

**COMMENTARY ON THE SIXTH OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL
MINORITIES REGARDING THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER
THIS CONVENTION BY THE CZECH REPUBLIC (ACFC/OP/VI(2024)2prov)**

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1. Part Summary

Use of minority languages

Recommendation

12. In the media, a public television programme is available in one minority language (Polish), while public radio programmes of a very short duration are offered in four minority languages (German, Polish, Romani, Slovak) and an (irregularly broadcast) private radio programme is offered in one minority language (Slovak). One newspaper exists in a minority language (Polish).

Comment:

There are many national minority organizations operating in the Czech Republic that publish printed and online titles in minority languages. These include, for example, Landesecho and Eghalând Bladl, which are published in German. The magazine *Prágai Tükör* is intended for Hungarians living in Prague. In addition, two Bulgarian periodicals, *Balgari* and *Roden glas*, are traditionally supported by a subsidy program of the Ministry of Culture (MoC). The MoC subsidy program also regularly supports Roma periodicals aimed at Roma youth (*Kereka* magazine), the Roma minority as a whole (*Romano hangos*), and specialized publications focused on the study and understanding of the Roma ethnic group (*Romano džaniben*). At the same time, some audiovisual projects are also supported (TUKE.TV, z.s. or Regionální televize, s.r.o.). The list of these organizations and titles is not exhaustive and is much broader.

Recommendation:

13. The right to use a minority language in dealings with the administrative authorities is significantly impaired by the fact that an applicant must provide an interpreter if no official speaks the minority language in question (with the exception of Slovak). In practice, only the Polish language is used in communication with local authorities and at railway stations/stops. Following an amendment in 2023 to Act No 301/2000 on registry offices, name and surname, it is possible to make a declaration of marriage or registered partnership in a minority language.

Comment:

We propose to amend the wording of the recommendation in the last sentence to bring it into line with the legislative framework of the Czech Republic: *"Based on the amendment to Act No. 301/2000 Coll., on registers, names and surnames and on amendments to certain related acts, as amended, it is possible from January 1, 2024 to make a declaration of marriage or partnership in a minority language."*

2. Article 4

Legal and institutional framework for the protection of the national minority rights

Recommendation:

44. The rights of persons belonging to national minorities are guaranteed at constitutional level by the (Czech) Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Articles 24 and 25) and

generally enshrined in the Minorities Act which follows in part the rights contained in the Framework Convention. The provisions of the Minorities Act refer to specific legal regulations for further elaboration of these rights. In accordance with specific legal regulations, certain rights of persons belonging to national minorities, for example concerning the establishment of a committee for national minorities, teaching in a minority language¹, and topographical indications in a minority language, depend on the proportion of Czech citizens with a permanent residence ("municipality citizens") in the given municipality (census-based 10% threshold of all "municipality citizens" in municipalities and 5% threshold in regions). To calculate whether a national minority reaches a threshold, the numbers of those who declared a single (minority) "nationality" (e.g. Polish) are added to those who declared two "nationalities" (e.g. Polish and Czech) in the area concerned. For the establishment of a committee for national minorities, the census results concerning several national minorities and persons affiliating with them can be cumulated to reach the 10% threshold. With regard to access to other minority rights (e.g. topographic indications), the 10% threshold must be reached by a single national minority and persons affiliating with it.

Comment:

The Ministry of the Interior currently sees no reason for legislative changes to the issue described, as the percentage threshold does not limit the exercise of the rights of national minorities in any way, but only the obligation of local authorities to take measures in favor of national minorities, such as foreign-language names. The rights of national minorities can be exercised regardless of the representation of the national minority, provided that the national minority proposes it and the local government accepts the proposal.

3. Article 5

Support for the culture of national minorities

Recommendation:

73. As far as cultural facilities related to national minorities are concerned, the authorities continue to support the Museum of Romani Culture which regularly organises a variety of events (exhibitions, conferences, concerts) to raise awareness of Romani culture. During the monitoring cycle, the authorities also financed reconstruction works at the "Museum of Moravian Croats/Croatian House" in Jevišovka (CZK 29 286 233/€ 1 163 542), which had been bought by the Croatian authorities and put at the disposal of the Croat minority. The building hosts a collection of items about the history, culture and traditions of the Croat minority that was officially registered in the Central Register of Collections in 2024. The registration enables the minority association that runs the "Museum of Moravian Croats" to apply for grants from additional programmes of the Ministry of Culture. Collections registered under Act No. 122/2000 may receive institutional funding. In 2024/2025, the "Museum of Moravian Croats" was only open to the public upon request.² In addition, the city of Prague continues to support

¹ In conformity with Section 14(1) of Act No 561/2004 on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and other Education, a local committee for national minorities has to be established.

² See [the sixth report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, pp. 34.

the House of National Minorities which provides national minority associations with space for exhibitions, performances and offices.

Comment:

With regard to this recommendation, we would like to point out that, by Resolution No. 16/29 of the Prague City Council dated September 12, 2024, the House of National Minorities was approved as a contributory organization of the City of Prague as of November 1, 2024.

Recommendation:

75. The Advisory Committee was also informed that no sustainable solution had yet been found to the long-standing³ problem of preserving graves of the German minority (around 25-28% of all graves in Czechia),⁴ of which a large number are in a poor and often disrespectful state. In 2016, the Government Council for National Minorities set up the “Working Group on the Situation of German (and Other) Graves in the Czech Republic”, which is now also dealing with the preservation of graves of persons belonging to the Russian and Ukrainian minorities at the Olšany Cemetery, its chapel and crypt as well as a crypt for Serbian war prisoners of the First World War. The preservation of graves of persons belonging to national minorities is according to interlocutors hampered by the fact that municipalities remain inactive, responsibilities are not clearly defined and financial resources have not been allocated.

Comment:

Since 2016, the Government Council for National Minorities has had a working group to address the situation of German and other graves, whose objectives include the establishment of a subsidy program for the preservation of German graves.

In 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned a project in the BETA 2 program of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, entitled "The issue of German graves in the Czech Republic: a proposal for a comprehensive approach," which was subsequently developed by GEOTest, a.s., and a research team from several universities and research institutions. The results of the project were presented at the end of 2023, and one of the outputs of the project is a proposal for a subsidy program.

Based on a resolution of the Czech government, a subsidy program for the restoration and maintenance of German graves will be administered for a period of three years starting in 2026. The Working Group for the Resolution of German and Other Graves also participated in the preparation of the subsidy program. The subsidy program will be financed from the budget of the Ministry of Regional Development or from European Union funds. Currently, an allocation of approximately CZK 10 million is planned for 2026, and this amount could increase to CZK 20 million per year in subsequent years.

³ Measures taken to preserve German graves are *inter alia* based on the 1992 German-Czechoslovak Treaty of Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Co-operation.

⁴ See “[Deutsche Gräber sollen erhalten](#) bleiben” (German graves should be preserved), in: Landesecho, May 2023, pp. 18–19.

4. Article 6

Intercultural dialogue and mutual respect

Recommendation:

84. *In the field of culture, the authorities finance cultural programmes that aim to raise awareness of national minorities and persons affiliating with them, for example the Greek, Hungarian and Roma minorities.⁵ In addition, several awareness-raising activities are carried out by museums, for example the Days of Jewish Culture (Art Museum Olomouc) which inter alia aim to contribute to eliminating antisemitism and religious intolerance.⁶*

Comment:

We recommend amending the wording to "*whose aim is, among other things, to contribute to the prevention of anti-Semitism and religious intolerance.*"

Hate speech and hate crime

Recommendation:

104. *The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to pursue their efforts to combat stereotypes and prejudice against persons affiliating with minorities, including through minority-specific awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. in social media). Furthermore, the Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to publicly condemn and, in cases of criminal relevance, effectively prosecute and sanction all instances of hate speech and anti-minority rhetoric in the public discourse.*

Comment:

In 2025, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, and the Working Group on Prejudiced Violence and Hate Speech developed recommendations entitled: *Strategic Recommendations for a Comprehensive Solution to the Problem of Prejudiced Violence and Hate Speech*.⁷ These recommendations establish a systematic procedure for institutions to follow when responding to hate speech and hate violence. The document focuses on prevention, awareness-raising, and education in this area. Another aim of the strategic recommendations is to remove barriers for whistleblowers in both the real and digital environments.

⁵ For example the festival for national minorities "Domovina" organised biannually as part of the International Folklore Festival, the World Roma Festival "Khamoro", the Days of Hungarian Culture and the Greek Days, see [Sixth report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, p. 35.

⁶ Additional examples: Wallachian Open Air Museum: international festival "Roma Song", international festival of Slovak folklore "Jánošík's Ducat"; Moravian Museum: exhibition about the Greek minority; see [Sixth Report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, pp. 29–30, 32, 35.

⁷ See [Recommendation of the Government Plenipotentiary for Human Rights on Prejudiced Violence and Hate Speech](#)

5. Article 9

Minority broadcast, print and digital media

Recommendation:

107. As far as print media are concerned, the newspaper “Głos” addresses persons belonging to the Polish minority in Polish and is published two days a week with financial support from the state. Furthermore, in 2024 the authorities undertook to support the creation of a newspaper in German. Almost all national minorities⁸ publish at least one state-funded magazine or bulletin in their languages at biweekly, monthly or less frequent intervals. For example, the Roma minority produces the biweekly magazine “Romano hangos” and the youth magazine (“Kereka”). “Roden glas”, the periodical of the Bulgarian minority, appears five to six times per year. An amendment to Government Decree No 98/2002, which had been planned to enter into force in the first half of 2025, shall enable the financing of digital media in minority languages.⁹

Comment:

In 2025, a draft of a new government regulation was created on the conditions and method of providing subsidies from the state budget for the activities of members of national minorities and for the promotion of equality, inclusion, and participation of members of the Roma minority. At this point, the inter-ministerial comment procedure has been completed. The government regulation should come into effect on January 1, 2026.

6. Article 10

Use of minority languages in administrative and judicial bodies

Recommendation:

116. Following an amendment to Act No 301/2000 on registry offices, name and surname (Registry Offices Act) in 2023, it is possible to make a declaration of marriage or registered partnership in a minority language if in the last two censuses at least 10% of the residents of the municipality where the declaration is being made declared their affiliation with the national minority concerned, both persons request it, and the official and the registrar have a command of the minority language.¹⁰ However, the protocol on the conclusion of the marriage and the entry into registered partnership is always drawn up in Czech.

Comment:

We recommend amending the wording of “116. Following Act No. 414/2023 Coll., which amended Act No. 301/2000 Coll., on registers, names and surnames and on amendments to certain related acts, as amended, it is possible, with effect from January 1, 2024, to make a

⁸ Bulgarian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Roma, Russian, Rusyn, Serbian, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese minorities.

⁹ See [Sixth Report](#)

submitted by the Czech Republic, pp. 39-40; information provided by the authorities on 6 September 2024.

¹⁰ See [the sixth report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, p. 43.

declaration of marriage or partnership in the language of a national minority, provided that in the last two censuses at least 10% of the citizens of the municipality in whose territorial jurisdiction the declaration is made have declared themselves to be of that nationality, and at the same time if both fiancés agree to this and the officiant and registrar are proficient in the language of this national minority. The marriage or partnership certificate shall always be drawn up in the Czech language.

Recommendation:

122. The Advisory Committee is pleased that the right to use a minority language has been extended to the procedure of concluding a marriage or registered partnership. However, implementation of this right depends on the 10% threshold, thereby following the Act on Municipalities (Section 29). The Advisory Committee considers it unfortunate that the 10% threshold requirement was included in a new legal provision at a time when it was known that only one national minority reaches this threshold. Considering that Article 10(2) of the Framework Convention applies in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, the Advisory Committee considers it important that the right to use a minority language in the procedure of concluding a marriage or registered partnership is not made dependent on the 10% threshold. In addition, the Advisory Committee notes that fulfilling the requirement that the official and the registrar have a command of the minority language is unrealistic for most national minorities as long as the authorities do not recruit persons able to work in minority languages (see preceding paragraph).

Comment:

We recommend amending the wording (p. 25), first sentence, so that the word "registered" is deleted, as this option does not concern registered partnerships, which will no longer be possible to enter into in the Czech Republic with effect from January 1, 2025, but rather partnerships entered into under the Civil Code (partnerships under the Civil Code can only be entered into in the Czech Republic from January 1, 2025). Similarly in the fourth sentence.

7. Article 11

Use of personal names and display of topographical indications in minority languages

Recommendation:

126. Following amendments to the Registry Offices Act, since 1 January 2022, women can request their surname to be used without the feminine ending of the Czech language and without the necessity to prove that they have an ethnic affiliation ("nationality") other than Czech. It is now also possible to change one's maiden name into a minority language name.¹¹

Comment:

We recommend the following amendment to the wording: *"126. Following the amendment to the Registry Offices Act, women may, as of January 1, 2022, request to use their surname in the masculine form, i.e., without the feminine ending in the Czech language, without having to*

¹¹ See [the sixth report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, pp. 42–43.

justify their request in any way, for example, by proving that they have a nationality other than Czech. With effect from January 1, 2024, it is also possible for the birth surname to be understood as the surname given in the language of the national minority. At the request of a citizen of the Czech Republic who is a member of a national minority whose name or names and surname are entered in the register in Czech or a language other than Czech, or at the request of his or her legal representatives, his or her name or names and surname shall be entered in the register in the language of the national minority.

Recommendation:

130. The legislation concerning the obligatory introduction of topographical indications in minority languages (Section 29(2) of the Act on Municipalities) has not changed during the sixth monitoring cycle. This obligation covers the name of the municipality, its districts, streets and other public spaces and the designation of state and local authority buildings and is dependent on whether at least 10% of the citizens of the municipality have declared their affiliation with the respective national minority in the last two censuses and on a request by representatives of the minority to the local authorities. A municipality may also voluntarily introduce topographical indications in a minority language irrespective of the local proportion of persons belonging to a national minority or other conditions. The grant programme “Support for the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” supports the production, installation and maintenance of signs and the production of related publications (e.g. digital or print maps with traditional place names).¹²

Comment:

Decisions on the names of streets and other public spaces are made by the municipality in accordance with Section 28 of the Municipalities Act, with the municipal council deciding on this matter within the scope of its independent authority (Section 84(2)(s) of the Municipalities Act). The name of a street or other public space must always be given in Czech, in accordance with Section 29(1) of the Municipalities Act. It must also comply with the rules of standard Czech and be sufficiently dignified. Streets and other public spaces may not be given identical names. The name of a street or other public space must be unique within the municipality and may not be used for living public figures. In the case of names referring to historical events or personalities, names of indisputable and historically verified facts should be chosen, and the municipality should avoid using names that support various currents of opinion leading to the restriction of citizens' rights and freedoms. Furthermore, if at least 10% of the municipality's citizens have registered as belonging to a national minority in the last two censuses, it is necessary, in accordance with Section 29(2) of the Municipalities Act, to indicate street names in the language of that national minority, provided that representatives of the national minority concerned request this through the national minority committee and the committee recommends it. Alternatively, a request may be made by an association which, according to its statutes, represents the interests of the relevant national minority and has been active in the municipality for at least five years. Given that decisions on the names of streets and other public spaces are the responsibility of the municipality, there is nothing to prevent the municipal council from taking this step (i.e. indicating street names in the language of the national minority) on its own initiative, even if the above conditions are not met, nothing prevents it from

¹² See [the sixth report](#) submitted by the Czech Republic, pp. 43–44.

taking this step (i.e., introducing street names in the language of the national minority) on its own initiative if it considers that the situation in the specific municipality requires it or that it may support the local national minority.

A committee for national minorities is then established by a municipality in whose territory, according to the latest census, at least 10% of the municipality's citizens belong to a nationality other than Czech, if an association representing the interests of the national minority requests this in writing. At least half of the committee members must be members of national minorities, unless this condition cannot be met due to a lack of candidates from among national minorities (Section 117(3) of the Municipalities Act). This committee is also established under the Regions Act and the Capital City of Prague Act. The difference lies de facto only in the percentage quota, which is set here at 5% of citizens declaring a nationality other than Czech (cf. Section 78(2) of the Act on Regions and Section 78(2) of the Act on the Capital City of Prague). Similarly, in the area of committees for national minorities, it is not excluded that they may be established "voluntarily" by the municipal council even if the legal requirements for their establishment are not explicitly met.

We consider the above-mentioned legal regulation to be adequate, functional, and satisfactory in practice, and also in view of the fact that we have not recorded any interest on the part of national minorities in changing the existing legal conditions in the long term, we do not plan any conceptual amendment, as we do not consider it necessary. We propose that the legal regulation be left in its current form.

Recommendation:

137. The Advisory Committee asks the authorities to address the issues concerning the transliteration of personal names in the Belarusian and Vietnamese languages.

Comment:

With regard to the above, we would like to note that, in cooperation with representatives of the Vietnamese national minority in the Government Council for National Minorities and with PhDr. Lucie Hlavatá, Ph.D., a court expert specializing in the verification and registration of Vietnamese names and surnames, published information in January 2025 intended for all registry offices on the procedure for transcribing Vietnamese names and surnames (Ministry of the Interior Information No. 2/2025 – Transcription of Vietnamese Names and Surnames).

8. Article 14

Teaching in and of minority languages

Recommendation:

165. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to introduce teaching of Slovak in public education at all appropriate stages, in particular pre-school, and to ensure that there is an offer of Slovak university studies which is sufficient to train teachers of Slovak.

Comment:

The Framework educational program for primary education allows schools to specifically include Slovak as an additional foreign language. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports does not record interest in teaching Slovak in kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools, nor does it record statistical data on its teaching in schools. Teaching in Slovak in kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools can be provided in accordance with national legislation, but again, there has been no interest in this matter to date.

The Slovak language is also generally part of higher education in two ways. On the one hand, there are universities that focus on teaching Slovak as part of their study programs, but at the same time, there are teachers at Czech universities who use Slovak as their mother tongue in their teaching. This brings Slovak to the attention of the general public and maintains mutual understanding.

Recommendation:

166. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to introduce bilingual education in German and Czech by contacting the relevant schools together with the regional and local authorities concerned and co-ordinating this process at national level.

Comment:

In connection with the implementation of the protection of German under Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, a bilateral meeting was held in July 2025 with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and representatives of the German minority (with the support of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights). At this meeting was discussed, *the Strategic and Action Plan (2024-2028) for the fulfillment of the Czech Republic's obligations in the field of support for the German language in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, created by representatives of the German minority, and the measures contained therein concerning the accessibility and expansion of support for German at all levels of education. Based on this meeting, a meeting will be held in October 2025 under the auspices of the Government Commissioner for Human Rights with representatives of the local governments of the districts concerned, as founders of local schools, selected principals of primary and secondary schools, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and other stakeholders. The purpose of this meeting will be to present the Charter itself and its commitments and the possibilities for support from state authorities in financial, methodological, and organizational terms in introducing and making available German language teaching and education in German.

Recommendation:

167. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to raise awareness of the benefits of teaching in or of minority languages among persons belonging to the national minorities concerned, to regularly assess the demand, and where it exists, to offer such teaching.

Comment:

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports supports the educational activities of national minorities, including the Roma minority, within the framework of programs focused on the educational activities of national minorities and on supporting the integration of the Roma minority. These programs are the main source of dissemination of minority languages (e.g., Romani) through the leisure activities of non-profit organizations, where children have the opportunity to learn the language and communicate in it, which leads to the preservation of the language and the strengthening of identity and community ties.

If a school has permission from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to teach certain subjects in a foreign language, no application from the legal guardians of minor or adult students is required to complete this course. At the same time, the legislation does not specify a minimum number of students, as these are compulsory subjects.

9. Article 15

Effective participation in decision-making processes and public affairs

Recommendation:

172. Representatives of the Slovak and German minorities complained that, as part of a harmonisation of statutes of all governmental consultative bodies, the authorities intend to reduce the number of seats of the German, Polish, Roma and Slovak minorities in the Government Council for National Minorities from two to one, which would grant these national minorities the same number of seats as reserved for the other national minorities. The representatives of the Slovak minority have put forward a counterproposal according to which those national minorities whose languages are covered by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and with which a certain (to be determined) number of persons affiliate would maintain two seats in the government council. In view of a number of pending requests of the Slovak minority, particularly in the areas of education and media, they emphasised the importance that the government council becomes an effective advisory and initiative body.

Comment:

The amendment to the Statute of the Government Council for National Minorities, effective from October 30, 2024, states that a national minority will be entitled to two members on the Council if it meets at least two of the following criteria:

- i) the minority language is protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,
- ii) the minority has at least 10,000 members according to the latest census (including two nationalities),
- iii) the minority has more than 75,000 members according to the latest census (including two nationalities).

Currently, representatives of national minorities are represented in the Government Council for National Minorities in the following numbers: Belarusian (1), Bulgarian (1), Georgian (1), Croatian (1), Hungarian (1), German (2), Polish (2), Roma (2), Rusyn (1), Russian (1), Greek

(1), Slovak (2), Serbian (1), Ukrainian (2), and Vietnamese (1). There has been no reduction in the number of representatives for individual national minorities.