEIR LANGUAGES – THE STATE OF THE ART AND ONGOING TRENDS

Jarmo Lainio

This article mainly concerns the situation of the five national minority languages of Sweden, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib, Sámi and Yiddish. It does not treat the minorities themselves, nor migrant groups and their languages. Still, some comments will be necessary about these matters as well.

The minority and minority language map of Sweden has changed dramatically since the 1990s. Not only has the extensive migration from other parts of the world, especially from the Balkans, changed the demography. The views about the linguistic mosaic of Sweden, including that of the past, have also changed. During the 2010s Sweden experienced further demographic changes due to the increase of refugees from Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, among other countries. Today around 2.4 Million (out of 10.1 Million) people living in Sweden have a non-Swedish background, and in most cases they have Swedish as a second language.¹ A necessary focus on the evolving demographic changes has partly been complemented by an increasing concern about the domestic minorities and languages, and their survival. These foci meet in the context of education; consequently, education is chosen as a main point of departure for the description here.

The Sámi were accepted as an indigenous group in 1974. In the mid-1990s, Finnish was officially established as a “domestic” language.² The acknowledgement of Finnish also created a push for Meänkieli, spoken in the Tornedal valley by the Finnish border, to become accepted as a language in its own right. The process coincided with the Swedish (and Finnish) efforts to apply for membership in the European Union (EU) in 1995; and decisions on which languages should be covered by the Council of Europe’s European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and included under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). Both conventions were ratified by Sweden in 2000. In addition to the acceptance of the three mentioned languages, also Romani Chib and Yiddish were selected as national minority languages with a historical presence in Sweden. Sámi, Meänkieli and Finnish were seen as territorial languages, whereas Romani Chib and Yiddish were seen as non-territorial. This means that Sámi, Meänkieli and Finnish also became covered by the more demanding and detailed Part III of the ECRML. Romani Chib and Yiddish were covered only by the more general, and geographically less restricted Part II. The general situation of the national minority languages at the end of the 1990s was treated in the governmental inquiries published in 1997/1998 and in a seminal research anthology.³ These introduced new dimensions in Swedish language and minority policy.

In the discussions preceding the ratification, South Swedish Scanian was also involved. However, as it was seen as a dialect of Swedish, it was not included. In the aftermath of the ratification, representatives of Elfdalian, a variety spoken in a restricted region of Dalecarlia, have continuously made attempts to have it accepted as a minority language, but thus far, without results. The main issue is whether it should be seen as a dialect of Swedish or a separate language. Likewise, there were discussions regarding sign language, but it was left out. There have been repeated suggestions that the Finland Swedes would become a national minority in Sweden. The

idea received support in the Swedish Parliament, but a governmental inquiry dealing with the question delivered a negative answer to the request.⁴ The five national minority groups and languages will be described below.

A DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES,
THEIR SPEAKERS AND PUPILS OF THE NATIONAL
MINORITY LANGUAGES

Sweden does not collect data on ethnicity or language preference, or on the use or choice of mother tongue. The tracking of language proficiency and use is in practice restricted to estimations, occasional small-scale surveys, or to the data collected in connection with questions on mother tongue instruction (MTI) in primary schools. For the purposes here, data from the schools, established by the National Agency of Education and Statistics Sweden, will be used. Other mentioned types of estimations will be provided as well.

The numbers for ethnicity or belonging to a minority group, and for estimations on language proficiency and users of the languages, differ extensively and are approximate (Table 1). In both cases they depend on what questions are being asked and for what purposes. One point to remember, is that for the different minority groups ethnicity (or ethnic identity) is not consistently or directly connected to the use or proficiency of the corresponding national minority languages, or vice versa. There are, however, differences between the groups, with some groups having a looser connection between ethnicity and language, and others having a more constant one. It also needs to be repeated that both in terms of ethnicity/identification and languages, people may adhere to several options at the same time. The number of persons with some kind of belonging to the minority groups, is consistently higher than the estimation on proficient language users.

Table 1. The national minorities of Sweden, estimated amount of people with the named minority and minority language backgrounds.

Minority groups and minority languages	Amount: minorities and speakers (Sources)
Sweden Finns – Finnish, incl. Sweden Finnish	450 000–600 000; ⁶ 712 000; ⁷ speakers, estimations: 80 000–200 000–450 000 ⁸
Tornedalians – Meänkieli, incl. varieties	50 000; ⁹ speakers, estimations: 20 000–45 000–80 000 ¹⁰
Roma – Romani chib, incl. varieties	40 000–100 000; ¹¹ 50 000–100 000; ¹² (no estimations on the number of speakers of the different varieties have been found; for Romani as a collective concept 10 000–20 000 has been mentioned) ¹³
Sámi – all Sámi languages	20 000–35 000 in Sweden; speakers, estimations: North Sámi 7 000, Lule Sámi 500, South Sámi 300 ¹⁴
Jews – Yiddish ¹⁵	8 000–18 000–25 000; ¹⁶ speakers, estimations: 1 000–4 000 ¹⁷

The number of estimated speakers is generally significantly lower than the number of people possibly constituting the minorities. This is a recurrent phenomenon in language shift contexts of minority groups.¹⁸ Estimations made by the authorities are usually

lower than those of representatives of the national minority language speakers themselves. In the presentation above, a clear division between different sources has not been possible to make.

In addition to a demographic and demolinguistic picture, such as the one given above, a general geographic picture may be given. Roughly, one could say that there are three grounds for describing the groups and their languages in cultural and contextual terms:

- mainly rural (Meänkieli and Sámi), vs. mainly urban (Finnish, Romani and Yiddish);
- Northern Sweden (Meänkieli, Sámi and partly Finnish, to a lesser extent Romani), and Central plus Southern Sweden (Finnish, Romani, Yiddish, to a lesser extent Meänkieli and Sámi);
- scattered and smaller islands of speakers (Sámi, Meänkieli, Romani and Yiddish) vs. an overall, more widespread presence (Finnish; which however may also be seen as scattered in some parts, just as for example Sámi and Meänkieli speakers may be living in urban areas in the Southern and Central parts of Sweden).

There are administrative areas for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sámi. These developed during the first years after the ratification by Sweden of the CoE treaties in 2000.¹⁹ The territories provide special support to the three Part III languages, i.e. Finnish, Meänkieli and Sámi (Figures 1 and 2).

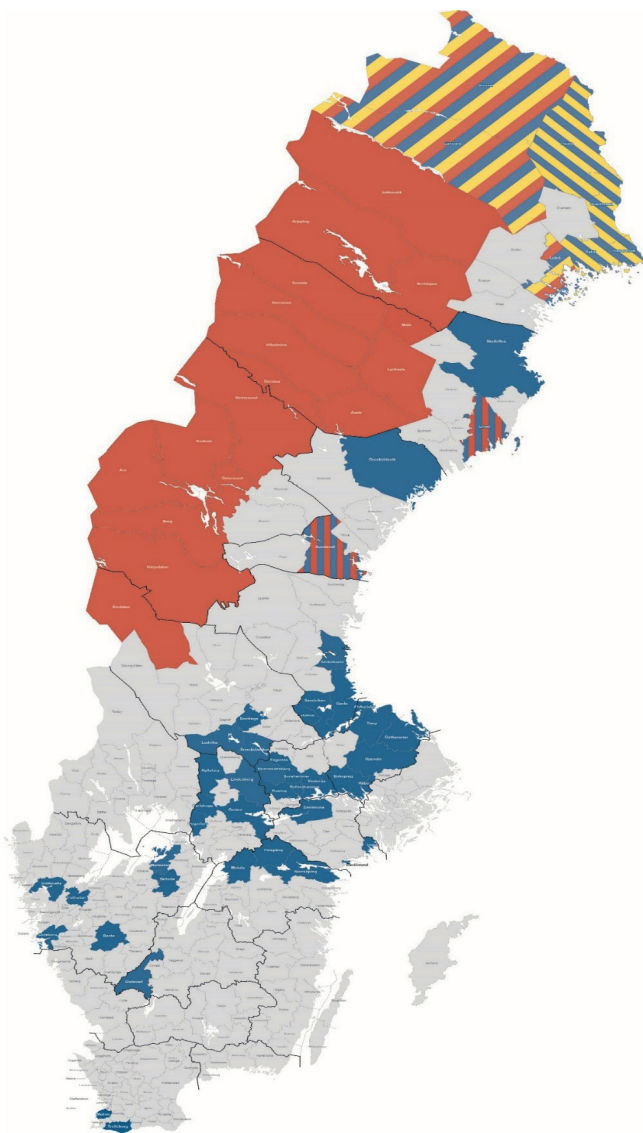


Figure 1. The administrative areas of Finnish (blue), Meänkieli (yellow) and Sámi (red), outside the larger Stockholm area.¹

1 I would like to thank the County Board of Stockholm, which has made the maps available for this article.

Stockholm, together with Mälardalen Valley west of Stockholm, cover one third of all Sweden Finns (Figure 2). Plans have been developed to extend also the Sámi and Meänkieli administrative areas to Stockholm, but formal decisions are still to be made.



Figure 2. The larger Stockholm region and the municipalities that belong to the administrative area for Finnish.
(Source: The County Board of Stockholm/Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län.)

The effectiveness of the inclusion of Stockholm in the area may however be discussed, since the city is divided into 14 city boards, with funding dispersed between them. This may hinder the effec-

tiveness of implementing larger projects and ideas that would be valid for the whole region, or at least for the city itself (Figure 2). For a more detailed description of the municipalities, regions, county boards and councils that are part of the respective administrative areas, see appendix 1 (Tables a-d).

The Finnish language is represented in about 22 % of all Swedish municipalities. This stands in contrast with for example the number of municipalities that experience requests for mother tongue instruction (MTI). As seen in Figure 1, Meänkieli is not the only national minority in any municipality. Regarding the Sámi language one may infer that most municipalities are geographically connected to each other, situated at the border of Norway, and Sámi is the only national minority language in most of them. These municipalities are with some few exceptions small – counted in terms of population, but not geographical distances – and rural.

Table 2. Number of municipalities in which reported eligible pupils for MTI live and the number of municipalities in which they receive mother tongue instruction. Academic year 2016/17, according to language.
Primary school and Sámi school.

LANGUAGE	MUNICIPALITIES WITH ELIGIBLE PUPILS FOR MTI		MUNICIPALITIES WITH INSTRUCTION IN THE MT	
	<i>N</i>	(%) ^a	<i>N</i>	% ^o
Finnish	233	(80)	144	62
Meänkieli	18	(6)	10	56
Romani Chib	138	(48)	43	31
Sámi	62	(21)	44	71
Yiddish	5	(2)	2	40

(Source: National Agency of Education; SOU 2017:91.)

^aPercentage of all municipalities in Sweden.

^oPercentage of municipalities with pupils eligible for MTI.

As a way of estimating the size of each national minority language group one may try to list cities and towns in which descendants of the groups and language users live and are active. Another way is to track the municipalities with pupils with the right to receive MTI. Yet other ways are given by Mikael Parkvall²⁰ and in Sisuradio's counts. The difficulties of having access to reliable data are discussed in SOU 2017:91.

The reports on municipalities with pupils eligible for MTI indicate the spread of the different national minority languages (Table 2).

There is a significant difference between the number of municipalities with pupils eligible for MTI, and the municipalities offering MTI in practice (Table 2). There are also differences between the languages: the difference between reported eligible pupils and those who receive MTI is the greatest for Romani, but also for the largest group, the Finnish group, the demand is obviously much greater than the offer. Thirdly, the number of municipalities offering national minority language education is considerably higher than the number of municipalities belonging to the administrative areas for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sámi: for Finnish 64 administrative area municipalities vs. 144 that offer MTI, Meänkieli 7 vs. 10 municipalities, and Sámi 22 vs. 44 municipalities. According to these figures, there would be room for additional administrative area municipalities for all three languages.

In general, the expectations and needs for MTI are higher than the offer of MTI. The seemingly exact numbers as reflected in Figure 4, need to be understood as highly approximate. The methods of collecting data differ in the municipalities and need to be seen as unreliable. In general, the numbers of eligible pupils may be expected to indicate too low amounts. This also connects to the new legislation of 2015, when pupils of national minority background were given the right to receive MTI without prior knowledge of the language.

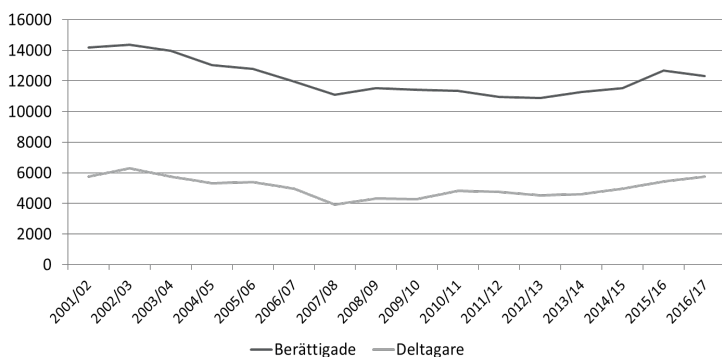


Figure 3. Estimated amount of eligible pupils for mother tongue instruction, and amount of pupils receiving mother tongue instruction in the five national minority languages of Sweden, for primary school, including the Sámi school, years 2001-2017.

Upper line = estimated amount of eligible pupils

Lower line = amount of pupils who have received mother tongue instruction in Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani chib, Sámi and Yiddish.

(Source: National Agency of Education/Skolverket; SOU 2017:91)

Altogether, there are about 12 500 pupils reported as eligible for MTI in 2016–17 (Figure 3). A large majority of these are Finnish MTI pupils. The range is from about 8 900 for Finnish, to around 20 for Yiddish. The discrepancy in the numbers for all of the national minority languages is about the same. However, the gap is slowly closing.

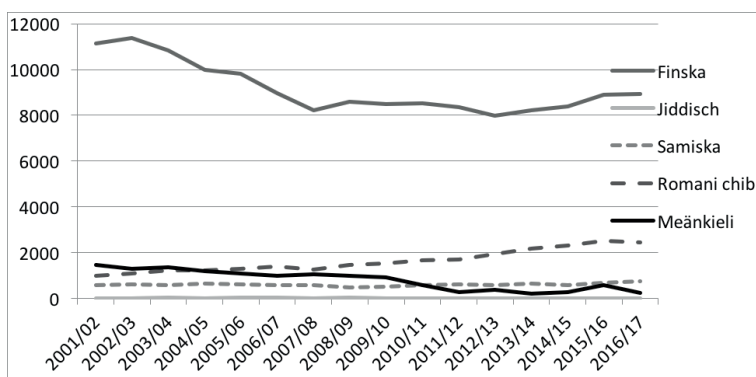


Figure 4. Reported amount of eligible pupils, for mother tongue instruction in the five national minority languages Finnish, Yiddish, Sámi, Romani chib and Meänkieli. Primary school and Sámi school, years 2001–2017.

(Source: National Agency of Education/Skolverket; SOU 2017:91)

The trend revealed by Figure 4 shows that Finnish, Romani Chib and Sámi are increasing slowly, after some dips in the mid-2000s and 2013–14. A slight increase can be seen for Sámi, whereas Romani chib is revealing a more long-term increase. In 2006–2008 there was a negative public discussion on both “suburban” Swedish and mother tongue instruction.²¹ This may well have affected the willingness by parents and children to choose and require MTI. In 2015, the new regulation in the School Act made it possible to choose a national minority language at the beginner’s level and without prior knowledge of the languages. For some languages this may have created a more widespread willingness to choose MTI, since the language shift process has resulted in poor proficiency for many children and even their parents.

As has been stated above, the demolingualistic picture for the languages on the one hand seems to be one of a continuous decline, followed by alarmed concern among the speakers. On the other

hand, both the statistics and the improved legal protection for the languages tend to create a more positive basis for the interest in the national minority languages. As a consequence, some rise is discernible in the MTI volumes. At a national level, there has been clear legal improvement in the support of linguistic rights. This has to some extent also been transferred to the field of education. Nevertheless, both domestic and international critique has been formulated and transmitted to the Swedish Government during the soon-to-be 20 years of adapting to the Swedish ratification of the two CoE treaties.

It has also become clear that there has been a constant conflict between NGOs, parents and representatives of the speakers on the one hand, and especially local authorities on the other. This conflict extends well beyond the last 20 years or so. The conflict therefore seems to be latent.

Several inquiries have been initiated to improve the situation for national minorities, either for all or for specific groups within specified areas. Two of the inquiries will be summarized further in this chapter. Both the international treaties and their monitoring, as well as NGOs, have had an impact on Swedish minority policy. In the Swedish context such pressure – if there is a political will – usually is channeled into reports and inquiries.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AND NATIONAL ADAPTATION

The international conventions, especially ECRML, have turned out to have a long-term effect on the minority and minority language issues in Sweden. They have led to several state inquiries during the first decade of the new millennium, and eventually to new pieces of national legislation. One result was the Swedish Language Act (in force 2009), another the Law on National Minority and Minority Languages (LoNM; in force 2010). Since the Swedish legal setup requires international conventions to be integrated into national

legislation, the latter law has been crucial for the strengthening of minority language rights and policy in Sweden. The law was a result of a decade of critique against the failures of the convention and national legislation to – in order to implement the ratifications by Sweden – deal properly with specific issues. Already at an early stage the question of territorial coverage was raised by representatives of the speakers of the Part III languages, as well as by the Committee of Experts (ComEx) that monitors the ECRML. This led to the creation of administrative areas for Sámi, Meänkieli and Finnish, with special rights for speakers of these languages within these areas. The regions in which administrative area municipalities are situated have become parts of these administrative areas. Since the areas have been based on voluntary applications (in accordance with the national law of 2010) by county councils, county boards, and most importantly, municipalities, the number of units within the administrative areas, especially of municipalities, has grown steadily. Today (2018) there are 64 (out of 290) municipalities that belong to the Finnish administrative area, 22 to the Sámi, and 7 to the Meänkieli area.²² The special rights defined in these administrative areas are for example the right to use the minority language with certain authorities, but also to have all or a substantial part of services in pre-schools and elderly care in the respective minority language. However, the field of education, which is a fundamental part of any language promotion effort, was left out from the legislation.²³ Consequently, the critique against the failure within education has not vanished.

One result of the new legislation is that, in principle, there are officially quadrilingual, trilingual and bilingual municipalities. For example, Kiruna in County Norrbotten is quadrilingual (Sámi, Meänkieli, Finnish and Swedish), while Pajala in the same county is trilingual (Meänkieli, Finnish and Swedish). The capital Stockholm, and the second and third largest cities of Gothenburg and Malmö are formally bilingual (Finnish and Swedish). In all cases, Swedish is the main and dominant language in practice. Simultaneously,

these urban centres represent the increasingly multilingual setup of Sweden to a higher extent than other urban and rural areas.

A main outcome of an authority becoming part of an administrative area is that some funding is transferred from the state to these lower level authorities, in order to implement the content of the LoNM. In the municipalities, this has meant that both activities and employed staff have been funded. This has opened up for real cooperation between the authorities and the speakers of minority languages. It has also created a basis for a variety of actions to promote the languages and their cultures.²⁴

There have been nine rounds of severe critique of Sweden's lack of success in fulfilling its obligations in the educational field regarding the national minority languages: three rounds from the FCNM and six from ECRML. As a result, new governmental inquiries were initiated – another consequence of international pressure.²⁵

The concern with the lack of educational success is naturally caused by the importance of education for the maintenance and promotion of any language, in particular for a minority language. This is acknowledged by the minority speakers themselves. Reasons include the role of the minority languages for identity formation, the training of literacy in the school context and its role for language maintenance. The positive effects of bilingual education have also been part of the debate. All five national minority languages have seen a group level language shift and individual language loss taking place, more severely for some of the languages than for others. There are signs of a gradual recovery, even if the general picture is gloomy and rightfully worrying for the survival of some, if not most, of the languages (see also Figure 4).

Some 20 years ago Lainio pointed out²⁶ that a process of improved official support and positive public rhetoric regarding the treatment of the minority languages had been and was developing. At the same time, implementation was poor and frustration among the minorities growing. This divide has been pointed out repeatedly also by others.²⁷ The international conventions on Swedish language

policy have had both direct and indirect impact, with both positive and more neutral effects, some of which are contradictory or paradoxical. During the last almost 20 years, a handful of the legal provisions and development have focused and improved some matters concerning national minorities and their languages. This has happened at the same time as a series of converse debates and strivings have also taken place, both in terms of state policies and within the minorities themselves. In the early 1990s, when the responsibility of schooling was transferred from the state to the municipalities, a dramatic drop in the support for MTI was seen.²⁸ Between 2005–2007 a similar strong reaction to bilingual education and MTI was launched by a newspaper debate, which also seemingly had a long-term negative impact on MTI.²⁹ The disappearance of bilingual education is a long-term effect of the lost support for MTI in general and bilingual education in particular. The continuous closing down of independent Sweden Finnish bilingual schools has taken place in this kind of a mental climate.³⁰ The same goes for the closing down of the only bilingual option for Romani children, bilingual classes in a Stockholm suburban municipal school, in 2016–2017.

Nowadays, there seems to be general support for the promotion of minority languages in education, but in the background, depending on political and ideological shifts, this is counterbalanced by a latent resistance to languages other than Swedish, and today, English. In addition, the striving for “perfect Swedish” from the mid-1990s³¹ and the explicit support for a monolingual habitus,³² may suffice to demonstrate this latent background resistance. In the late 2000s the former Minister of Education, Mr. Jan Björklund, stated that: “in Sweden we speak Swedish”.³³ The same expression, with a slightly changed meaning, was used by the most recent chair of the Conservative party, Mr. Ulf Kristersson, in December 2017.³⁴ On the other hand, some minority internal and some inter-minority developments have turned out important as well.

**Division between Indigenous, minority
and migrant status**

There are other, less well acknowledged discourses in the background, some of them relating more to the minorities than to a public, majority debate. There is a strong commitment among the Sámi to land-owning issues and the lack of a Swedish ratification of ILO 169. The convention would give the Sámi increased self-determination power e.g. regarding land issues, reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, and mining challenges. This is connected to the strong identification of the Sámi as an indigenous group, not a minority.³⁵ The view that the Sámi should be seen as a minority – in addition to or instead of an indigenous group – is not gaining ground. The general impact of the CoE conventions, which target minorities, is appreciated, however, although the general conclusion is that there is too little support for the different Sámi languages. This view is shared by the Sámi Education Board, which represents the policies of the Sámi Parliament. This conclusion is connected to the wishes and strivings of the Sámi NGOs, to have the Sámi languages treated separately, for example in the realm of education. The request is to take into account the specific educational needs of especially North Sámi, Lule Sámi and South Sámi, the latter two of which are severely endangered languages.

With regard to the ratification of the Language Charter (ECRML), some representatives of the Roma NGOs are of the meaning that Romani could also be covered by Part III, even if this is not a widely dispersed view. Also within the Jewish group requests for a more equal treatment of all national minority languages have been proposed. Within the field of media provisions, both Jewish and Meänkieli speakers are of the view that the state support is unevenly distributed to the detriment of these two languages and mi-

norities. Shadow reports in the monitoring process of the ECRML have included such views.³⁶

In the public debate on national minorities there seems to be a widespread opinion that the integration of newly arrived migrants, especially lonely children, is more urgent than matters concerning national minorities.³⁷ For example, if mother tongue instruction has a low priority for (local) authorities, then the issue of mother tongue instruction for national minorities is given even lower priority. The difference in urgency is brought up as a reason to attract more consideration and more funding for the recently arrived groups and their integration. This creates a negative distinction between the need for linguistic and cultural revitalization among national minorities on the one hand, and the need for integration of recent migrants on the other.

Some other distinctions, however, are made to the benefit of the national minorities. Both the Language Act (2009) and the School Act (2010, 2015) single out the language rights of national minorities as more far-reaching. The Language Act states that the national minority languages shall be possible to *use, develop and learn*, with the support of the public funding, whereas migrant languages are supposed to be possible to *use and develop* only.

The School Act gives the right to all children to receive mother tongue instruction – that is, to *learn* the languages if some requirements regarding use and proficiency are fulfilled. Other specific rules only apply to national minority languages. For example, since 2015 it is possible to receive either mother tongue instruction as a first language or as a language at beginners' level (called *second language* in this context). This means that it is possible to receive such instruction without prior knowledge of the languages, at any grade during primary school (nine years). It is also possible to receive MTI when only one pupil with a national minority language background in the municipality requires it. In addition, there are differences with regard to how bilingual education may be provided for national minority languages – where Sámi as an indigenous

language, and Finnish, due to its high number of speakers – again give these languages some advantage in terms of the extension of bilingual education options. Sámi is taught in the state Sámi school (five school units at present) at preschool (age 6) and during grades 1–6, and Finnish may be taught as a bilingual, experimental option during all nine years of primary school. To date, this has not been applied to other languages. Pupils of the national minority languages may also receive MTI during all nine years of primary school, whereas this is formally restricted to seven years for other mother tongues. Practice may, however, vary in this regard.

A general trend among the national minorities themselves is to attempt to level out differences between the five national minority languages in the future, based on wishes from their representatives, except for the specific regulations referring to the indigenous status that applies to the Sámi, which is not wished to be reduced or weakened. This wish for levelling of the differences is in some contrast with another trend.

Diversification

Another developing trend, which seems to be the case also in other CoE ratifying states of the Language Charter (ECRML), is that during the process of monitoring a diversification is taking place with regard to which languages should be protected and how. In the Swedish context, this is obvious. Just like Norway and Finland, e.g. for educational provisions and needs, Sweden has ratified Sámi as one language. But the number of speakers and the power positions differ significantly between North Sámi on one hand, and Lule Sámi and South Sámi on the other (in Finland, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi are the minor Sámi languages represented). Recently, revitalization efforts have also been proposed for Ume Sámi and Pite Sámi in Sweden. In short, both the demographic differences and the linguistic distance between the Sámi languages are of such a

magnitude, that it complicates any pedagogical or teaching efforts. This also concerns, for example, the availability of teacher education. This is matched by a numerical dominance of North Sámi also outside the classrooms and schools, such as in the media. To some extent, similar discussions have evolved for some of the other national minority languages.

The recent diversification of Romani is also based on several parallel developments. First, there was a poor knowledge of the impact of linguistic variation within Romani at the time of the ratification, both in the political sphere and among the speakers of different Romani varieties. This was further blurred by the renewed migration by Roma, mainly from the Balkans in the 1990s. Secondly, more insightful knowledge has been gained during the years after the ratification, based on experiences and the challenges that for example instruction, teacher education, language cultivation and the production of teaching materials have presented. It has become increasingly clear that for example Kale of Finnish Roma, Polish Romani and various varieties from the Balkans, e.g. Arli, Kelderash, Lovari, as well as Travellers' Romani, are not easily compatible in the educational and other contexts mentioned.³⁸ This is naturally partly connected to the different historical backgrounds of the groups.

A similar development has taken place for Meänkieli. By proponents of its varieties it is understood to be divided into three main varieties, largely concentrated to the Torne Valley itself, and the surroundings of Gällivare and Kiruna. In addition to the standardization process that is being promoted in different ways for the involved varieties, the role of identification has also been pointed out.³⁹ Speakers identify with a dialect/regional variety rather than a standardized variety of Meänkieli. For Meänkieli then, a similar dilemma occurs as for Romani: the attitudes and the linguistic realities differ, but the ratifications of the conventions express a rather homogenous understanding of the situation. Also, the standardization process is only in its initial phases for both.⁴⁰ At least for

Meänkieli the diversification is paradoxical, since the existence of dialects/varieties is often seen as a defining aspect of a language.

For Finnish a similar development has been under way for decades. A separate Sweden Finnish variety is evolving. However, due to more or less formal decisions,⁴¹ the standard variety used in Finland has also been accepted for formal and written language use in Sweden. It has been chosen as the target variety for education. After some vivid discussions in the 1990s, it seems that there is a stand-still at present. This is so despite the fact that the linguistic differences are increasing vis-à-vis corresponding dialects and varieties of Finland Finnish, and with regard to a growing distance to the Standard variety among the users of Finnish in Sweden. The difference between the norm and the Sweden Finnish situation in Sweden's ratification of the CoE conventions is telling: The minority group accepted for the minority position is Sweden Finns, not Finns, whereas the minority language accepted is Finnish, not Sweden Finnish.

The Sweden Finns initiated a discourse on the status of them being a national minority, by unilaterally proclaiming themselves a national minority in 1990.⁴² This was not accepted or adopted by the Swedish Government at that time. A corresponding willingness to define the language as Sweden Finnish was not developed. The Tornedalians on their side, proclaimed Tornedalen Finnish to be a language of its own, Meänkieli, in 1988 at a gathering in Pajala.⁴³

RECENT UPDATES IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL MINORITY POLICY AND NATIONAL MINORITY LANGUAGE POLICY

In Sweden, as mentioned, external pressure for action is often channeled into official reports and inquiries. Two recent inquiries have dealt specifically with pertinent problems in Swedish minority policy.

The first of these was the so-called **Rohdin's inquiry** in 2016–2017. Acknowledging some central problems regarding Swedish

minority policy – such as the inadequate adherence by local authorities to the Law on National Minorities – the mandate of the inquiry was broad. Principal investigator Lennart Rohdin was asked to, *inter alia*:

- Make a coherent analysis of the minority policy in order to clarify strengths and challenges and make proposals to secure the compliance with the rights of national minorities;
- Analyze and suggest how the influence of the national minorities and their participation can be strengthened;
- Propose how state coordination and monitoring can be organized and discuss whether a possibility for appeals on authority decisions should be introduced;
- Investigate the need of increasing the knowledge base in order to raise the knowledge of society regarding national minorities, and
- Revise the law on national minorities and minority languages and make proposals for changes.

It seems the results of the inquiry⁴⁴ have been largely accepted: The proposal subsequently put forward by the Government included most of the conclusions made by the inquiry. This means that the Government “proposes changes to the Law (2009:724) about national minorities and minority languages, in order to strengthen the basic protection for these languages and cultures, and to strengthen the extended rights that are valid in the administrative areas of Finnish, Meänkieli and Sámi.” Among other things, it is proposed that

- municipalities and county councils shall adopt targets and principles for their minority policy work;
- that the obligation to inform minority language speakers shall be clarified;
- that the content of cooperation with the speakers according to the Law, shall be clarified;

- that the administrative area authorities shall take into consideration the possibilities for minorities to be part of the decision-making process in matters that concern them.

Specific proposals are also made regarding pre-school education and elderly care.

Other consequences of the inquiry would be that differences between the languages covered by administrative areas (Part III languages in the Charter context; Finnish, Meänkieli and Sámi) and the other two (Romani chib and Yiddish) would be reduced. This also connects with the improved coverage of all languages, outside the administrative areas, that is, if the so-called Basic protection is better known and followed up by authorities.

The other recent major inquiry focused specifically on updating the field of national minority language education policy. This so-called **Lainio's inquiry**⁴⁵ complements the more general, minority policy overview. Some of the main problems preceding and being pointed out in this inquiry were:

- lack of continuity in the provision of MTI,
- lack of equity between municipalities in providing MTI,
- the restriction in a majority of the municipalities to only give one hour per week in MTI,
- the almost total deconstruction of bilingual education in the municipal schools, and the continuous threat to the independent schools providing bilingual education,
- the poor long-term provision of teacher education for MTI and other types of teacher education in and of the national minority languages,
- the reported unwillingness among municipalities to provide instruction in and of national minority languages, despite the extended legal rights given to national minorities.

These issues have been long-standing in the national discourse on the MTI of national minority languages, predominantly concerning demands from Finnish and Meänkieli representatives. It furthermore seems that since the ratification of the international conventions have been taken seriously by Sweden, this has led to more direct impact and willingness to change the official Swedish views on these issues.

Some of the main proposals of Lainio's inquiry are summarized below:⁴⁶

- equity in education, which in this context means that irrespective of where a child lives, the same opportunities to receive MTI should be provided, and that education should compensate for differences in background and living conditions,
- a new subject should be introduced, which means that the five national minority languages are lifted out of the general concept and treatment of mother tongues, and be taught under the subject of *national minority language (NML)*; this also means that the strengthened rights that were awarded to the national minority languages under MTI, should be preserved,
- new provisions concerning teaching in NMLs introduced for all the compulsory school forms, for upper secondary schools and upper secondary schools for individuals with learning difficulties,
- teaching of the NMLs within the subject time allocations, meaning that there is a set amount of hours to be taught throughout every school year and counted together during primary school,
- a development of teacher training, in order to match the needs of teaching at different levels and in different school forms (pre-school, subject teaching in the languages, bilingual education),
- short-term and long-term solutions for bilingual education, which means that intermediate solutions should apply and be developed in the short-term perspective, whereas long-term

perspectives would target a reintroduction of proper bilingual education throughout primary school and including a functioning pre-school option, with services fully or to a substantial part in the NMLs, and

- an attempt to increase the teaching of the NMLs substantially at secondary school level, which is almost non-existent today; this could partly be arranged by allowing and providing NMLI at the beginner's level, also at secondary school.

As of yet, the outcome of the inquiry is not yet known.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the result of Rohdin's inquiry it seems that the suggestions have a fair chance to be accepted and possibly implemented. On the other hand, Sweden is facing elections in the fall of 2018, which means that the political field, if changed, may well interfere with the legislative and language policy process.

It is not known how Lainio's proposals will be received even if some NGOs, i.e. representatives of the speakers of national minority languages themselves, have been supportive. The authorities have not signaled any major objections. Some variation in the views on details of the proposals can be seen among teachers, and in the National organization of teachers (Lärarnas Riksförbund).⁴⁷ In comparison with general minority issues, those relating to education seem to be more sensitive.

It may sound dramatic, but the proposals in the educational sphere, combined with those in the minority policy renewal, have a taste of "now or never" – or, as it was called in the early 1980s by Meänkieli representatives, "the last battle". For them, for the Sámi and the Sweden Finns, this is a repetition of earlier phases, reminiscent of the critical stages that their minority languages have been in – and still are in. For the other two, this is an awakening. One may

therefore wish for a positive outcome of these two inquiries and the efforts put into the revitalization policy by the Swedish state and the NGOs, but also for the maintenance of the languages as fully functional in a modern society. This would not work without the support of the educational system.

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NOTES

- 1 SCB, <http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/helarsstatistik--riket/befolkningsstatistik-i-sammandrag/>; Ganuza & Hedman 2015.
- 2 Wande 1994.
- 3 SOU 1997: 192, SOU 1997: 193, Hyltenstam (ed.) 1999.
- 4 SOU 2017:88.
- 5 According to the definitions in ECRML and FCNM.
- 6 <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>
- 7 Data collected by Statistics Sweden/SCB, for person with at least one grandparent born in Finland; published by Sisiradio. www.sr.se/sisiradio.
- 8 Various sources; Reinans 1996:104 = 200 000; see discussion by Parkvall (2015), who presents the lowest estimations and the highest, by other sources.
- 9 <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>; Parkvall (2015:62) gives the lowest figures, 175 000.
- 10 Parkvall 45 000 on page 2015:68; and 20 000-25 000 and up to 80 000 in other sources on page 2015:77.
- 11 Based on other sources, summarized in SOU 2017:91: p 195.
- 12 <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>
- 13 This is further commented upon by Parkvall 2015:121, as being extremely difficult to evaluate.
- 14 Based on summarized data provided by Vinka, SOU 2017:91: p. 199; <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>
- 15 Hebrew is not seen as a traditional minority language among Jews in Sweden.
- 16 <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>
- 17 Parkvall 2015:108.
- 18 Edwards 1985; Fishman 1991.
- 19 Both for Finnish and Sámi the original number of municipalities included in the respective administrative areas were much smaller. The largest difference is for Finnish, which had five municipalities covered (all in Norrbotten County in the North), and which has now grown to 64 (see below). For a closer description of their tasks, see further below.
- 20 Parkvall 2015.
- 21 Bijvoet & Fraurud 2006; Milani 2007; Lainio 2013, 2014.
- 22 Also, county boards and county councils belong to the administrative areas. <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/PublishingImages/Pages/forvaltningsomraden/F%C3%B6rvaltningsomr%C3%A5den%202018.pdf>

- 23 Fishman 1991; Rohdin 2015; Huss & Syrjänen Schaal 2015; cf. LoNM 2010, <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/Pages/ny-lag-om-nationella-minoriteter.aspx>
- 24 Länsstyrelsen 2016; SOU 2017:60, SOU 2017:88.
- 25 See the evaluation of Sweden's minority policy, Rohdin's inquiry; SOU 2017:60, SOU 2017:88, and Lainio's inquiry on education for national minority languages below; SOU 2017:91; cf. Huss & Spiliopoulou Åkermark 2005.
- 26 Lainio 1999, 2001.
- 27 Municio 1983, 1987, 1993; Hyltenstam & Tuomela 1996; Spiliopoulou Åkermark & Huss 2006; Hyltenstam & Milani 2012; cf. Lainio 2014.
- 28 Municio 1994; Hyltenstam & Tuomela 1996.
- 29 Bijvoet & Fraurud 2006; Milani 2007.
- 30 Lainio 2014; cf. also Schools Inspectorate/Skolinspektionen 2012; Wickström 2014.
- 31 Sjögren et al (eds.) 2000.
- 32 Gogolin 2002; that is the view that only Swedish is to be publicly used in Sweden.
- 33 This is actually a common used expression in debates on languages in Sweden.
- 34 <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/kristersson-i-sverige-talar-man-svenska/>
- 35 E.g. Sámi Parliament: <https://www.sametinget.se/1054>.
- 36 <https://www.str-t.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/STR-T-Verksamhetsplan-2017.pdf>; see also proposals in Rohdin's inquiry, SOU 2017:60, SOU 2017:88.
- 37 E.g. Schools Inspectorate/Skolinspektionen 2012; Länsstyrelsen 2016.
- 38 See also Halwachs, Klinge & Schrammel-Leber 2013; <http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/om-oss/for-dig-i-skolan/sprak-for-dig-i-skolan/spraken-i-sverige/romska.html>; <http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/om-oss/verksamhet/romani-chib.html>.
- 39 SOU 2017:91; STR-T 2017.
- 40 Kangas 2018; cf. Halwachs, Klinge & Schrammel-Leber 2013; Lainio & Wände 2015.
- 41 E.g. Ehrnebo 2007.
- 42 Lainio 1996b; Melakari 2003.
- 43 <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/jPwML/spraket-meankieli-firar-30-ar>
- 44 SOU 2017:60, SOU 2017:88.
- 45 SOU 2017:91.
- 46 See SOU 2017:91:30-43.
- 47 <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=185&artikel=6898850>

RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN THE BALTIC STATES: BETWEEN INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION IN ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

Ewa Chylinski

INTRODUCTION

The situation of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking minorities in the three Baltic countries has gone through different political, social, economic and cultural developments: from high securitization, strict regulation of formal status of citizenship, integration requirements to recognition of a different cultural identity.

The key issues relevant here are:

1. Population with “undefined citizenship” or non-citizens in Estonia and Latvia;
2. Russian language in public sphere (media, administration, education);
3. Integration and/or inclusion approach to Russian and Russian-speaking minorities;
4. Observance of minority rights and
5. The role of the kin-state.

These issues are rather common to all post-Soviet countries, except for the citizenship aspect and to some extent the formal and infor-

mal status of the Russian language. The dynamics of the relationship between the Baltic States and the ethnic Russians, the Russian-speaking communities and the Russophone Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, are changing over time and evolving under the impact of regional and global developments. Europeanisation through the Council of Europe (CoE), NATO and EU membership and the impact of diaspora policies of the Russian Federation, are continuously shaping attitudes and actions of the respective governments, as well as minorities themselves.

APPROACHES TO RUSSIAN MINORITY STATUS

In the wake of acquiring their independence, the three Baltic States made critical decisions concerning the status of their respective minority populations, in particular those originating from earlier Soviet republics. Estonia and Latvia announced resuming their policy from the period of independence 1921–1941, respecting traditional minorities such as Jews, Swedes, Germans, Russians and others. This had great implications on the population that migrated to Estonia and Latvia after 1945 and was unable to document their family or citizenship relations stemming from pre-World War II. They were considered aliens, despite being 2nd or 3rd generation individuals living in Estonia or Latvia and legally registered in the territories of the Estonian or Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). Lithuania, that had seen changes both in terms of territory and in terms of population composition after the war, decided to extend Lithuanian citizenship to all who were legally registered in the territory of the Lithuanian SSR in 1991.

In consequence, almost 31 % of the population in Estonia and 27 % of the population in Latvia found themselves formally and practically stateless. The largest group constituted of ethnic Russians who initially migrated to Estonia and Latvia as military personnel and industrial workers, later followed by other professional groups

and their families. The Soviet policy of population migration was based partly on access to the Baltic Sea, which unlike the Russian ports of Archangelsk, Murmansk and St. Petersburg is far enough south in order not to freeze over in winter. And partly it was in order to keep a close watch on Western adversaries by the Baltic Sea; Germany in particular. A large contingent of 150 000 troops and auxiliary personnel, most of them ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belarus, was deployed to the Baltic Military District.

In addition, the type of industry placed in Estonia and Latvia meant transporting a skilled labour force that would develop textile and electrical products, maintenance industries for military complexes, as well as high quality dairy products. Lithuania, which was still dominated by agriculture and fisheries, was less attractive and did not experience such massive influx.

With the change of political affiliation and aspirations to join the NATO, it was agreed that the Russian Federation, as a legal successor to the USSR, will withdraw its troops. In addition to military personnel there were several thousands of military pensioners and their families who were not particularly wanted back in Russia. Absorbing the large population groups of returning Soviet troops into Russia was not easy. During the complicated and gradual withdrawal process, the government of the Russian Federation continuously negotiated the status of the left-behind groups and their legal protection on the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The last soldier left in 1999. Through the departure of Soviet military and their families, the non-citizen population was reduced to 19 % on average. Still, Estonia and Latvia adopted rigid stands on the citizenship status of post-Soviet minorities, hoping that it would prompt them to leave. This did not happen, as many families had limited affiliations with Russia at this point.

When the Baltic States joined international organizations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the CSCE, and subsequently were seeking membership of NATO and the EU, they were surprised by the political requirements of observing human and minority

rights. However, the pressure to respect EU, OSCE and CoE political commitments to human rights, including minority rights, did not change the policies on non-citizens in Estonia and Latvia. The EU required as a minimum the ratification of the CoE Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) before becoming an EU member. This was done by Estonia in 1997, Lithuania in 2000, but Latvia ratified it only in 2005, a year after becoming a member of the EU. None of the countries have signed and ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, despite offering school education in several minority languages. The critical issue in all three countries is the status of the Russian language vis-à-vis state languages, and the *de facto* use of Russian in public space. In 2011, Latvia conducted a referendum on Russian as a second national language, vigorously promoted by the Russian party Harmony and For Human Rights in United Latvia. The proposal was rejected by a majority of the voters.

The monitoring process of the FCNM obliged both Estonia and Latvia to develop social integration strategies that would accelerate the naturalization process of those who wished to be included as citizens. International organizations and domestic fora were pushing hard to adopt policies and laws that would end statelessness among its member states. Yet, the process of naturalization, despite many legislative changes easing the requirements, has rather strict ramifications, impacting the inclusion of Russians and Russian-speaking minorities into public and administrative jobs.



Figure 1. Map of the Baltics. Native Russian speaking population, percentage of whole population in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Source:

https://eurasiangeopolitics.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/20140329_eum944.png

INTEGRATION OR INCLUSION OF ETHNIC RUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES?

Estonia and Latvia consequently insist on using the term “integration” when designing strategies for minorities to become part of the respective societies out of their status as aliens.

In Estonia, the Russian minorities live in densely populated regions, relatively isolated from the respective majority population.

Integration is therefore relevant. In Lithuania, the issue is more related to inclusion in social and public life, as the Russian minority is well integrated, yet marginalized in many aspects. The integration of Russian minorities is conditioned by the policies, opportunities and incentives provided by respective states. It is also related to how the incentives are perceived by each member of the minority community and to what extent state policies and societal attitudes respect the desire of minorities to be part of the larger society while preserving their own cultural and linguistic identity. The state's support to its minorities, and considering them as an integral part of society, is a central element of a state's democratic profile, inherently tied to values of equality and non-discrimination. Simultaneously, most national minorities have a historic homeland: an independent kin-state that may or may not be involved in integration processes of their kin in the countries where they reside.

Therefore, one cannot discuss the situation of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking minorities without looking into the policies and activities of the kin-state towards its minorities dispersed over the post-Soviet space – either members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or non-CIS countries such as the Baltic States. In the case of the Baltic States, this means looking at the role and impact of the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, other now independent post-Soviet countries, on the integration of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking minorities.

Ukraine and Belarus also keep relations with their diaspora, but their support is mainly directed towards ethno-cultural activities of folkloristic nature, while the Russian Federation regards its role as a political and humanitarian project.

SUPPORT TO RUSSIAN MINORITIES AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS
BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, millions of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking communities found themselves in a minority position in newly independent states. The Russian Federation (RF), in the period of 1992–1993, tried to formulate a policy towards its ethnic brethren outside the RF. The most critical issues were related to citizenship, workplaces, pensions, education and the status of the Russian language. The creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS or in Russian SNG) helped to resolve some of the issues, yet the three Baltic states did not join the CIS, thus leaving the Baltic Russians outside of the CIS agreements and, with a declared non-citizen status in Estonia and Latvia, with very limited rights. Initially, as a successor to the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation took upon itself a responsibility to care for all Russian speakers regardless of their ethnic origin. The laws and the policy have evolved since 1999,¹ based on the Law on State Policy in Relation to Compatriots Abroad, which covered 3 groups defined as:

1. Citizens of RF living permanently outside of RF
2. Citizens of the former USSR living in post-Soviet space
3. Emigrants with no Russian citizenship but affiliating themselves culturally with Russia

For many years, the Law was rather inactive as there were no financial means allocated for its implementation, although various ministries were tasked to provide support to Russians and Russian speakers through cultural agreements. The deadline for receiving Russian Federation passports for all former USSR citizens expired at the end of 2000.

In 2007, the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation decided to redefine and reorganize its policy towards the Russian diaspora

as part of its foreign policy. The Department for Russian Diaspora established a special Foundation for the Support and Protection of Compatriots Abroad.² The idea of the “Russian World” (*Russkij Mir*), a concept covering the culture and civilization of Russians outside Russia, has a practical dimension of monitoring the situation of Russian minorities across the CIS and other former USSR republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia), and of break-away Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria. It also operates the Institute of CIS Countries, publishing monitoring results, research on diaspora and its integration in the respective countries. The Foundation offers legal services³ and support to local NGOs established by Russian minorities such as *Baltija.eu*, *Forum Estonii* (Estonian Forum), *Forum Latvii* (Latvian Forum) and *Forum Litvy* (Lithuanian Forum), representing Russian associations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Where there are no schools with Russian language education, the Foundation supports social and cultural activities of the local Russian organizations and Sunday schools for Russian-speaking minorities. The role of the “Russian World” and *Rossotrudnichesto* (Russian Cooperation) is regarded as using the diaspora as a soft power tool in keeping its geopolitical influence on the former territories, and globally taking upon itself the role of protector of the rights of Russian minorities and Russophones.⁴ Modelled after the British Council, L’Institute Francais and Goethe Institut, the Russian Federation is thus actively engaged in the Baltic States. The activities also involve support for Russian political parties, media, educational exchanges and repatriation programs. There is limited cooperation in teacher education and text book exchange. The Foundation convenes for regular annual review conferences of the Russian organizations in the Baltic States (2017 in Narva, Estonia) to identify priority issues for keeping relations with ethnic Russians and Russophones, and areas of diplomatic interventions with the governments. Despite the policy of respect for self-identification and choice of allegiance, the cultural affiliation is the strongest asset. Many ethnic Russians and other Russophones

who have over time acquired citizenship of respective states still retain close ties to the Russian culture.

This policy of the active kin-state has impacted the situation of Russian minorities and other Russian-speakers and their integration in the Baltic States, Estonia and Latvia in particular.⁵ Bearing in mind the policies of individual states and the role of the Russian state in supporting and protecting its minorities, the three Baltic States represent similar yet different models of integrating and including ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking minorities.

RUSSIAN MINORITIES IN ESTONIA

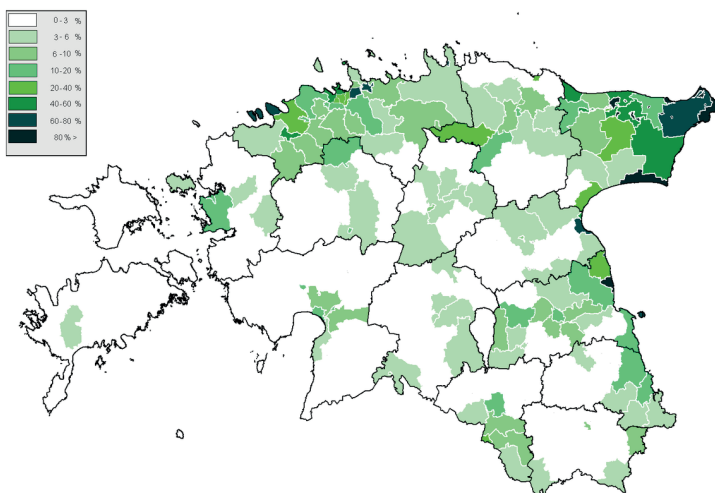


Figure 2. Geographical location of Russian population in Estonia, percentage of population.

(Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russians_in_Estonia)

Ethnic Russians in Estonia mainly live in the northern regions. They were recognized as a minority during the independence peri-

od of 1921–1941 (constituting then 8 % of the population). Half of them were part of the autochthonous population living around the Pechory and Izhborsk areas, which were included into Estonian territory based on the Estonian–Soviet Peace Treaty of Tartu. These territories were returned to the Russian FSSR in 1945.

Large numbers of Russians moved into Estonia after 1945 (military and industry). Today, they constitute approximately 25% of the population, mainly residing in urban centers. Many members of these groups and following generations were non-citizens. The naturalization processes substantially changed the proportions: in 1992, 32 % were non-citizens whereas in 2016 the percentage declined to 6.8 %.

Estonian citizenship can be acquired after successfully passing an integration test on the constitution, citizenship act, loyalty pledge and language test. As the use of Russian language is very common in several parts of Estonia there is no practical necessity to learn Estonian, but it prevents persons with limited Estonian language skills to seek jobs in other regions and public administration. This results in high unemployment rates in regions with a Russian population. Pending the level of language skills in Estonian, the inclusion into the labour market outside of Russian-speaking areas and in public administration is possible. The integration package including the final test is rather expensive – € 384 (2017), though refundable by the state if completed successfully. Policies concerning citizenship went through an evolutionary process from very strict requirements and long administrative processes to a more pragmatic recognition of real life situations. Thus persons born or settled in Estonia before July 1990, and who successfully pass all the elements of the integration test, can apply for an Estonian citizenship in accelerated mode.⁶ The language test is the most demanding of all integration requirements as Estonian belongs to a completely different group of Finno-Ugric languages than the Slavonic Russian. The test includes both a written and an oral part with 60 % of the attainment at B1 level of CEFR (Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages with a scale A1-B1-B2-C1-C2) in order to pass the test. Recognizing this barrier, elderly above 65 years of age can pass an oral part only. Also, young persons who went through education in Estonian, or in Russian with 60 % of subjects being taught in Estonian, are exempted from the language test. Finally, since 2016, children born on the territory of Estonia of non-citizen parents can acquire Estonian citizenship.

Under the Ministry of Culture there are special bodies dealing with minority issues: the National Minorities Cultural Advisory Council that includes 35 members from cultural associations, of which the Russian cultural societies are most numerous, and another body – MISA – is coordinating subsidies to support cultural societies.

Media in the Russian language are those coming through trans-border or digital broadcasting from Russia, with content reflecting Russian perceptions. In 2016 the Public Broadcaster decided to re-establish an Estonian TV channel in the Russian language: ETV+ which provides general information on different aspects of life in Estonia to counter information coming from various Russian media used by the Russian-speaking population.

Estonia is continuously developing a series of integration policies – 1998, 2005–2009, 2010–2013, 2014–2020, all building upon each other and with different goals and sub-goals. The current strategy has as its main goal to ensure the cohesion of society and the civic identity of Estonia. This is the first strategy that mentions a civic outlook on Estonia. One could discuss whether this strategy is a response to the influence of Russia's policy towards its claimed diaspora of ethnic Russians and Russophone minorities. For these individuals, the cultural identification with Russian heritage and language is still important, despite stronger affiliation with the territory of Estonia.

Protection of rights is also one of the contested issues – on the one hand the perception is that Estonia is discriminating its Russian population, while on the other hand, the RF Russian World and

Rossotrudnichestvo is intervening on behalf of the Russian minority mainly in relation to education policies in the Russian language and the use of Russian in public space. The Council of Europe is also critical of the Estonian policies. This is particularly expressed in the comments to the Estonian state reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention in all cycles.⁷ The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has recognized progress made, but in its latest report calls upon authorities to criminalize racist or discriminatory acts.⁸

Another long-standing issue has been the status of pensioners. As Estonia is not a member of the CIS, there is no automatic transfer of pensions. The pension issue has been discussed and debated for years as the large ethnic Russian population without citizenship was for a long time excluded from the Estonian pension schemes. Pensions for ethnic Russians are provided in accordance with Estonian law on social security and agreements between Estonia and the Russian Federation signed in 2011. The right to pension is based on proportionality of work and residence period in the USSR (including Estonian SSR) and independent Estonia.⁹

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

Ethnic Russian political parties are an integral part of political life in Estonia, not only locally in the regions of Narva and Ida-Viru but also at national level. The Center Party has been present as a social-liberal party in Estonia since early 1991 and is supported by over 75 % of non-Estonians. It has been part of the government and parliament of several convocations and has its representatives in the European Parliament. It is claimed that the party is supported through Russian NGOs in Estonia, which is not surprising as its program has a strong civic appeal to minority inclusion.

One of the crucial elements of the transition to independence was to restore the Estonian language as a state language and to remove the dominance of Russian in all aspects of the public sphere. The most powerful institution is the Language Inspectorate.¹⁰ It was founded already in 1990 as a State Language Board, but its mandate has changed over time: from re-instating the Estonian language in state and local administration, to developing it to cover new areas of use. Its most operational task is to oversee the implementation of the Estonian Language Law, i.e. that all official meetings, including those in minority municipalities, must be held in Estonian. Street names, advertisements, public documents and workplace information displays also must be written in Estonian. The same goes for schools and kindergartens who must conduct their business in the state language. In a Russian-speaking environment it is required to present an Estonian language certificate for certain positions (schoolmaster, kindergarten leader etc.). Up to 2015, in case of non-observance, the person could be fined, having to re-take the language test or be removed from her/his position. However, the fining authority has been abolished and now the Language Inspectorate plays an advisory role to public institutions and to persons working in them. Yet, the problem has not been removed as the Inspectorate has assumed a new responsibility for re-classification of language requirements for certain positions, often resulting in the necessity to take a new language test.

Media is another dimension of language use, regulated by the Language Act and the Public Broadcaster. Everyone has access to Russian TV (First Baltic Channel – a Baltic subsidiary of the First Russian Channel) and radio channels, internet and other sources of information. The Estonian Public Broadcaster is one of three main media providers financed by the tax payers and therefore is expected to deliver public service also to minorities. The Russian-language TV-channel ETC+ was finally created in 2016 after four attempts and rising pressure to provide alternative independent information source

about Estonia in Russian. The viewer rate is estimated to 30% of the Russian population in Estonia and in Latvia.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE LANGUAGE BATTLE

On average 20 % of all pupils attend Russian language schools in Estonia, mainly in Tallinn and Narva. Yet, the language of instruction since the 2012 school year is 60 % in Estonian at the upper secondary level (gymnasium). The organization “Russian School in Estonia”, supported by *Russkij Mir*, has been protesting this for several years, bringing examples of Finnish and German gymnasiums teaching a majority of subjects in respective languages. The contested issue is not only the language of instruction but also the content, since the methodological curricula for teachers comes from Russia.

Estonia has committed itself to observe rights of minorities in its domestic legislation and through legal commitments to international conventions: the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Council of Europe FCNM. The political commitments under the OSCE - High Commissioner on National Minorities Recommendations, and the UN membership - UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Religious or Linguistic Minorities¹¹ reflect Estonia's alignment to democratic processes, including relations with the RF, yet having problems with their day-to-day implementation.

Back in 1994, Estonia and the Russian Federation concluded a number of cooperation agreements, one of them being a cooperation in education, including education in the respective languages. In addition, the Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities gives the Russians the right to establish schools in Estonia. Recently, the agreement has been revised and signed anew, without specifically mentioning primary and secondary schools. This resulted in an aggravated dispute over Russian as a medium of instruction in Russian schools. The dispute is of relevance to

those Russians living in Estonia of whom about 100 000 are citizens of the Russian Federation, and to Russian-speaking groups,¹² who suggested to the Ministry of Education that the Estonian language should be compulsory as a *subject* throughout the entire obligatory educational system as an alternative to *partial education* in Estonian. The debate is continuing while there are many offers from Estonian summer schools to study both Estonian and Russian.

The Estonian educational reform regarding minority languages at school, Russian in particular, has become an export commodity to other post-Soviet countries wishing to strengthen the position of their respective state languages; such as Georgia and Azerbaijan. In 2016, Georgia started developing a strategy for re-introducing small minority languages in public schools (abolished in 2013). However, the strategy has been put on hold while waiting for a cooperation agreement with the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science to assist in reforming minority education.

In Azerbaijan, where Russian has status of an official language, a similar reform has been underway for the past four years.

LATVIAN POLICIES TOWARDS ITS RUSSIAN MINORITIES

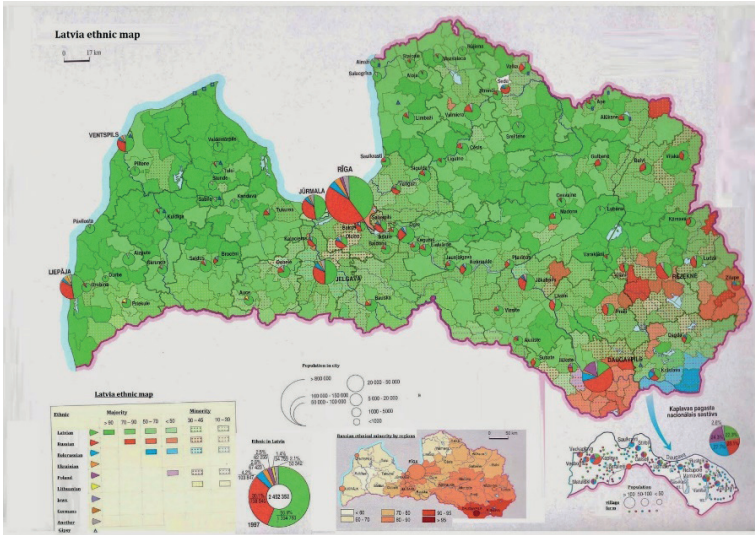


Figure 3. Map of ethnic groups in Latvia, including the Russian population.
(Source: pixshark.com¹³)

Latvia has the largest Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Baltics. Like Estonia, it has adopted a principle of continuation of statehood from before 1941. A strict approach to citizenship included only those who were citizens in Latvia before the Soviet annexation and their descendants. For those who could not document such lineage, a status of non-citizen was devised which continues until now. Besides the Russian minority there are other minorities in Latvia, most of them having Russian as a first or second language. In that sense, the societal division goes along linguistic rather than strictly ethnic lines as there are many Russophone Latvians, mainly in Riga.

CITIZENSHIP AND RUSSIAN MINORITIES

In 1995 around 29 % of the population in Latvia were non-citizens, reduced to 12 % by 2015 through emigration and naturalization processes. An amendment of the Citizenship Law in 2013 simplified the naturalization process, in particular for children under the age of 15 of non-citizen parents and for those between 15–18 years of age, who can now apply for naturalization individually. Also, young people who have completed at least 50 % of their education in the Latvian language are exempted from the language test. According to the Latvian government, non-citizens are not stateless persons, as the state of Latvia has a responsibility for them when travelling abroad and has granted those persons almost the same rights as citizens, except for voting rights and the right to seek public office. Children born in Latvia of non-citizen parents can acquire citizenship automatically. The Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) has a homepage in Latvian, Russian and English providing information on various aspects of the citizenship application process.¹⁴ The Latvian authorities closely monitor the naturalization process of all minorities.¹⁵

Interestingly, in the last Latvia FCNM report from 2016, there is a table indicating the proportion of non-citizens among Russian and other minorities.

Table 1. Composition of the population in Latvia
by nationality and citizenship, July 2016.

	Population	%	Citizens	%	Non-citizens	%
Latvian	1281315	60,00	1279654	99,8	580	0,05
Russian	561854	26,31	358863	62,8	162102	28,85
Belorussian	69960	3,28	29682	42,43	33934	48,50
Ukrainian	51372	2,41	18451	35,92	24058	46,83
Polish	45964	2,15	35618	77,50	8667	18,86
Lithuanian	26745	1,25	17507	65,46	6188	23,14
Jewish	8659	0,41	5952	68,74	2075	23,96
Roma	7545	0,31	7124	94,42	360	4,77

(Source: Latvia 3rd cycle State report CoE FCNM¹⁶)

Latvia has established a set of institutions designated to enhance Russian minority issues in the country. The political problem of minority integration has been treated with shifting significance, from a security to a socio-economic issue. In the earlier period of independence and until 2001, it was the Ministry of Social Affairs that was responsible for minority issues. Later in 2010, the Ministry of Justice established a department of social integration and devised a project on state integration policy. Since then, the supervisory body is the Ministry of Culture with its Consultative Council on National Minorities. The President of Latvia also has an Advisory Council on National Minorities. The minorities themselves established a Committee of National Minority Organizations' Representatives for the Monitoring of Council of Europe FCNM. An old organization from 1988 – the Association of National Cultural Associations of Latvia, ANCAL, which includes over 20 minority cultural organizations – continues its existence with financial support from the Ministry of Culture. It is a non-political association that focuses on folk traditions, literary and musical aspects of respective cultures and is promoted within the framework of cultural cooperation agreements with kin states. The first Forum of National Minorities was held in 2013. Later, in 2016 the first National Minority Cultures Festival took place in Daugavpils and in Latgale.

Latvia has been working on the integration policies since early days of independence, debating how to address the issue: on the one hand promoting ethno-national interest of the titular group and on the other hand following its national-constitutional and international commitments. One of the key national legal provisions is “Law on the Unrestricted Development and Right to Cultural Autonomy of Latvia's Nationalities and Ethnic Groups”.

As a result of several public debates and after setting up a framework for a Social Integration Fund (SIF) in 2000, the National Program “The Integration of Society in Latvia” was finally shaped

and equipped with an action plan to be implemented 2000–2003. Subsequently, the National Program for Promotion of Tolerance was launched for the period 2006–2010. As part of the integration policy, the Ministry of Education developed its strategy for educational policy, focusing on how to organize widespread teaching of the state language and how to organize minority school education. The Latvian Language Agency is responsible for all aspects of Latvian language acquisition, including the provision of online courses and materials.¹⁷

The Latvian Ministry of Education and Science and its Advisory Committee on Minority Education Affairs have developed two generations of policy since 2004. The policies have aimed at a gradual transition from minority language instruction to Latvian language instruction (60 %), with minority languages including Russian to be taught as a separate subject. If school exit exams are passed in the Latvian language it speeds up naturalization as the person does not need to pass the obligatory language test.

Culturally, the Russian minorities across the country and the Russian-speaking minorities have been addressed in the State Cultural Policy Guidelines “National State” 2006–2015 with the vision of an open and consolidated society.

Societal integration is regarded as a long-term policy and subsequently requires differentiated approaches. As a next level of integration, creation of national identity (civic identity) is at the core of the policy designed for the period 2012–2018 “National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Guidelines”. The Guidelines indicate a recognition of a multi-cultural outlook of Latvia, respecting cultural identity of minorities while stating the integrative role of the Latvian language as indisputable.

EDUCATION REFORM AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES - ETHNIC RUSSIANS AND OTHER ETHNICITIES

Latvian language is a key entry point to the society and to citizenship. Since 1998 it is a statutory state language according to the Constitution.

Russian is still a widespread, *de facto* national working language – 50 % of the population is using it as L1, and almost 500 000 as L2, including minorities. In 2012, a national referendum on bilingualism was conducted, but it rejected the proposal to recognize Russian as an official language.

Livonian is the only recognized autochthonous minority language, yet only a handful of people know some Livonian. The last speaker of the language died in 2013, but there are many efforts to revive it. It is also the only minority language that is allowed to be visible in the public space on the Livonian territory in form of place names.

The State Language Centre issues recommendations in relation to Latvian language proficiency in public positions, recently indicating that mayors should have at least intermediary level skills. Otherwise they need to shorten their period in office or improve their language skills within 6 months. This strict approach regarding state language acquisition was accompanied by a draft amendment to the law on agricultural land ownership, submitted by the Union of Greens and Farmers. The draft stipulates that legal land ownership by physical persons should be possible only if such a person can pass a Latvian language test at intermediary level. For company ownership, it is required that more than 50 % of the persons in the company speak Latvian at intermediary level.

The State Language Centre is authorized to impose sanctions and issue fines to those who do not observe state language requirements in the public space, and execute so-called preventive visits by language inspectors, a practice that was heavily criticized. Even in cases where the use of the Russian language was allowed – such as

public health information or other consumer information, the institutions or companies were fined.¹⁸ The US embassy in Latvia was also called to order because it used Russian on its website. It seems that this practice is being abandoned according to the FCNM 3rd Cycle state report submitted in 2016, yet in 2016 over 70 fines were issued to physical and legal persons.

Until 1995 two school systems existed – education institutions with Latvian as the language of instruction and education institutions with the Russian language of instruction.

In the period of 1990–1992 the first ethnic minority schools opened: Polish, Ukrainian in Riga and Polish in Daugavpils. In addition, minority language classes were opened in schools with a sufficient number of students – Lithuanians, Estonians and Romani. The Latvian language policy allows for education in public schools in seven minority languages – Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Estonian Belarus, Hebrew (Yiddish is no longer an active language in Latvia since the 2nd World War). Despite devising a special national policy on Roma integration required by the EU, Latvia has no Romani language classes.

Another language and minority that is pursuing claims of recognition is Latgalian. In the name of unity of the Latvian language, it has been given the status of a dialect. It can be taught as an optional subject in schools of Eastern Latvia.

THE ROLE OF THE KIN-STATE IN THE RUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

The Russian Federation plays an active kin-state role in Latvia, financially supporting various organizations of ethnic Russians and cultural associations of Russian-speaking communities. The “*Russkij Mir*”-program and *Rosssotrudnichestvo* provide Russian textbooks and other educational materials, Russian language literature, children’s books, newspapers and illustrated magazines, available in

kiosks and bookshops. It also provides humanitarian assistance to families of pensioners, and provides pensions to those who are eligible according to the Russian law on pensions. The pension age in RF is much lower than in Latvia. This is not appreciated by the Latvian authorities and regarded as undermining the pension law of Latvia.

In 2007, Latvia and the Russian Federation signed an agreement on pension provisions based partly on territorial residence and partly on proportionality: the work period on the territory of the USSR and work period/social pension on the territory of residence.¹⁹

Russian businesses in Latvia are mainly joint ventures but also a number of highly qualified IT specialists receive work and residence permits.²⁰ According to the law the permits, in particular a residence permit, costs approximately € 5.000, and a similar amount is required for a work permit.

Latvia is offering a so-called “golden visa” when a company or a private person invests a certain amount in property. Buying property gives you a residence permit and a Latvian travel document allowing for free travel within the EU. This has increased Russian tourism with 22 % in 2016, in particular in recreational coastal areas such as Jurmala (the entire entertainment industry in Russian language has been developed in this resort). This re-immigration from the Russian Federation and Ukraine has increased the number of Russians with over 10 000 new residents in 2014–2016.²¹

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation of Russians and the Russian-speaking population is proportionate to their share of the population and draw on 25 % of the vote. There is, however, a division along ethnic/linguistic lines. The Russian-speaking parties are regarded as leftist pro-Russian or even pro-Kremlin, while Latvian-speaking political parties are regarded as national-conservative and nationalist.

Perhaps the most significant achievement was the election of the naturalized Russian Nils Ushakovs as Mayor of Riga. In 2016, he was fined by the State Language Inspectorate for using Russian on his Facebook: as a mayor in his official capacity he should be using the state language only.

In 2005 the Russian-speaking parties consolidated themselves into a Latvian Russian Union party consisting of the “Harmony Centre (SC)” (3 parties) and formerly the coalition “For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL)” (4 parties) with two seats in the European Parliament (one each). The Latvian Russian Union signed a cooperation agreement with the Crimean branch of Russian Unity in 2014, which signaled a unity of the Russian world. The Crimean branch was dissolved after 2014 and merged with the United Russia party. The links with Russian minority political parties outside Russia are part of the Russian World policies yet operating within the limits of legality in their respective countries.

LATVIA AND THE EU & NATO MEMBERSHIP

One of the flagships of Latvia's EU policy is to act as a leading force behind the implementation of the EU Eastern Partnership policy (EaP). This was established as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 to improve relations in Europe following EU enlargement to the East. The EaP was launched in Prague in 2009 with the aim to develop relations with six new post-Soviet states – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The key areas covered by EaP cooperation are good governance, stronger economy, stronger society leading to democratic development and participation. The civil society dimension includes respect for and involvement of minorities in public life as a valuable resource and greater outreach to grassroots organizations and youth. One of the key methods of cooperation is cross-sharing experiences between EaP countries and the newer members of the EU and NATO. The

Association Agreements concluded between the EU and three of the six EaP countries, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, have opened up for the transfer of experiences from Baltic states, including those related to minority governance. The educational reforms in minority education are currently negotiated in Georgia and Moldova. Reform of local governance is being implemented in Ukraine following Latvian and Estonian practices.²²

As an EU member state and a participating state of the OSCE, Latvia together with Estonia and Lithuania is expected to fulfill its political commitments with regard to the observance of minority rights. Latvia is now actively promoting its reform experience in relation to the EU, including its reform on various aspects of its minority policies, and transferring knowledge on public administration reform, local government reform and education reform to Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The language of this cooperation is mainly Russian as it allows for direct communication with the recipient parties.

EU is supporting Latvia with 4.5 billion Euro from the Cohesion Policy Fund and the European Social Fund (2014–2020). One of the budget lines include development of equal and inclusive labour market (gender, minorities and disabled people).

Although Latvia has de-securitized its attitude towards ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking minorities in the last years, it has stepped up its engagement with NATO by providing communication facilities for deployment of NATO forces on its territory.

The highly regulative policies of the Latvian government may make one wonder why Russians stay on if there is so much pressure on them?²³ Some analysts indicate that the existence of informal networks is the key answer, yet looking at the Europeanisation process and the support rendered by the kin-state it seems that individuals of the Russian minority accept certain uncomfortable aspects of their lives in Latvia.

The Lithuanian Russian ethnic minority community is the smallest one in the Baltic states, consisting mainly of traditional Russian groups settled in the current territory of Lithuania since the 18th and 19th century (Old Believers and others), and of Russians who arrived during the Soviet period to work in the fishing industry and in the administration in larger cities. In Vilnius, Russians and Russian speakers constitute 15 % of the population, in Klaipeda 23 % and in the settlement of Visagina in the vicinity of the Ignalina nuclear power plant 55 %.²⁴ In terms of religion the majority is Orthodox, but there is still a large community of Old Believers (12 %), Roman Catholics (12 %) and atheists.

One of the reasons for the higher proportion of ethnic Russians in Klaipeda is the emigration of the German population from the region and city during the 2nd World War. Klaipeda (Ger. Memel) was settled by Germans in the 13th century, its population later partially replaced by Russians and other minorities for the purpose of the fishing industry.

The Russian ethnic communities maintain their ethno-cultural distinctiveness supported by a larger Russian-speaking multi-ethnic population of Slavic Belarusians and Ukrainians but also Georgians, Tatars, Armenians, Jews, even Estonians and others. The approach is to be organized in order to resist assimilation. The Russians are proportionally less represented in the Lithuanian elites (parliament, business, judiciary), than they are in Estonia and Latvia.

The treaty with the Russian Federation of 1991 extended the definition of residency to those who immigrated between 1989–1991. Thus, the citizenship law was amended on several occasions²⁵ to include dual citizenship and to cover both the non-ethnic Lithuanian population and ethnic Lithuanians who left the country before (1918–1940), during and after the Soviet break-up and acquired citizenship of another country.

Ethno-cultural rights are vested in international and national legal provisions, put into practice in a House of National Communities, Vilnius (1991), the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations (2004) and the Folklore and Ethnography Centre of Lithuanian Minorities (2007). In addition, five weekly newspapers²⁶ and an internet portal are available in Russian. Political participation is not widespread among ethnic Russians. They join mainly the mainstream parties or earlier Social-democrats or Communist parties now absorbed or transformed. The ethnic dimension of local politics is relatively insignificant, as the concentration of ethnic Russians in some territorial-administrative units, relevant for electoral processes, is not enough to make an impact. As part of the mainstream parties, ethnic Russians have been MPs and MEPs on several occasions. The largest politico-cultural organization of ethnic Russians is the Union of Russians, which in its statutes clearly indicates the political goals of participation in the public life at local and national levels (Vilnius, Klaipeda and Visagina branches).²⁷

The stability of the ethnic Russian population can be explained from the following points of view:

1. No particular pressure from political parties or society
2. Well integrated communities while maintaining a distinct ethno-cultural profile
3. Freedoms and rights adopted as part of the EU accession package in 2004
4. Political participation
5. Free movement of persons, goods and services between the EU and the kin-state

With a relatively liberal immigration policy there is a possibility for new migration of ethnic Russians into Lithuania, either through acquisition of real estate (summer dwellings, apartments) or by establishing joint-venture businesses. On a regular basis there are forums and

business conferences such as Visagina's Russian-Lithuanian Forum.²⁸ The attractive conditions for businesses – access to European markets, bank credits at European interest levels, transferable profits – are of particular interest in the western parts of Russia.

In terms of pensions, Lithuania and the Russian Federation signed an agreement in 1997 allowing for transfers in accordance with work periods in respective territories and/or the right to a pension in accordance with national legislation.²⁹ According to the Institute of Ethnic Studies,³⁰ Russians in Lithuania are covered by minority legislation and facilities are created under the House of National Communities and other local institutions that provide protection for and development of their cultural identity. There is print media in the Russian language (about 18 titles),³¹ and the radio channel *Russkoje Radio Baltii* (Russian Radio of the Baltics) is quite popular among both Russians and Lithuanians due to its music programs. The press landscape in Lithuania differs from that of Estonia and Latvia as several daily papers have both Lithuanian and Russian versions allowing for local and global news delivery.³² General media accessibility is high – especially social media are very popular in Lithuania.³³

LITHUANIA AND THE EU

Lithuania is a Schengen country and part of the Eurozone since January 2015. It receives almost €1 billion from the EU, mainly for regional development. The agricultural sector is almost fully financed by the EU.³⁴ Also, support for various aspects of socio-economic equalization, including modernization of the education sector, is provided by the European Social Fund. There are 11 MEPs from Lithuania, representing different political orientations, including ethnic Russians and Russophone minorities. In addition, Lithuania currently has nine seats in the Economic & Social Council and nine representatives in the Committee of Regions. In

2016 Lithuania received €1.499 billion while contributing €0.319 billion. Investment from the EU is on a high level. Lithuania is among the most well-funded countries in the whole Union.

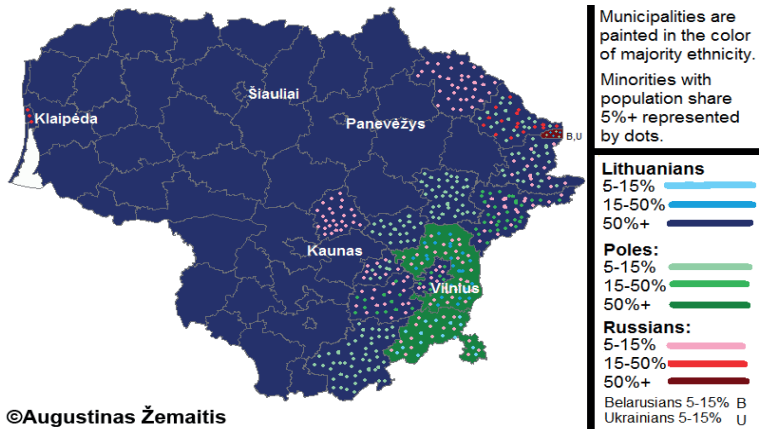


Figure 4. Ethnic minorities in Lithuania, and share of the local population.
(Source: truelithuania.com³⁵)

EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY PERSPECTIVES AND EU MEMBERSHIP

The annexation of Crimea and the break-away situation in Eastern Ukraine has put renewed focus on Narva (Estonia) and Daugavpils (Latvia), both densely populated by ethnic Russians and other Russian-speaking minorities.

Europeanisation

At the end of 2017, Estonia completed its military build-up, a build-up that should be seen as a warning to potential Russian attempts to intervene on behalf of the Russian population. The reverse securitization of minorities, as part of *Pax Russica* (Russian World)

and used in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, seems not to gain any ground among Russians or Russian-speaking groups in Estonia and Latvia. On several occasions, the self-proclaimed Donetsk Republic has addressed Narva (its sister city since 2006) for both material and political support for their struggle. The refusal by Narva to assist Donetsk could be seen as an example of current relations.

EU membership puts the Russian minorities of the Baltic States in a very advantageous situation vis-à-vis the offers coming from the Russian Federation. Democratic freedoms – freedom of movement and free labour movement – allows Baltic State citizens and non-citizens to travel and work in the EU. The EU provides financial support to integration strategies through the state budget as well as through different structural funds such as the European Social Funds and the Regional Development Fund. Both funds support socio-economic alleviation and development in regions densely populated by minorities, especially for the young people, who have difficulties in finding employment. The Baltic States were hit quite hard when the Russian Federation in 2014, in response to EU sanctions upon the annexation of Crimea, imposed a ban on imports of products from the EU. All three countries still have high export rates to the Russian Federation and received no compensation from the EU for the losses. The ban also complicated the energy supply to the Baltics as they are still attached to the electricity grids of Russia and Belarus. The EU is now implementing a project of synchronization of power supply with other EU countries, yet the fear is that once completed the prices will rise and it will affect poorer, mainly minority regions.

The Russian state and its diaspora organizations cannot compete with or counterbalance the EU. Nevertheless, it tries to re-establish economic and business ties with Russian minorities by developing tourism infrastructure and other forms of cooperation that are mutually beneficial. In many cases, only Russian businesses are prepared to invest in minority regions like Narva, Daugavpils or Ignalina.

If Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania wish to have a rational and balanced relationship with its minorities, the governments need to adopt not only integrative approaches but also an inclusive attitude to the ethnic Russians and other Russian-speaking minorities. This would mean that they could become full-fledged citizens not only by passport but also by civic participation in all aspects of public life.

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NATIONAL, ETHNIC, LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN POLAND – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Tomasz Wicherkiewicz

Not so long ago Poland celebrated the ten-year anniversary of entry into force of the *Law on Ethnic and National Minorities and Regional Languages*. The commemoration was noticeably weaker than the fifth anniversary, but still quite remarkable considering Poland's relatively small repertoire of ethnic and linguistic diversity. The *Law on Ethnic and National Minorities and Regional Languages* came into official effect in January 2015, but preparatory legislative works had continued from the beginning of Poland's democratic transformations. This allegedly made the Law the longest-proceeded legal act in the history of the Third Rzeczpospolita.¹

When eventually adopted, the 2005 Law was perceived as a summary frame for the system of national/ethnic/language minority protection in the new Poland as a member of the new Europe.² For both the minorities themselves and the state administration, the document turned to serve as the main point of reference in all public domains of minority life.

The transformations that started in 1989/1990 had already brought significant changes to the state policy towards minority issues; followed by a prevailingly positive societal support expressed in public debates and a dramatically growing interest in prob-

lems of ethnicity and minorities. The previously (in the communist-ruled People's Republic of Poland = PRL) recognized groups (such as Belarusians, Czechs and Slovaks, Jews, Lithuanians, Roma, Russians, Ukrainians, or Tatars and Karaims),³ as well as newly acknowledged minorities (e.g. Armenian) gradually adapted their structures to the new conditions, and started reformulating their (language) policies, even if originally to a very limited extent. More difficulties emerged in the process of official and public recognition of the German and Rusyn-Lemko⁴ minorities, although the existence and official representative structures of both groups were eventually approved at the beginning of the 1990s.

Numerous activities were undertaken with the intention of strengthening the presence of minorities in the public sphere. The 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland includes two articles concerning the language situation/policy:

Art. 27: Polish shall be the official language of the Republic of Poland. This provision shall not infringe upon national minority rights resulting from ratified international agreements.

Art. 35: The Republic of Poland shall ensure Polish citizens belonging to national or ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language (. . .).

The 1999 *Law on the Polish language* was intended to protect the Polish language as the state's official language, the nation's cultural welfare, and the expression of national identity. According to its Art. 2. "the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups shall remain intact". Provisions for the possibility of introducing a minority language as auxiliary in those areas with a "considerable share of the non-Polish population, where minority languages could be used in bilingual place-names, in personal names and in local administration" were included too. That regulation was to be extended

and specified by *the Law on national and ethnic minorities*, then still under preparation.

The *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, ratified by Poland in 2000, included provisions for the following national minorities: Armenians, Belarusians, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Karaims, Lemkos, Lithuanians, Roma, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars, and Ukrainians, as well as a special reference to the Kashubs as an “ethnic group in the Province of Pomerania, who cultivate their regional traditions and use a language different from the Polish language”. The monitoring reports concerning the implementation of the Convention were published in 2002, 2007 and in 2012,⁵ the fourth cycle report due in April 2017.

The final stage in adopting the new state’s post-transformational policy towards regional and minority languages was the ratification of the Council of Europe’s *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Having signed it in 2003, Poland finally ratified the Charter as the 24th member-state in 2009, after long discussions and debates.

According to the statement contained in the instrument of ratification deposited in Strasbourg:

The Republic of Poland declares that it shall apply the Charter in accordance with the Act on national and ethnic minorities and on regional language, dated 6 January 2005. The Republic of Poland declares, in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 1, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages that, within the meaning of the Charter, minority languages in the Republic of Poland are: Belarusian, Czech, Hebrew, Yiddish, Karaim, Kashub, Lithuanian, Lemko, German, Armenian, Romani, Russian, Slovak, Tatar and Ukrainian.

The regional language is the Kashub language.

The national minority languages are Belarusian, Czech, Hebrew, Yiddish, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak and Ukrainian.

The ethnic minority languages are Karaim, Lemko, Romani and Tatar.

The non-territorial languages are Hebrew, Yiddish, Karaim, Armenian and Romani.

Quite surprising and unprecedented in the hitherto practice of the *Charter* ratifications was such a detailed classification of languages concerned into “national” or “ethnic minority languages”. Kashubian was again officially labeled a “regional language”. Another originality was the choice of provisions selected from the *Charter* by Poland’s Ministry of Interior and Administration and the parliamentary Committee for National and Ethnic Minorities, accompanied by a statement that all of them should be applied for all the languages listed. That has stayed in obvious contradiction with the spirit of the *Charter*, according to which diverse obligations should be adopted for stronger and weaker languages, and without any differentiating between the Part II (general obligations) and Part III (detailed provisions) of the convention.⁶

POPULATION CENSUSES AND THE LAW ON NATIONAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES AND ON THE REGIONAL LANGUAGE

Before the transformations, the existence of the minority communities had not only been neglected or ignored, but even approximate related data or statistics had been unavailable. None of the population censuses since 1932 referred to national/ethnic or linguistic (minority) issues.⁷ Therefore, all numerical figures referring to minorities, be it officially recognized or not, were solely based on rough estimations by minority groups themselves or/and researchers.

The results of two population censuses (carried out in 2002 and 2011) revealed some figures related to minority ethnicity and language use, although numerous doubts and ambiguities concerning the census methodology and practices were reported by minority communities, sociologists and independent statisticians.

The 2002 census included the following questions:

- i. Which nationality do you consider yourself?*
- ii. Which language do you use most often in a home context?*

According to the census, **444 590** Polish citizens (of over 38 million, i.e. slightly over **one percent**) declared they belonged to a national minority – a number which differed considerably from estimates made previously by scholars and minority organizations.

In many individual cases, it was difficult to give an unbiased answer to the question as to which ethnic or national group a person belongs to. A surprisingly high total of about 775 000 participants did not declare their nationality.

The data obtained during the census and officially published as its results included the following figures:

	<i>Which nationality do you consider yourself?</i>	<i>Which language do you use most often in a home context?</i>
Silesian	173,153	56,643
German	152,897	204,573
Belarusian	48,737	40,650
Ukrainian	30,957	22,698
Roma(ni)	12,855	15,788
Russian	6,103	15,299
Lemko	5,863	5,627

Lithuanian	5,846	5,838
Kashubian	5,062	52,665
Slovak	2,001	921
Jewish	1,133	<i>Hebrew: 225</i>
Armenian	1,082	872
Czech	831	1,482
Tatar	495	-
Karaim	45	-

The results of the 2002 census gained a legally binding dimension through regulations in the *Law on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language*, passed eventually in 2005. The *Law* officially recognized nine national minorities (those having a kin state: Armenian, Belarusian, Czech, German, Jewish, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian),⁸ four ethnic minorities (i.e. those without a kin state: Karaim, Lemko, Roma, Tatar),⁹ and the regional language (Kashubian),¹⁰ granting them in general the same linguistic rights, such as the right to education in/of their mother tongues, access to mass media, the right to use names in their original version, etc.

Contrary to previous estimates by specialists, and to the surprise of minority communities, Poland turned out to be actually one of the most homogenous countries in Europe as far as the linguistic or ethnic diversity is concerned.¹¹ Even if the state was to officially recognize fourteen minority/regional languages, the total share of autochthonous minority/regional language speakers would amount to less than two percent of the citizens.

The fifth anniversary of the of entry into force of the *Law on Ethnic and National Minorities and Regional Languages* was hence celebrated pompously in 2010 by minority communities, state and regional administration and academia, and marked with preparations for the next population census. The 2011 nation-wide survey

was to be much better focused on minority questions. However, its methodology actually turned out to be even less reliable than in 2002.

Two types of forms available only in electronic form were used for the purposes of the 2011 census. A long form with a broad range of topics with many (over 120) questions was used in sampling survey, whereas a short form (16 questions) was used in the full-scale survey, mostly in order to update data from registers and information systems. Electronic forms were available on-line, and a short form was also available off-line. The forms were prepared for use by an application designed for portable devices of the hand-held type as well as for Internet application which was used during self-enumeration by the Internet. The electronic application was provided with glossaries for questions.¹²

As part of the census, a complete survey of the population in 86 municipalities was conducted, initially selected on the basis of the 2002 census results. The main criterion of selection was that at least 10 % of the population in the municipality belonged to a national or ethnic minority (according to the 2002 census). The long form was used for persons living in the sampled municipalities, whereas persons living in other dwellings were expected to fill in the shorter form. The questions regarding national or ethnic identity as well as the language used at home were added to both forms, since none of the administration systems included information on nationality that could be used in the population census. In the opinion of the census administration, the data from that survey were of essential importance for the so-called “minority municipalities”, i.e. those, where minority languages could be introduced on an auxiliary basis.

Out of 38.5 million Polish citizens, an enormous majority (98 %) turned to be monolingual ethnic Poles; the results for other minority ethnicities/nationalities as well as for their languages were as follows: ¹³

	minority & regional languages		national / ethnic identity declared	
	mother tongue	languages spoken at home	as the only one	as one of identity components
Polish	37,656,090	37,815,606	37,072,615	871,440
Silesian ²	140,012	529,377	375,635	471,085
Kashubian	13,799	108,140	16,377	216,170
German	58,170	96,461	44,549	103,265
Ukrainian	28,172	24,539	27,630	23,370
Belarusian	17,480	26,448	30,195	16,592
Romani	8,612	14,468	9,899	7,149
Russian	17,048	19,805	5,176	7,870
Lemko	4,454	6,279	5,612	4,919
Lithuanian	5,408	5,303	4,830	3,032
Armenian	2,115	1,847	2,031	1,591
Czech	890	1,451	969	2,477
Slovak	648	765	1,889	1,351
Jewish	Hebrew	321	1,636	5,871
	Yiddish	90		
Tatar	-	9	665	1,251
Karaim	-	-	233	113
unspecified	521,842	519,698	521,470	
other dialectal or regional identities declared:	Polish-Belarusian borderland dialect, Belarusian-Ukrainian dialect, Ruthenian, Simple Belarusian, Highlanders' dialect		Kocievian, Highlander, Greater-Polish, Masurian, Cieszyn-Silesian, Zaglembian, Tuchola-Borowiak, Ruthenian, Mazovian, Kurpian, Boyko	

The above figures clearly indicate how numerically and proportionally weak the minority communities turned out to be in contemporary Poland, how marginal the role of minorities had become, and – in consequence – how vulnerable or endangered minority/regional languages are. The only languages that can be seen as ethnolinguistically safe are the national minority standard languages taught in schools for ethnic minorities. One example is the standard variety of Lithuanian (which is both a subject and the language of instruction), another is German and Ukrainian due to their international prestige, although the position of these languages in Poland may be compromised, as a result of complicated, but still under-researched, (language) attitudes toward German(s) and Ukrainian(s) on the part of the Polish majority.

All the other minority and regional languages and their varieties in Poland have to be considered from vulnerable to critically endangered.¹⁴

BILINGUAL PLACE-NAMES IN 'AUXILIARY' MINORITY AND REGIONAL LANGUAGES

The first bilingual place-names in the history of Poland were introduced pursuant to the 2005 *Law on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language*, along with the potential 'auxiliary/supporting' status of languages assigned to all minority communities: 9 national minorities, 4 ethnic minorities (Karaim, Lemko, Roma, Tatar), and the regional language (Kashubian), granting them in general the same linguistic rights, such as the right to education in/of their mother tongues, access to mass media, the right to use names in their original version, etc.

The Law introduced a plurality of minority communities and their languages to the Polish legal system. Along with educational and cultural rights, the minorities were granted the right to use their languages as 'auxiliary/supporting' languages in those municipal-

ities, where at least 20 per cent of inhabitants declared affiliation to a minority. This is where the authorities made a very clear and concrete use of the national population census results, without having informed the responding citizens in advance about the legal consequences of their declarations in 2002.

Therefore, most minorities decided to participate actively in the preparations for, as well as procedures and promotion of the next census (to be held in 2011), in order to demonstrate higher numbers and a higher share of minority populations.

The results of the 2002 census revealed 51 municipalities, where more than 20 per cent of inhabitants declared affiliation to a minority nationality: 28 German, 12 Belarusian, 10 Kashubian and one Lithuanian.¹⁵

The introduction and actual appearance of bilingual place-names in the hitherto monolingual landscape of Poland were great innovations for the public administration (especially at the directly involved municipality level); they were also a challenge for the communities – both minorities and local Polish majorities, who were afraid of revealing themselves according to the rigid scheme: “Minority vs. Majority”. They also referred to negative historical associations (recalling e.g. the German minority’s role of the Fifth Column, or the support of the Soviets by Belarusian or Jewish minorities in 1939). The opinion polls showed a rather reluctant attitude towards installing “bilingual” names.

According to Łodziński 2016, in 2005, 63 % of the respondents were against placing boards with names in a minority language next to the ‘original’ Polish names and 26 % supported them (11 % of respondents said “hard to say”). Ten years after the adoption of the law on minorities and the introduction of bilingual names, the opinion on them did not change much. In 2015, most of the respondents (60 %) were against them and 32 % supported them.

The presence of additional names in minority languages indicates the socially important role of language in identifying identities in ethnically diverse regions in contemporary Poland. They became

publically visible signs of the distinctiveness of minorities, setting “symbolic boundaries” around the local community. Before, they had been limited primarily to the study of recognized minority languages in schools and folklore events. The process of socio-economic changes in Poland, especially industrialization, migration from the countryside to the cities and the expansion of mass culture in the Polish language (mainly radio and television), were also favorable to the massive assimilation (with varying intensity in particular periods of post-war history) of minorities and minority languages; and strengthened by the Polonizing role of the Roman-Catholic Church. All these phenomena have strengthened the natural processes of language assimilation of minorities and the domination of the Polish “literary” language at the expense of other minority languages and dialects. This includes the regional varieties previously considered dialects by both Polish scholarship and public opinion that (have) strived for “linguistic independence”, such as Kashubian or Silesian. From a linguistic perspective, it was difficult to talk about the ethnic-linguistic diversity of the country.

The above-quoted regulations (in footnotes) reveal, that the burden of introducing additional names has been transferred to the level of local authorities, and – to a lesser degree – to the local communities themselves. They, together with local minority organizations, may be the leading actors in their implementation, although they did not directly influence the process of drafting the 2005 Law at central level, or the specific administrative arrangements therein. The local authorities have the freedom to decide on the implementation and can influence and control the local process of introducing the bilingual names. The political representation of minorities in municipal councils plays an important role, also through lobbying and voting decisions. Since the 1990s, minority representatives have been present in local authorities in all regions inhabited by minority groups in Poland. Here and there, they have become an important public forum for minority group interests. In the 2006 municipal elections, 420 representatives

of national and ethnic minorities were elected into municipal councils, and 32 became municipality mayors. Similarly, in the 2010 elections, 350 of them were elected to the municipal councils. In turn, in the 2014 elections, 43 representatives of national and ethnic minorities became mayors, and 452 sat on the boards of municipal councils, predominantly in the provinces of Opole (Germans), Podlachia (Belarusians, Lithuanians), Subcarpathia (Ukrainians), Pomerania (Kashubs), Silesia (Germans), and Warmia-Masuria (Ukrainians). Most effective at the level of local and regional politics are representatives of the German, Belarusian and Kashubian communities.¹⁶

As stated earlier, on the basis of the 2005 legal provisions (20-percent threshold for persons belonging to a minority based on data from the 2002 census), additional place-names in minority languages could be introduced in 51 municipalities. This included the following minority languages: German (28 municipalities), Belarusian (12), Lithuanian (1), and Kashubian (10 municipalities). The first bilingual signs with additional names appeared in Kashubia (municipality of Szymbark/Szimbarck), and in Silesia (village of Łubowice/Lubowitz and municipality of Radłów/Radlau).¹⁷

By the end of 2016 a total of 1 211 additional names in 58 municipalities had been introduced in the minority or regional languages, including:

- 31 municipalities with **359 German** names,
- 23 municipalities with **786 Kashubian** names,
- **30 Lithuanian** names in one municipality,
- **27 Belarusian** names in one municipality, and
- **9 Lemko** names in two municipalities.

Still, all of this constitutes an extremely low percentage - 1.1 % of all officially recognized names of localities in Poland (according to the list of official names of localities and their parts from 2012).

The presence of bilingual place-names in the public landscape, even if not welcomed or accepted, was tolerated on a local scale.

The amendments to the 2005 Law, prepared and announced for its tenth anniversary, were to include two crucial regulations enforcing and extending the role and status of minority or regional languages:

- the common threshold for an administrative unit to adopt a minority or regional language as ‘auxiliary’ and to use it on bilingual place-names was to be lowered from 20 to 10 percent of local population declaring their minority identity (still according to the results of the recent census)
- the respective regulations for the level of municipalities (*gmina*’s) were to be extended to the level of counties (*powiat*’s), what could result in accepting Kashubian, Belarusian and/or German as auxiliary languages in several counties

The ceaseless appeals of Silesian organizations to be recognized as representatives of the Silesian ethnic minority and/or of Silesian as a regional language in Poland came to nothing.¹⁸ Since 2014, efforts for official recognition as a regional language community have also been undertaken actively by the microcommunity of *Wymysiörys* from the town of Wilamowice in Southern Poland.¹⁹

The year 2015 was marked not only by the tenth anniversary of the *Law on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language*. The parliamentary elections in October 2015, preceded by presidential elections in May 2015, were to turn Poland’s political scene upside down. Both elections were won with a small majority by the right-wing populist, national-Catholic conservative party *Law and Justice* (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) and their candidate Andrzej Duda respectively.

Seemingly of symbolic character was one of the very first political decisions of the new President, who, on the day after parliamentary elections, refused to sign and consequently rejected the Amendments to the *Law on national and ethnic minorities and on regional language*. According to his Chancellery, the President’s doubts were raised by the possibilities of using minority languages

– as auxiliary and in addition to the official language – in contacts with county (*powiat*) authorities. In the present legal state, this is possible only in proceedings with municipal (*gmina*) authorities. The ability to use an auxiliary language means that persons belonging to minorities would have the right to address the municipal (and possibly county) authorities orally and in writing in their own language, and to receive on request, also orally or in writing responses or certificates issued in the official language or auxiliary language. Also citizens of EU and EFTA Member States would have been entitled to use an auxiliary language. As the official argument to reject the amendments, the President referred to a lack of financial estimations of costs incurred by the counties and municipalities involved.

Minorities in Poland have understood the rejection as a symbolic determinant of a new minority policy of the state. Besides, the decision has also been perceived as a presage marker of harsher bilateral relations with Germany and Lithuania, as these are the only EU/EFTA member states whose national languages function also as minority languages in Poland. In many opinions uttered by nationalist conservatives, the position of minority languages in Poland is much better than those of Polish in Lithuania and Germany respectively; the former fiercely combating Polish orthography when spelling the Polish minority's names and surnames, the latter refusing to recognize the '*polnischstämmige Bevölkerungsgruppe*' as one of the national minorities in the *Bundesrepublik*.

Very soon the bilingual place-names were to become one of the main battlefields of a new historical policy of the Polish authorities, strongly supported by a significant share of public opinion. Since 2015, many bilingual road signs with names in Lithuanian, German, Lemko, Belarusian (the latter two obviously in Cyrillics), or even Kashubian, have been regularly painted over or destroyed. Hostile actions have also been undertaken in regions and in relation to most of minority communities, their cultural, historic, cultural or linguistic memorials and monuments.



*The Cyrillic-lettered name of the Lemko settlement Regietów / Регітів
smashed in September 2017 (photo: T. Wicherkiewicz)*

POLICY OF MONOPOLIST HISTORICAL MEMORY AND 'ANTI-MINORITISM'

Not only bilingual place-names – or any other inscriptions in minority languages – have been targeted by various actions undertaken either anonymously or quite overtly by various right-wing activists and their organizations. More and more frequent attacks on persons who speak foreign or minority languages or who 'look non-Polish' are being reported.

Recent years saw attacks and/or acts of vandalism on Jewish, Ukrainian, German cemeteries, a defamation of a 17th-century mosque in eastern Poland, but first and foremost on various memorials of symbolic importance for individual minority groups.

Moreover, the state administration overtly ignores – or, in some cases supports – mass events convoked under the banners of the "politics of memory", which intentionally (mis)address relations of Poles and Polish majority with any kind of minorities, be it national, religious or cultural. Quite famous in that respect have become e.g.

rallies of the *National Radical Camp* ('Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny') and/or other far rightist movements (including e.g. hooligan football fan clubs) in regions inhabited by national-religious minorities in Eastern Poland. For example, against the Ukrainians in the city of Przemyśl in Subcarpathian province²⁰ or on behalf of Polish and Catholic supremacy in important Belarusian and Orthodox centers, like the town of Hajnówka in the Province of Podlachia (see below). During the rally of the National Radical Camp in 2016 in the city of Wrocław, a puppet resembling a Jew was reviled and burnt in public. Not infrequent are anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim excesses, also with the participation of and/or support expressed by the Catholic clergy to the nationalist ventures.

Also, the new state-orchestrated historical policy seems to ignore any multi-faceted analyses and perspectives of events, facts and persons, which had been and could have been looked upon from various national, ethnic, cultural or religious angles. The actively adopted and supported policy of memory includes a ban on any reference to mistakes or atrocities committed by Poles, Polish organizations or Polish state (even ethnic cleansings initiated by the Polish communist authorities are not univocally condemned anymore).

In 2017, the Ukrainian and Lemko communities in Poland celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Operation *Vistula* ('Akcja Wisła') carried out in Spring/Summer 1947.²¹ Worth stressing is that until 1989, the *Akcja Wisła* constituted a taboo in any official discourse. Only after the socio-political transformations, the Ukrainian and Lemko organizations could refer to the deportations as mass traumas for their communities. Any compensation has not been granted, however, except for a symbolic condemnation expressed by the Polish Senate in 1990, by the President of Poland Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 2002, or jointly by the Polish President Lech Kaczyński and his Ukrainian counterpart in 2007. The 2017 anniversary commemorations had long been prepared by minority communities, various institutions and NGOs. A few months before the celebrations, the state and all its agencies at all authority levels

withdrew from the organization of the events and suspended any financial support. It also boycotted all the commemorative events, that eventually took place without any official state representatives and mainly thanks to the country-wide crowd-funding action organized by Polish and Ukrainian non-governmental organizations.²²

As already mentioned, numerous anti-minority events have recently taken place in Białystok and Province of Podlachia (*województwo podlaskie*), which nowadays constitutes the most multi-ethnic (and multilingual in a sense) province of the otherwise rather homogeneous Polish state. According to the censuses of 2002 and 2011, the number of persons declaring an ethnicity other than Polish amounted to 50 000–55 000 (4.1 - 4.6 per cent of the province inhabitants).²³ Even if the total percentage is not very high, the province officially emphasizes its multiethnic character and uses it in e.g. tourist campaigns. Nevertheless, it is in Podlachia where most nationalistic incidents have taken place in recent years, including a defilement of Jewish cemeteries,²⁴ desecrations of a Tatar mosque, overspraying Lithuanian and Belarusian village names on bilingual signs²⁵ or overpainting (with Polish nationalistic symbols) monuments commemorative for the Lithuanian ethnic group.²⁶

National and ethnic minorities in Podlachia are increasingly concerned about the rise of radical nationalist sentiments and events such as those celebrated in Białystok by the nationalist sections.²⁷ Government officials at the central and provincial levels claim that the situation is monitored by security services. In their opinion, there are no cases of violating the law, freedom of assembly is secured, and no direct interventions are necessary.

Belarusian or Tatar minority activists believe that the views expressed during the “March of the Doomed Soldiers” (*Marsz Żołnierzy Wyklętych*)²⁸ in Hajnówka, or in other marches of the Nationalist Radical Camp, are dangerous. Similar concerns are uttered more and more often by representatives of minority communities all over the country.

Worth mentioning here is also the case reported by the German minority organizations to the European courts of law.²⁹ In 2015 the authorities of the provincial capital of Opole announced a plan to expand the city limits and area at the expense of the surrounding municipalities, inhabited by significant German communities and provided with bilingual place-names in German as auxiliary language. The motion was foremost justified with the increase of the developmental potential of Opole. Many legal experts pointed out errors in the proposal. Nevertheless, and in spite of mass protests in the communities concerned with the reform (the German minority saw the decision as a danger to the official status of German as auxiliary language in the area), it was positively evaluated by the central Government and implemented legally on January 1st, 2017.

Instead of a summary or any strategic prognosis, which seems impossible to provide at this stage of quite chaotic developments regarding the situation of national, ethnic and linguistic minorities in Poland, another quotation will be cited here. This is a general image of Poland's minority policy expressed by one of the members of the Parliamentary Committee for National and Ethnic Minorities (from the ruling party *Law and Justice*), when discussing the legitimacy of the 2005 Law (May 2016):³⁰

[...] after all, what has been done for the minority languages and for minorities is great proof that we [Poland] are in the forefront in this area, aren't we? Reaching into our true tradition of being the first, multinational Commonwealth [*Rzeczpospolita*], we are Europe's best animators and educators (...) world class specialists in such a multinational context and in a multicultural sense, also from a multidisciplinary and pragmatic perspective, right? We have [reached] a compatibility of cohabitation, because when it comes down to it, ours is a great, splendid, mutually fulfilling, complete and fertile diversity. So we have this diversity already and we don't need to create it anew, do we? [...]

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NOTES

- 1 Rzeczpospolita (calque from Latin *res publica*) is the Polish endonymic term referring to the consecutive state(hood) forms: Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania (I Rzeczpospolita), the interbellum Republic of Poland (II Rzeczpospolita), the communist People's Republic of Poland (PRL = Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa), III Rzeczpospolita (after 1990), and IV Rzeczpospolita as a next form of the Polish state(hood) postulated and referred to by the political semantics of the actually ruling party 'Law & Justice' (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; 2005-2007 and since 2015).
- 2 Poland entered the Council of Europe in 1991, and the European Union in May 2004.
- 3 For more details of minority and minority language policy and developments in communist Poland, see Majewicz & Wicherkiewicz 1990, 1998.
- 4 The Rusyns are communities that use East Slavic language varieties in Central Europe, that live or lived in the Carpathian mountain range and, also, that adhere to the traditions of Eastern Christianity. The Rusyn language complex (often and by many treated as a group of dialects of Ukrainian) comprises of the following varieties: Lemko in Poland, Pryashiv Rusyn in Slovakia, Subcarpathian Rusyn in Ukraine, Pannonian Rusyn in North Hungary, Rusyn in Vojvodina (an autonomous province in Serbia). The corresponding ethnic taxonomies refer to the (Carpatho-)Rusyn nation, although still questioned fiercely by most of the Ukrainians (who have considered Lemkos/Rusyns an 'ethnographic group' of the Ukrainian nation. For more information, see e.g. Michna, Ewa 1995. *Łemkowie. Grupa etniczna czy naród?* [the Lemkos: an ethnic group or a nation?]) Krakow: Nomos and/or its review In English available: <http://www.lemko.org/magura/scholar/michna.html>
* All Internet sources were accessed in October 2017.
- 5 http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/Table_en.asp#Poland
- 6 More on Poland and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, cf. Wicherkiewicz 2014 and Wiśniewiecka-Brückner 2011.
- 7 with an ambiguous exception of the "Universal summary population census" in 1946, which labeled four categories: 1. Poles, including the verified or validated autochthons, 2. the autochthons under verification or validation, 3. Germans, and 4. other nationalities. According to the communist nomenclature, the Autochthons were citizens of the pre-War German Reich, who on their own will and ethnic identity or upon administrative regulations revealed Polish nationality. The category of "verifiable / validable" autochthons included mainly Silesians of Upper Silesia, Kashubs and Slovicians of Pomerania, Masurians and Warmiaks=Ermlanders of East Prussia, as well as ethnic Poles in other former borderland territories
- 8 Art. 2:
 - (1). A national minority, as defined by the Act, shall be a group of Polish citizens who jointly fulfil the following conditions:
 - 1) is numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the Republic of Poland;
 - 2) significantly differs from the remaining citizens in its language, culture or tradition;
 - 3) strives to preserve its language, culture or tradition;
 - 4) is aware of its own historical, national community, and is oriented towards its expression and protection;
 - 5) its ancestors have been living on the present territory of the Republic of Poland for at least 100 years;
 - 6) identifies itself with a nation organized in its own state.
 - (2). The following minorities shall be recognized as national minorities:

- 1) Belarusians;
- 2) Czechs;
- 3) Lithuanians;
- 4) Germans;
- 5) Armenians;
- 6) Russians;
- 7) Slovaks;
- 8) Ukrainians;
- 9) Jews.

9 Art. 2:

- (3). An ethnic minority, as defined by this Act, shall be a group of Polish citizens who jointly fulfil the following conditions:
 - 1) is numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the Republic of Poland;
 - 2) significantly differs from the remaining citizens in its language, culture or tradition;
 - 3) strives to preserve its language, culture or tradition;
 - 4) is aware of its own historical, national community, and is oriented towards its expression and protection;
 - 5) its ancestors have been living on the present territory of the Republic of Poland for at least 100 years;
 - 6) does not identify itself with a nation organized in its own state.
- (4). The following minorities shall be recognized as ethnic minorities:
 - 1) Karaims;
 - 2) Lemko;
 - 3) Roma;
 - 4) Tatars.

10 Art. 19:

1. For the purposes of this Act and in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages “a regional language” shall mean a language that is:
 - (1) 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; and
 - (2) different from the official language of that State; it shall not include either dialects of the official language of the State or the languages of migrants.

2. The Kashubian language shall be a regional language within the meaning of the Act (...)

The absence of an (in)definite article in the Polish language may be of crucial importance here for the other language communities, who would apply in the future for the similar status (of a regional language). The official Polish wording of the Art. 19, para 2 reads: “Językiem regionalnym w rozumieniu ustawy jest język kaszubski”; the English quotation here is excerpted from the official web-page of the Ministry of Interior and Administration [<http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal.php?serwis=planddzial=353&id=4392&sid=a52d5ee252af087abdbdb45b9eec0f4a> – accessed in 2014]. The legislative and executive bodies (i.e. the Parliament and the Ministry) have definitely intended to limit the use of the term “regional language” solely to Kashubian, although applications to obtain the same status have been repeatedly articulated by the Silesians and Wilamowiceans.

11 Wicherkiewicz 2007.

- 12 E.g. the terms which referred to national or ethnic identity were defined as follows:

Nationality or ethnic identity – is a declared (based on a subjective impression) individual feature of each person expressing his/her emotional or cultural relationship, or the one following from his/her parents’ origin, to a specific nation or ethnic com-

munity. For the first time in the history of Polish censuses, the 2011 census allowed the inhabitants of Poland to express complex national and ethnic identities by asking the respondents two questions regarding national and ethnic affiliation.

Language spoken at home - the language used in everyday contacts with the closest persons. In census 2011 a solution has been adopted which enables respondents to register two names of non-Polish languages regardless of the fact, whether they were spoken jointly with Polish language, or exclusively.

Mother tongue - the language learnt as first spoken language in the early childhood, or possibly the language parents or custodians used the most when speaking to a person in her/his early childhood.

13 http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/nsp_PLK_HTML.htm

14 More details on individual languages and their situation: <http://inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl> (ed. T. Wicheriewicz)

15 Art. 9:

1. With the municipal authorities, it shall be possible to use, in addition, the minority language as well as the official one.
2. An additional language might be used only in these municipalities where the number of minority residents, whose language is to be used as a supporting one, is no less than 20 per cent of the total number of the municipality residents, and who have been entered into the Official Register of Municipalities (...), where an auxiliary language is used.
3. The possibility of using an auxiliary language shall mean that persons belonging to a minority (...), shall have the right to: 1) apply to the municipal authorities in the additional language, either in a written or oral form; 2) obtain on his/her distinct request, an answer in the auxiliary language, either in written or oral form.

Art. 14:

The number of municipality residents belonging to a minority (...) shall be constructed as the number officially stated as a result of the latest census'

Art. 12:

1. It shall be possible to used additional, traditional place-names alongside:
 - 1) official names of places and geographical objects;
 - 2) street names - established in the Polish language, pursuant to separate regulations.
2. Additional names (...) shall be used solely on the territories of municipalities entered into the Official Register of Municipalities where names are used in the respective minority language (...). Entries into the Register shall be made (...) on the request of the municipal council [...]
5. The additional names (...) shall be placed after the respective Polish name, and shall not be used separately;
6. The establishment of an additional name in a given minority language shall take place in accordance with the spelling rules of the language concerned.
7. An additional name of a place or geographical object in a minority language shall be established provided that:
 - 1) the number of municipality residents belonging to a minority is no less than 20 per cent of the total number of this municipality residents or, in case of an inhabited place, in consultations (...) more than a half of its residents who have taken in the consultations were in favor of the establishment of an additional place-name in the minority language;
 - 2) the municipal council's application gained approval of the Committee on Names of Places and Geographical Objects(...).
8. The relevant provisions of the Act (...) shall apply to the (...) additional street names

- in a minority language.
- Art. 15 defines the financial obligations, when implementing Art. 9 and 12:
1. The costs involved in the introduction and the use of a supporting language on the territory of the municipality and the costs involved in the introduction of additional names (...) shall be borne by the municipal budget, (...)
 2. The costs involved in the change of information boards, resulting from the adoption of an additional name of a place or physiographical object in the minority language shall be borne by the State budget.
- 16 Łodziński 2016.
- 17 Rudnik is also the first municipality to introduce additional names in the minority language, although the German minority accounts for less than 20% of the municipality's population (13.4% according to the 2002 census). It was based on public consultations conducted in one village - Łubowice, which is the birthplace of one of the most eminent German poets of the Romantic era of Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857). For this reason, many Germans visit it; There is also the Upper Silesian Center for Culture and Meetings, which bears its name.
- 18 More on the Silesians and their national/language movement cf. Kamusella 2009.
- 19 More on the community of Wilamowice(an) cf. Wicherkiewicz & Olko 2017.
- 20 <https://112.international/ukraine-and-eu/march-participants-shouted-death-to-ukrainians-near-ukrainian-center-in-polish-city-przemysl-11948.html>
- 21 The official aim of Akcja Wisła was to deprive the detachments of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), still fighting against the communist regime in south-eastern confines of post-War Poland, of any civil and material support. The operation, however, was the main step towards "solving the Ukrainian problem in (communist) Poland."
- Resettled were people not only from the south-eastern regions on which UPA was active, but also from territories on which no clashes with UPA "bandits" had taken place. Altogether, about 140,000 persons were resettled, including about over 30,000 Lemkos.
- As a result, vast territories (some 1.5 thousand km²) were almost completely deserted and remained such till 1956; so were about 170 abandoned villages.
- The Ukrainian and Lemko resettlers constituted in 1947 the last wave of settlers to populate the western and northern territories deserted by the Germans, hence they were to inherit the worst, most devastated and plundered ex-German households and farms. The semi-official propaganda depicting the newcomers as "Ukrainian murderers and bandits" preceded their arrival. Many conflicts emerged almost immediately, when the newcomers were, because of the shortage of households, located in houses already occupied by Poles. It was not allowed to settle more than just a few Ukrainian or Lemko families in the same village or town. Families coming from the same village had, as a principle, to be separated; all this aimed at the destruction of former communities. In certain regions emptied by the Ukrainians and Lemkos, Polish newcomers — mainly repatriates from the USSR, Podhale highlanders and refugees from Greece were being settled and state-owned farms were being founded.
- 22 http://epoznan.pl/news-news-74645-MSWiA_odmowilo_wsparcia_obchodow_rocznicy_Akcji_Wisla_Zwiazek_Ukraiincow_prowadzi_zbiorke_na_spoleczne_obchody
- 23 The largest minority in the region being Belarusians (although speaking various varieties of the East-/West-Slavic linguistic continuum); other minority groups include Lithuanians, Tatars, Russian Old-Believers, Ukrainians, Roma.
- 24 <http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,20143961,pomnik-upamietniajacyzydow-w-rajgradzie-zdewastowany-znowu.html?disableRedirects=true>

- 25 <http://bielskopodlaski.naszemiasto.pl/artykul/orla-reduty-dwujezyczne-tablice-znow-zamalowane,4173580,art,t,id,tm.html>
- 26 cf. report.: <http://www.red-network.eu/?i=red-network.en.items&cid=276>
- 27 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ts-slmzmDA>
- 28 The “doomed soldiers” (*Żołnierze wyklęci*) is a term applied to members of anti-communist Polish resistance movements formed in the later stages of World War II and its aftermath by some members of the Polish Underground State. These clandestine organizations continued their armed struggle against the Stalinist government of Poland well into the 1950s. The guerrilla warfare included an array of military attacks launched against the communist regime’s prisons and state security offices, detention facilities for political prisoners and concentration camps that were set up across the country.
The “Doomed Soldiers” constitute the central axis of the new Polish historical policy, introduced hastily, among others, in all public mass-media as well as in the imprudently implemented reform of the entire educational system (September 2017). As a collective hero, the “Doomed Soldiers” are seemingly to replace all other personal role models and historical value references, even such as the soldiers of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, who had remained the main reference of Poland’s hitherto historical policy. According to some opinions and observations, the survivors of the Warsaw Uprising too often expressed too liberal and “too European” opinions in reference to current social and political issues.
Some scholars argue that the anti-communist underground was obviously anti-Semitic and responsible for e.g. some murders of Jews, often using the pre-war anti-Semitic motifs and the stereotype of the Jewish population. According to some “conservative” researchers, the anti-Semitism among the Doomed Soldiers could be linked to, or even excused by, a large share of Jews among the communist apparatus of power and terror. Many “liberal” historians, as well as minority circles, stress the fact that some of the Doomed Soldiers’ armed units wittingly targeted Jewish civilians all over Poland, or such minority communities, as Slovaks in the borderland area with Slovakia, Belarusian Orthodox villages in Podlachia or Ukrainian population in central-eastern region of Lublin. Such facts are recently overtly neglected or referred to as deeds of glory committed by the heroes enthroned and admired by the current historical policy.
- 29 <https://www.fuen.org/hu/hirek/single/article/fuen-supports-the-german-minority-in-poland>
- 30 <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/zapisy8.nsf/0/6D967609E66E71ACC12581250044E37E/%24File/0185208.pdf>

APPENDIX I.

Municipalities, regions,¹ county boards and councils that are part of the respective administrative areas²

Table a. Administrative area for **Finnish**, municipalities, 2018.

<p>Borlänge, Borås, Botkyrka, Degerfors, Enköping, Eskilstuna, Fagersta, Finspång, Gislaved, <i>Gällivare</i>, Gävle, Göteborg, Hallstahammar, Haninge, <i>Haparanda</i>, Hofors, Huddinge, Håbo, Hällefors, Järfälla, <i>Kalix</i>, Karlskoga, <i>Kiruna</i>, Köping, Lindesberg, Ludvika, <i>Luleå</i>, Malmö, Mariestad, Motala, Norrköping, Norrköping, Norrköping, Nykvarn, Oxelösund, <i>Pajala</i>, Sandviken, Sigtuna, Skellefteå, Skinnskatteberg, Skövde, Smedjebacken, Solna, Stockholm, Sundbyberg, <i>Sundsvall</i>, Surahammar, Söderhamn, Södertälje, Tierp, Trelleborg, Trollhättan, Trosa, Uddevalla, <i>Umeå</i>, Upplands Väsby, Upplands-Bro, Uppsala, Västerås, Älvkarleby, Örebro, Örensköldsvik, Österåker, Östhammar and <i>Övertorneå</i>.</p>
Total = 64 of altogether 290 municipalities.
<p>Bold = in the larger Stockholm region. <i>Italics</i> = also an administrative area municipality for another national minority language</p>

Table b. Administrative area for **Meänkieli**, municipalities, 2018.

<i>Gällivare, Haparanda, Kalix, Kiruna, Luleå, Pajala and Övertorneå.</i>
Total = 7 municipalities
<i>Italics</i> = also an administrative area municipality for another national minority language

- 1 There are 20 regions/county councils in Sweden. Those county councils that have some extraordinary tasks of regional development are also called regions. The division and naming process is, however, complex.
- 2 Tables are based on information from the County Board of Stockholm, which together with the Sámi Parliament have a supervisory task concerning the Law on national minorities and minority languages (LoNM), <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/Sv/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/Pages/forvaltningsomraden.aspx>.

Table c. Administrative area for Sámi, municipalities, 2018.

Arjeplog, Arvidsjaur, Berg, Dorotea, <i>Gällivare</i> , Härjedalen, Jokkmokk, <i>Kiruna</i> , Krokom, <i>Luleå</i> , Lycksele, Malå, Sorsele, Storuman, Strömsund, <i>Sundsvall</i> , <i>Umeå</i> , Vilhelmina, Åre, Åsele, Älvdalen and Östersund.
Total = 22 municipalities
<i>Italics</i> = also an administrative area municipality for another national minority language

Table d. Regional administrative areas for all three languages, including regions, county councils and county boards, 2018.

Dalarna, Gävleborg, Jämtland, Jönköping, Norrbotten, Skåne, Stockholm, Södermanland, Uppland, Västerbotten, Västmanland, Västernorrland, Örebro and Östergötland, as well as the region of West Götaland/Västra Götalandsregionen.
Total = 15

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The texts in this book are based on a Ralf Dahrendorf-Roundtable that was organized in Helsinki in the spring of 2018.

The book covers minorities living in six different countries bordering the Baltic Sea. It provides the reader with essential knowledge of some of the largest minorities in the area and of the particular challenges facing them in the 21st century.

The minorities covered are the Sámi people, the national minorities in Sweden, the Russians in the Baltic States and the different minorities living in Poland. There is also an article reflecting on the concept and definition of minorities in Europe.

The articles in this book seem to underline two basic facts.

Europe is unintelligible without some knowledge of its minorities and historic communities.

And, furthermore, that Europe is a continent filled with many visible and invisible borders.