FUEN

EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF MINORITIES 2025 AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Information reported by
FUEN Member Organisations
in the context of the
7th Annual Meeting of the FUEN Working Group on Education
10-13 NOVEMBER 2025/ KOMOTINI, GREECE

education in FUEN

The Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) held its 7th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Education (WGE) from 10 to 13 November 2025 in the cities of Komotini and Xanthi, Western Thrace, Greece. The annual gathering brought together 34 participants from 11 European states, representing national minorities, educational institutions, school associations, civil society organisations and researchers. In a region shaped by complex histories of coexistence, the meeting focused on three primary themes: minority schooling systems, the situation of Turkish minority education in Greece, and teaching minority history at secondary and upper-secondary level.

The current report encompasses the participants' inputs with regard to the educational situation of the minorities they represent as well as online contributions of FUEN member organisations. The overview encompasses the information submitted by 10 minorities from 8 European states. Although it is not exhaustive, it well illustrates the current state of affairs. In focus are not only the common and specific challenges faced by the different minority communities across Europe, but also positive developments that need to be accounted for.

The report is divided into two main sections. The first one presents a comparative overview of the situation with minority history teaching, while the second provides details about the particular situation that minorities face in their states.

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

General situation

Across Europe, the educational situation of minorities is characterised by substantial variation in legal recognition, institutional design, and enforceability of rights, resulting in markedly different educational outcomes. A key dividing line emerges between contexts where minority education is grounded in explicit, rights-based recognition, and those where recognition is linguistic, symbolic, or permissive, with limited practical effect.

In several countries, minorities are formally recognised as national minorities, and minority education is embedded—at least in principle—within the public education system. This applies, for example, to the Croatian minority in Austria, the Sorbs in Germany, the German minority in Hungary, and the Greek minority in Ukraine. A comparable rights-based framework also exists in Croatia itself, where national minorities are constitutionally recognised and minority education is regulated under the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and the Act on Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities. In these cases, minority education is anchored in constitutional provisions, minority-specific legislation, or state education laws, and is delivered within public institutions. In Croatia, minorities may receive education through three legally defined models: full instruction in the minority language (Model A), bilingual education (Model B), or minority language and culture as a subject within Croatian-language schools (Model C). However, even within this group, implementation varies

widely. While Saxony provides a relatively comprehensive Sorbian educational infrastructure from preschool to grammar school, comparable guarantees are only weakly realised for Lower Sorbs in Brandenburg, and Croatian bilingual education in Austria remains territorially and institutionally constrained.

A distinct model is represented by Catalonia, where Catalan functions not as a minority add-on but as the principal language of instruction within the public education system. Here, language immersion is structurally embedded and supported by extensive policy planning, institutional investment, and curriculum regulation. Minority-language education is thus system-defining rather than compensatory, even though it operates in a legally and politically contested environment.

By contrast, some minorities remain entirely outside recognised minority education frameworks. The Macedonian minority in Greece exemplifies a situation of complete exclusion: despite binding international obligations dating back to 1923, the minority has no recognised legal status and no access to education in its language at any level. A similarly exclusionary situation exists for the Turkish community in the Dodecanese Islands, which falls outside the scope of Greece's minority regime and relies solely on informal community-based language initiatives.

The situation in the Netherlands illustrates a different type of limitation. Frisian (Frysk) is a recognised regional or minority language and holds co-official status in the province of Fryslân, yet this recognition operates within a permissive, non–rights-based framework. The Dutch state formally allows the use of Frisian in education but does not guarantee it as an enforceable right. As a result, minority-language education depends heavily on policy agreements, goodwill, and local initiative rather than on binding legal entitlements. Importantly, recognition is framed in linguistic and territorial terms, not as recognition of the Frisians as a national minority with corresponding educational rights.

Finally, some contexts, such as Ukraine, reflect a preservation-oriented approach. Minority languages, including those of the Greek community, are recognised within consultative and strategic frameworks, with measures focusing on higher education, textbooks, cultural inclusion, and endangered-language protection. However, these measures do not amount to a comprehensive, continuous system of minority-language schooling, particularly at primary and secondary levels.

Overall, the general situation reveals a **fragmented European landscape in which minority education ranges from systemically integrated models, through partial and uneven implementation, to complete exclusion**. **Formal recognition alone does not determine outcomes: the decisive factor is whether recognition is accompanied by enforceable rights, institutional capacity, trained teachers, and effective monitoring mechanisms.**

Problematic aspects

A central problematic aspect across the cases is the **gap between legal guarantees and practical implementation.** This gap appears in multiple forms and contexts.

In Austria, although bilingual education for the Croatian minority is legally guaranteed, implementation is uneven. In preschool education, the legally required minimum of six hours of

bilingual instruction is often not met, and no inspection mechanisms exist to verify compliance. At primary and secondary levels, Croatian is frequently taught as a second language rather than as a mother tongue, and bilingual instruction is geographically restricted to a small number of schools.

Territorial limitation is another recurring structural problem. Croatian bilingual education is confined to Burgenland, excluding Croatian communities in Vienna. Similarly, Sorbian education in Germany is strongly differentiated by region: while Upper Sorbs in Saxony benefit from robust institutional provision, Lower Sorbs in Brandenburg receive only optional foreign-language instruction, and there is currently no native-level Lower Sorbian teacher in the entire federal state. In Croatia, access to minority-language education is also uneven, as full Model A education is available only where sufficient numbers of pupils are enrolled, leaving many minority children—particularly in urban or dispersed settings—dependent on partial or extracurricular forms of provision.

Teacher shortages emerge as a cross-cutting challenge. Germany faces a general lack of Sorbian-speaking teachers, directly undermining the sustainability of existing provision. In Ukraine, the number of teachers able to test or pilot Modern Greek textbooks has dropped dramatically due to the war, creating bottlenecks in curriculum development and approval. Croatia similarly faces shortages of qualified teachers for certain minority languages, particularly for smaller communities and at secondary level, affecting the continuity and quality of minority-language instruction.

In several contexts, minority education is further weakened by policy inconsistency and legal uncertainty. In Catalonia, judicial suspensions of educational decrees have created uncertainty at school level, despite strong political commitments to Catalan as the main language of instruction. At the same time, sociolinguistic data show a marked decline in the everyday use of Catalan among students, particularly in peer interactions, indicating erosion of immersion practices beyond formal instruction.

Non-recognition and exclusion represent the most severe problematic aspect. The Macedonian minority in Greece remains entirely excluded from minority education, despite international obligations. Similarly, the Turkish minority in the Dodecanese Islands has no access to public bilingual education, relying solely on informal community initiatives after the closure of all Turkish schools by the early 1970s.

For Roma communities, particularly in Hungary, **systemic segregation and discrimination** remain dominant challenges. Despite improvements in educational attainment, a majority of Roma children attend segregated schools, face biased placement in special education, and encounter basic access barriers such as lack of school transport. Comparable risks of segregation and limited educational progression have also been identified for Roma pupils in Croatia, despite the formal availability of minority education models.

Finally, several cases highlight the **absence of enforceable mechanisms**. In the Netherlands, minority language education operates under a permissive rather than rights-based regime, with no effective sanctions for non-compliance with obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. As a result, most schools continue to operate almost exclusively in Dutch, even in officially bilingual regions. In Croatia, while minority education rights are clearly codified, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms remain largely administrative rather than judicial, limiting remedies when local authorities fail to ensure adequate provision.

Positive aspects

Despite structural challenges, the text documents a range of positive developments and promising practices across Europe.

One positive trend is **the adoption of strategic, long-term policy frameworks**. In Catalonia, the Pacte Nacional per la Llengua Catalana commits substantial annual funding and establishes a comprehensive roadmap up to 2030, reinforcing education as a core pillar of language policy. Similarly, in the Netherlands, instruments such as the Taalplan Frysk 2030 and the BFTK 2024–2028 articulate coherent goals for bilingual education and curriculum development. In Croatia, the legal clarity of the three-model system provides a structured framework that, where adequately resourced, allows for flexible adaptation to local demographic conditions.

Institutional strength and continuity are evident in certain contexts. The German minority in Hungary benefits from a comprehensive school network covering ages 3 to 18, strong involvement of minority self-governments, and systematic inclusion of minority history and culture in the curriculum. In Saxony, Sorbian education includes compulsory subject teaching in Sorbian, supported by a dedicated institutional infrastructure. In Croatia, minority councils and representatives play an institutional role in shaping educational provision, including curriculum content related to minority language, history, and culture.

Targeted programmes demonstrate strong impact where structural systems fall short. In Hungary, the Christian Roma College Network has enabled hundreds of Roma students to complete university degrees, with exceptionally high employment outcomes. Inclusive secondary schools such as the Dr. Ámbédkar School further illustrate the effectiveness of integrated, high-quality educational models.

Positive developments are also visible in teacher education and digitalisation. Germany's Institute of Sorabistics has presented a comprehensive reform concept aimed at strengthening Sorbian teacher training, while digital Sorbian-language resources are expanding. In Austria, a new multilingual pedagogical framework for early childhood education explicitly promotes bilingualism and multilingualism. Croatia has similarly expanded the availability of minority-language teaching materials and digital resources, particularly for Model C education, supporting language maintenance where full bilingual schooling is not feasible.

In contexts of conflict and instability, **resilience and preservation efforts** stand out. In Ukraine, despite the war and occupation of key regions, Modern Greek continues to be taught in higher education, textbooks are being updated, and endangered languages such as Urum and Rumeika are formally recognised within national preservation strategies.

Finally, **civil society engagement** emerges as a crucial positive force. Initiatives such as the planned Croatian bilingual school pathway in Vienna, advocacy by Plataforma per la Llengua in Catalonia, and legal action by Roma communities in Hungary demonstrate how minority organisations actively compensate for state shortcomings and push for greater accountability. Within Croatia, minority organisations and councils likewise play a central role in sustaining language education, advocating for local provision, and supporting extracurricular language and cultural activities.

COUNTRY/MINORITY INFO-SHEETS

Austria: Croatian Minority

General Educational Situation of the Croatian Minority in Austria

The Croatian minority is a recognised national minority in Austria and enjoys formal protection in the field of education, primarily through constitutional and minority-specific legislation.

Overall, while a solid legal framework for bilingual Croatian–German education exists—particularly in Burgenland—the practical implementation of minority education remains uneven and structurally limited. Significant gaps persist between legal guarantees and everyday practice across all educational levels. These shortcomings are compounded by limited institutional capacity, insufficient monitoring mechanisms, and the strict territorial confinement of bilingual schooling to a single federal state, despite the growing geographical dispersion of the Croatian minority.

The legal basis for Croatian minority education is anchored in Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty (1955) and further specified through the Burgenland Minority School Act (1994). Together, these instruments guarantee bilingual Croatian–German education in the federal state of Burgenland and form the core of Austria's minority education framework for the Croatian community.

At pre-school level, bilingual programmes are offered in 25 municipalities. However, implementation varies considerably. In many cases, the minimum legal requirement of six hours of bilingual instruction per week is not fulfilled. Moreover, there is no genuine bilingual pedagogical practice, and no systematic inspection mechanisms are in place to verify whether bilingual programmes are actually implemented.

At primary level, 29 schools provide some form of bilingual education. Of these, eight schools operate as fully bilingual institutions, while 21 schools offer Croatian only as a subject. Croatian is predominantly taught as a second language rather than as a mother tongue. This level is characterised by limited teaching materials, underdeveloped curricula, and a shortage of adequately trained staff. Provision for bilingual special-needs education is largely absent or extremely limited.

At secondary level, genuine bilingual instruction exists only in a small number of schools, notably in Oberwart/Borta, Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof, and Eisenstadt/Željezno. Outside these locations, Croatian is generally offered merely as an optional subject, without systematic integration into subject teaching or coherent bilingual learning pathways.

In higher education and teacher training, institutional capacity remains particularly constrained. Only one teacher training college, located in Eisenstadt, offers bilingual Croatian–German

teacher training. Other pathways, including BAfEP programmes and university-level studies, include Croatian solely as a single subject. Overall, teacher education opportunities are limited in scale and geographically concentrated, restricting the long-term sustainability of bilingual education.

A key structural problem lies in the strict territorial limitation of the bilingual schooling system to Burgenland. This framework excludes Croatian communities living outside the region, including a growing population in larger urban centres such as Vienna, where no public bilingual Croatian–German education system exists.

Specific Developments Affecting Croatian Minority Education in Austria

Positive developments

A recent positive development addressing the lack of bilingual education outside Burgenland is the establishment of the Croatian School Association "Rešetatić" in Vienna by the Croatian Centre and partner organisations. The initiative aims to create a private bilingual Croatian–German education pathway from kindergarten to Matura level, inspired by the Czech Komenský School model. While the project is currently still in the planning phase, it represents a potentially significant step towards expanding access to Croatian minority education beyond Burgenland.

In the field of early childhood education, the Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland introduced a *Sprachpädagogisches Rahmenkonzept* promoting bilingual and multilingual preschool education (German–Croatian–Hungarian). The framework explicitly values multilingualism and aims to improve the quality of language learning in early childhood settings.

Negative developments

At the systemic level, general funding cuts pose a growing risk to minority education. Federal funding for ethnic minorities—including Burgenland Croats, Slovenes, Hungarians, Roma, Czechs, and Slovaks—is scheduled to be reduced by €189,000 in 2025 and by €599,000 in 2026. These reductions threaten the sustainability of cultural and educational initiatives, including minority-language education.

Other / structural developments

The founding of the Croatian School Association "Rešetatić" also highlights a broader structural issue: the increasing reliance on private or community-driven initiatives to compensate for the lack of public bilingual education outside Burgenland. While such initiatives demonstrate strong community engagement, they also underscore the absence of a comprehensive, nationwide public framework for Croatian minority education.

Catalonia (Catalans in Spain)

General Educational Situation of the Catalans in Spain

Catalan is the principal language of instruction within the public education system in Catalonia and constitutes the core of the long-standing language immersion model. This model is designed to ensure universal competence in Catalan while maintaining bilingual proficiency and social cohesion within the education system.

Overall, the educational framework in Catalonia is characterised by a strong institutional commitment to Catalan as the main working and instructional language across public education. The immersion model remains the dominant organising principle of schooling, shaping curriculum design, teacher requirements, and the linguistic environment of schools. At the same time, the system operates within a highly contested legal and political context, which affects the stability and predictability of language policy implementation at school level.

The public education network plays a central role in sustaining Catalan-language education. Investment in educational infrastructure and facilities contributes to maintaining a comprehensive and accessible public school system in which Catalan is the primary language of instruction. While such investments are not language-specific, they indirectly support the transmission of Catalan language and culture by reinforcing the institutional framework in which Catalan-medium education is delivered.

The general educational situation is further shaped by ongoing public and political debate regarding educational outcomes, curriculum priorities, and language use in schools. These discussions reflect broader tensions concerning language policy, educational performance, and cultural transmission, and form part of the wider context in which Catalan-language education operates.

Specific Developments Concerning Catalan Language Education in Catalonia

Recent developments concerning Catalan-language education in Catalonia reveal a mixed picture. On the one hand, strategic policy initiatives and financial commitments demonstrate renewed institutional engagement with language promotion. On the other hand, sociolinguistic data, judicial interventions, and ongoing political debate point to structural vulnerabilities and implementation challenges within the education system.

Positive developments

A major strategic development is the signing of the *Pacte Nacional per la Llengua Catalana* (National Pact for the Catalan Language) by the regional government. The pact establishes a comprehensive roadmap up to 2030, structured around nine strategic work horizons and 21

action areas, including education, the labour market, culture, and digitalisation. It commits a minimum annual budget of €200 million to Catalan language policy, signalling a long-term, cross-sectoral approach to language promotion and reinforcing the central role of education within this framework.

Sociolinguistic data also point to positive trends in absolute terms. Between 2018 and 2023, the number of people aged 15 and above who report knowledge of Catalan increased by approximately 267,600, while the number of frequent Catalan users rose by at least 127,600. These figures indicate that both knowledge and active use of Catalan continue to grow in absolute numbers, despite demographic changes and population growth.

In the education sector specifically, the Catalan Department of Education adopted decrees and guidance in 2023–2024 reaffirming Catalan as the main working and instructional language in schools. These measures also included plans to strengthen teacher language requirements, notably through the introduction of a C2-level Catalan proficiency requirement for newly recruited teachers. The stated aim was to counter declining everyday use of Catalan and to safeguard the immersion model. While these measures reasserted the institutional commitment to Catalan, their implementation has been partially constrained by subsequent judicial decisions.

Further support has been provided through investment in educational infrastructure. In 2024, the European Investment Bank approved a €100 million loan to the Government of Catalonia for the renovation, expansion, and construction of public education facilities. Although primarily focused on improving educational environments and energy efficiency, this investment indirectly supports Catalan-language education by strengthening the public school network in which Catalan is the principal language of instruction.

Negative developments

Despite growth in absolute numbers, the relative social vitality of Catalan has declined. The share of the population in Catalonia for whom Catalan is the habitual language fell from approximately 36.1% in 2018 to around 32.6% in 2023. This decline raises concerns regarding the everyday social use of Catalan and its transmission, including within the educational context.

Data from the school environment further underline these concerns. A 2021 survey indicates that only 39.4% of secondary school students reported that they “always or almost always” speak Catalan with their teachers, down from 56% in 2006. Similarly, only 21.4% reported frequent use of Catalan during group activities, compared to 67.8% in 2006. These figures suggest a significant reduction in everyday use of Catalan in schools and a potential weakening of immersion practices in informal and peer-based interactions.

More recent data from the 2022 Language Policy Report of the Catalan Ombudsman’s Office and the Government of Catalonia present a somewhat differentiated picture. According to the report, 82% of primary school students and 73% of secondary school students state that they speak Catalan with their teachers in class. However, peer interaction remains markedly weaker: only 51% of primary students and 39% of secondary students report using Catalan in student-to-student interactions, meaning that Spanish predominates in around 60% of such interactions at secondary level.

Judicial developments have further complicated implementation. During 2024–2025, parts of the Catalan educational guidelines and decrees were temporarily suspended or annulled by decisions of the Catalan High Court, often following appeals by actors advocating increased Spanish-language instruction or contesting the legal wording of the measures. These rulings have generated legal uncertainty at school level, with mixed signals for school management and teaching staff. It should be noted, however, that these suspensions do not concern the proposed C2-level Catalan language requirement for teachers.

Educational language policy has also become increasingly politicised following lower-than-expected PISA results in 2023–2024. Critics argue that extensive immersion in Catalan may negatively affect performance in subjects assessed in Spanish or other languages. This position contrasts with data from the Generalitat de Catalunya, which indicate a significant decline in basic Catalan language use and competence. Other commentators emphasise the role of socioeconomic factors and methodological limitations in interpreting PISA results. The resulting debate risks influencing future curricular or instructional reforms.

Other / contested developments

Concerns have also arisen in relation to proposed curricular and legal changes at both national and regional levels. In December 2024, proposals to make Catalan and Spanish literature optional subjects at upper secondary level triggered strong reactions from language and cultural organisations, which view such changes as undermining cultural transmission and the institutional presence of Catalan. Supporters of the proposal have framed it as curriculum modernisation. The proposal has not entered into force, largely due to mobilisation by civil society actors, including Plataforma per la Llengua, which successfully advocated for increasing Catalan Language and Literature instruction to up to three hours within the educational curriculum. These debates continue to shape the contested landscape of Catalan language education policy.

Croatia: Serbian Minority

General Educational Situation of the Serbian Minority in Croatia

The Serbian minority in Croatia is a constitutionally recognised national minority and is formally entitled to minority education within the public education system. Minority education in Serbian includes instruction in the Serbian language and literature and the use of the Cyrillic script. In legal terms, these rights are clearly defined within the Croatian minority protection framework.

In practice, however, Serbian minority education is organised as a separate and parallel provision, largely disconnected from mainstream education. Minority education functions primarily as a supplementary track rather than as an integrated bilingual or intercultural model. Serbian language and literature are taught within dedicated minority curricula, while the dominant language of schooling remains Croatian.

Curricular design reinforces this separation. The Croatian language and literature curriculum does not include regional or minority literature, while the Serbian curriculum is positioned as an addition rather than an integral part of general education. As a result, minority education operates in isolation, with limited opportunities for intercultural learning or recognition of shared linguistic and cultural histories.

Language policy since the 1990s has further shaped this context. Croatian and Serbian are treated as fully distinct national languages in education, despite continued mutual intelligibility. This approach emphasises linguistic separation through terminology, orthography, and literary canons, narrowing the space for shared educational content.

Specific Developments Affecting the Serbian Minority in Croatia

Positive developments

Serbian minority education continues to be formally provided within the public education system, and the existing legal framework guaranteeing minority-language instruction remains in force. These legal guarantees ensure the continued availability of Serbian language and literature teaching and preserve the formal conditions for minority education, even in a challenging political and social environment.

Negative developments

Despite formal guarantees, Serbian minority education remains structurally marginalised. A persistent curricular asymmetry between dominant and minority education limits the visibility and legitimacy of minority knowledge, while Serbian minority education is framed as a supplementary provision rather than as a systemic component of general education. The public use of the Cyrillic script has further declined and remains contested, particularly in areas affected by depopulation and nationalist pressure, weakening both the symbolic and practical foundations of minority-language education. Limited intercultural engagement within the education system reinforces social and educational separation and restricts opportunities for mutual understanding.

Other developments

Academic research and civil society actors continue to critically assess the current model of minority education, emphasising the need for intercultural education approaches and shared curricular responsibility between dominant and minority education. These critiques highlight structural limitations in the existing framework and call for reforms that would integrate minority knowledge into mainstream education without assimilation.

Germany: Sorbian Minority

General Educational Situation of the Sorbs in Germany

The Sorbs, traditionally residing in Lusatia, a cross-border region in eastern Germany spanning Upper Lusatia in the Free State of Saxony (Upper Sorbs) and Lower Lusatia in Brandenburg (Lower Sorbs), are a recognised national minority in Germany and benefit from a comparatively strong framework of state protection and institutional support, including in the field of education. Overall, while this recognition is underpinned by legal guarantees and public support mechanisms—particularly in Saxony—the practical realisation of Sorbian education remains uneven. Clear disparities persist between the educational provision for Upper and Lower Sorbs, and the system as a whole is increasingly constrained by structural challenges, most notably a general shortage of teachers affecting Sorbian-language education in both relevant federal states.

These differences are closely linked to regional governance frameworks and the way educational responsibilities are implemented at the level of the federal states in which the Sorbian population traditionally resides. Education in Germany is a matter of federal state competence, and the legal and institutional arrangements for Sorbian education are therefore shaped by the specific policies of Saxony and Brandenburg, despite a shared national minority framework.

Before the start of compulsory schooling, Sorbian-language education is supported through a structured pre-school system. Across Upper and Lower Lusatia, approximately 30 kindergartens serving children aged 0 to 6 provide Sorbian-language educational offers, of which seven are fully Sorbian kindergartens located exclusively in Saxony. Language transmission at this level is organised primarily through immersion-based pedagogy, whereby children acquire Sorbian naturally through everyday interaction rather than formal instruction. This approach is implemented through the WITAJ model, which requires Sorbian-speaking educators to communicate exclusively in Sorbian, creating a full-language environment ("language bath") for early learners.

In the Free State of Saxony, the educational situation for Upper Sorbs is generally good. Saxon laws and related regulations explicitly guarantee Sorbian education from pre-school through the school system. A well-developed institutional infrastructure supports Sorbian-language education, including six primary schools, four secondary schools, and one Sorbian grammar school. In these institutions, Sorbian is taught as a mother tongue, and additional subjects are delivered in Sorbian on a compulsory basis for all pupils. Instruction follows a cross-school-type "2-plus" model, which ensures parity between Sorbian and German as languages of instruction. Pupils are grouped according to their language competence, ranging from mother-tongue proficiency to Sorbian as a second language for learners with little or no prior knowledge, and bilingual subject teaching is applied across non-language disciplines. Dedicated school coordinators and specialist advisers support the implementation of this model at school level.

Beyond these core schools, Sorbian is also offered as a second or foreign language at a further eleven schools. More broadly, Upper or Lower Sorbian can be learned within the wider school system at a total of 41 primary schools, nine lower secondary schools, three grammar schools, and two vocational schools, the latter focusing primarily on early childhood educator training.

In addition, fifteen after-school care facilities support Sorbian language use in the primary education phase outside formal classroom teaching.

Longitudinal data from Saxony indicate a steady increase in the number of pupils learning Sorbian. The total number of learners rose from 2,432 in the 2011/2012 school year to 2,900 in 2022/2023. Growth is particularly visible among pupils learning Sorbian at mother-tongue level or with high second-language proficiency, while the number of learners starting with very limited language competence has declined.

In contrast, the situation in Brandenburg, where Lower Sorbian is traditionally spoken, is more limited in scope. Lower Sorbian is taught only as a foreign language and exclusively on an optional basis. While Brandenburg's school law and accompanying regulations guarantee Lower Sorbian school education in principle, this legal commitment is not matched by compulsory or mother-tongue instruction within the mainstream education system. There is no provision for mother-tongue education, and Sorbian classes are facultative and can be discontinued by pupils.

Sorbian/Wendish instruction in Brandenburg is provided at six primary schools and one Lower Sorbian grammar school, primarily in the form of foreign-language teaching. Where staffing permits, bilingual teaching in selected non-language subjects is also offered. An additional ten primary schools and three lower secondary schools provide Sorbian mainly as a "language of encounter" rather than as a structured language-learning pathway.
In the 2022/2023 school year, a total of 1,791 pupils received regular Sorbian/Wendish instruction in Brandenburg.

Across both Saxony and Brandenburg, a general shortage of teachers negatively affects Sorbian education. This shortage constrains the implementation of existing legal guarantees and limits the sustainability and expansion of Sorbian-language teaching at all educational levels.

Specific Developments Affecting Sorbian Education in Germany

Positive developments

Positive developments have been observed in the area of digitalisation. The range of digital Sorbian-language formats and resources that can be used in schools has been steadily expanding, offering new opportunities for language learning and teaching support.

In the field of teacher education, the Institute of Sorabistics at the University of Leipzig remains the only institution providing academic training for teachers of Sorbian. The institute offers teacher training programmes, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Sorabistics, as well as a continuing education Master's programme in Lower Sorbian for teachers in Brandenburg. Although the current situation has been assessed as unsatisfactory, the university presented a comprehensive concept in December 2025 for the future development of the institute. The plan envisions strengthening the institute through the appointment of new teaching staff and professors, updating curricula, expanding course content, and launching targeted outreach and promotion activities. These measures raise expectations of a significant improvement in Sorbian teacher training.

In addition, planning is underway to introduce year-group-mixed teaching for Sorbian pupils at the first primary school, with implementation foreseen for the next school year. This initiative is currently in the planning and conceptualisation phase.

Teaching and learning materials for Sorbian education are supported by a dedicated institutional infrastructure. The WITAJ Language Centre, operating as a department of the Domowina umbrella organisation, is responsible for the development of all Upper Sorbian teaching materials for grades 1 to 12 in Saxony, largely in cooperation with the Domowina publishing house. Separate departments for language development and pedagogy operate in Bautzen and Cottbus, with the latter also hosting a specialised unit for Sorbian/Wendish educational development serving schools in Brandenburg.

Beyond compulsory schooling, Sorbian-language education extends into adult and lifelong learning. Adult education provision includes Sorbian language courses at different proficiency levels, certification programmes, and targeted language revitalisation initiatives for both Upper and Lower Sorbian.

Negative developments

At the same time, evaluations of Sorbian language competence among pupils indicate worrying trends. Assessments of language proficiency among eighth-grade pupils in Saxony over the past three years show a continuous decline in results, pointing to a deterioration in Sorbian educational language competence among children and adolescents.

In Brandenburg, the situation is particularly critical, as there is currently no teacher with Lower Sorbian language skills at a native-speaker level. This severely limits the quality and depth of Lower Sorbian language instruction.

More broadly, declining language proficiency and reduced everyday use of Sorbian among children and young people represent a significant challenge to the long-term viability of Sorbian-language education, even in regions with comparatively strong institutional frameworks.

Other / structural developments

The developments outlined above underline a structural tension within Sorbian education: while the minority enjoys strong formal recognition and legal protection, demographic pressures, declining language competence, and persistent teacher shortages increasingly undermine the effectiveness of the system. The contrast between relatively robust institutional provision in Saxony and the much weaker situation in Brandenburg remains a defining feature of Sorbian education in Germany.

Greece: Macedonian Minority

General Educational Situation of the Macedonian Minority in Greece

The Macedonian minority in Greece is situated in a legal vacuum shaped by Greece's restrictive minority recognition framework. As the Greek state recognises only the "Muslim minority" as such, all other ethnic, linguistic, or national minorities fall outside the scope of domestic minority law. Consequently, the Macedonian minority has no recognised legal status, no statutory protection, and no dedicated legal framework governing its educational or cultural rights.

At the international level, Greece is bound by an International Protocol of the League of Nations adopted in 1923 and ratified by Greek law on 30 October 1923. This protocol obliges the state to provide education to the Slavic-speaking minority in the Greek region of Macedonia within the framework of primary and secondary education. Despite the continued legal validity of this obligation, it has not been implemented in practice.

As a result, no form of state-supported education in the Macedonian language exists in Greece today. The Macedonian minority remains entirely excluded from minority education provision and continues to lack access to educational rights formally guaranteed under international law, reflecting the broader consequences of Greece's non-recognition of ethnic and linguistic minorities beyond the officially recognised Muslim minority.

Specific Developments Affecting Macedonian Minority Education in Greece

Negative developments

In recent years, attempts were made to activate the international legal framework governing minority education. Applications requesting the implementation of minority education rights were submitted to the Greek Ministry of Education between 2018 and 2020, as well as to the Municipality of Edessa in 2019. These initiatives did not result in any concrete measures, institutional arrangements, or policy changes.

More broadly, the Greek state has maintained a persistent negative stance towards implementing minority protection obligations in practice, particularly within the public education system with regard to the use of minority languages. This approach continues to prevent the introduction of Macedonian-language education and reinforces the systemic exclusion of the Macedonian minority from the education framework.

Greece: Turkish Minority

General Educational Situation of the Turkish Community in Greece

The Turkish minority in Greece operates within a distinct legal and political context, as minorities are not formally recognised on the basis of ethnicity. Within the Greek legal order, the Turkish community in Western Thrace is recognised exclusively on the basis of religious affiliation, as part of the Muslim minority, which constitutes the only officially recognised minority group in the country. Ethnic or linguistic minority status is not acknowledged, a factor that directly shapes the scope and structure of minority education arrangements.

In line with this official framework, minority education formally adheres to the religious definition, and minority institutions are officially designated as "Muslim schools." In practice, however, the minority language of instruction in these schools is Turkish, reflecting the linguistic reality of the community and the de facto bilingual character of education in the region.

The legal foundation for minority education in Western Thrace is established by the Treaty of Lausanne. Under this treaty, the Turkish community was granted autonomy in educational matters, and a system of Turkish primary and secondary schools was created, providing bilingual instruction in Turkish and Greek. This framework historically ensured a significant degree of self-management by the minority.

Over time, however, the scope of this autonomy has been progressively reduced. A combination of regulatory measures and administrative practices has curtailed the decision-making powers of minority institutions. Although bilingual Turkish–Greek education continues to exist in formal terms, the Greek state now exercises extensive control over the Turkish school system in Western Thrace, representing a marked departure from the original autonomy envisaged under international agreements.

In contrast to the situation in Western Thrace, the Turkish community in the Dodecanese Islands—particularly on Rhodes and Kos—falls entirely outside the scope of minority protection. Greek authorities maintain that the Treaty of Lausanne does not apply to the Dodecanese, which were under Italian rule in 1923, and do not recognise the ethnic identity of Turks in the islands. As a result, no state-supported bilingual education or mother-tongue instruction exists. All Turkish schools that historically operated in the Dodecanese were closed by the early 1970s, and no public Turkish-language education has been re-established. Children from the Turkish community rely solely on informal community initiatives and non-recognised afternoon language courses, placing the community in a situation of complete educational exclusion.

Specific Developments Affecting Turkish Minority Education in Greece

Negative developments

The Turkish minority education system in Western Thrace continues to face structural erosion. One persistent issue is the absence of bilingual or minority-language kindergartens within the Turkish school system, resulting in compulsory early education delivered exclusively in Greek.

At primary level, the continued closure of Turkish schools has significantly reduced geographic access to minority education and increased travel distances for pupils. The application of minimum enrolment thresholds remains a central mechanism driving institutional contraction.

At secondary level, the extremely limited number of Turkish minority schools, combined with state control over governance and curricula, restricts educational choice and weakens minority-language educational pathways. The absence of any Turkish secondary school provision in Evros further exacerbates regional inequalities.

In addition, demand for the establishment of a new Turkish secondary and high school in Xanthi has declined. This trend reflects a broader loss of confidence within the community in the sustainability, autonomy, and responsiveness of the minority education system under current conditions of centralised state control and long-term institutional contraction.

Hungary: German Minority

General Educational Situation of the German Minority in Hungary

The German minority is a recognised national minority in Hungary, where minority education is guaranteed by law and forms part of the public education system. Hungary recognises a total of thirteen national minorities that are legally entitled to organise minority education, among which the German minority has developed the most extensive and institutionalised school system.

Overall, the German minority benefits from a comparatively well-established and comprehensive educational framework covering all age groups from early childhood through to the end of secondary education. The minority has access to a structured school network serving children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18. Within this network, education is provided through both language schools and bilingual schools, allowing for different models of minority language instruction depending on local conditions and demand. At system level, minority education is embedded within the general Hungarian school structure, which includes an eight-year primary school cycle (divided into primary and lower secondary stages) followed by various forms of upper secondary education, including grammar schools and vocational secondary schools.

The German minority maintains the most developed minority education network in the country. This includes approximately 250 primary schools offering German minority education, mostly covering grades 1 to 8. Of these, 37 schools operate under the direct sponsorship of German minority self-governments. In addition, around 30 bilingual primary schools provide education with a significant proportion of instruction delivered in German. At upper secondary level, there are eight bilingual grammar schools offering German minority education, five of which are fully or partially maintained by minority self-governments. Mother-tongue German schools, in which Hungarian is taught only as a subject, exist but remain extremely rare.

Within the legal framework, several distinct educational models coexist. The majority of institutions operate as language-teaching nationality schools, where German is taught for approximately five weekly lessons, supplemented by an additional lesson dedicated to the minority subject "Volkskunde" (folklore and cultural studies). Bilingual schools deliver up to 50 per cent of weekly instruction in German across various subjects, while Hungarian is taught as a separate subject. Fully mother-tongue German education represents only a marginal segment of the system.

Minority self-governments play a central role in the governance of minority education. They are legally entitled to take over the sponsorship of schools, enabling them to exercise direct influence over educational provision, language use, staffing priorities, and cultural content within minority institutions. This governance role is a defining structural feature of German minority education in Hungary and differentiates it from standard public schooling arrangements.

Cultural education constitutes a core component of minority schooling. Folklore is taught in all nationality schools as a key vehicle for the transmission of cultural heritage, and the history of the German minority is addressed both within folklore lessons and in history classes. Within minority education, schools have discretion over approximately ten per cent of the history curriculum, allowing targeted coverage of minority-specific topics. Particular attention is given to the settlement of Germans in Hungary in the eighteenth century and to the traumatic events affecting the community after the Second World War, including deportation for forced labour to the Soviet Union and expulsion to Germany. These events are officially recognised through a legally established national day of remembrance on 19 January, dedicated to the deportation and expulsion of the German population, and are reinforced through long-term educational projects and commemorative initiatives within schools.

Despite these strong institutional and legal foundations, the system faces long-term demographic challenges. According to available data, approximately 98,400 persons identify as belonging to the German minority in Hungary, representing around one per cent of the total population, while only about 28,500 persons report German as their mother tongue. The German minority population is characterised by an ageing demographic profile and a highly dispersed settlement pattern, which complicates the organisation of education and contributes to declining enrolment. The number of pupils with native-level German language skills has been steadily decreasing, with direct implications for the linguistic depth, sustainability, and intergenerational transmission of minority education.

Specific Developments Affecting German Minority Education in Hungary

Positive developments

Specialised university programmes, bilingual grammar schools, and teacher training pathways continue to support German-language education and contribute to the preservation of German culture and language. These institutions remain an important pillar of minority education and provide a stable foundation for teacher supply and curriculum development.

Negative developments

Several constraints affect the effective reach of the system. Enrolment in minority-language education has been declining, and only a relatively small proportion of pupils currently benefit from education delivered substantially in the minority language, particularly at higher levels of bilingual or mother-tongue instruction. Minority self-governments face increasing financial pressures related to school maintenance, staffing incentives, and the development of updated teaching materials, which limits their capacity to sustain and further expand minority educational provision. Additional challenges include shortages of qualified teachers, the need for modernised and digitally adapted learning materials, and the growing prevalence of behavioural and social difficulties among pupils. These structural constraints have also been noted by international monitoring bodies, including the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

Hungary: Roma Minority

General Educational Situation of the Roma Minority in Hungary

The Roma constitute the largest ethnic minority in Hungary and remain disproportionately affected by educational inequality, despite targeted initiatives and measurable improvements in recent years.

Overall, the educational situation of Roma in Hungary is characterised by a dual reality. On the one hand, improvements in educational attainment and the success of targeted programmes demonstrate the potential impact of inclusive and high-quality educational models, particularly at secondary and higher education levels. On the other hand, systemic challenges persist. Segregation, discrimination, unequal access to quality education, and biased institutional practices continue to shape the educational experiences of a majority of Roma children. A pronounced divide remains between successful local or programme-based interventions and the broader structural conditions of the public education system.

At the level of basic education, progress has been recorded. The proportion of Roma adults with less than eight years of schooling has declined significantly, from approximately 24% to 13%, indicating an overall improvement in educational attainment. Early childhood education participation stands at around 73%, and secondary education completion at approximately 43%, representing the highest rates recorded for Roma populations within the EU, although still substantially below those of the general population.

Despite these improvements, segregation within the mainstream education system remains widespread. According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2025), 62% of Roma children in Hungary attend schools where the majority of pupils are also Roma, placing Hungary among the countries with the highest segregation rates in Europe. International monitoring bodies have further highlighted persistent patterns of unequal treatment, including biased track recommendations, early school leaving, and insufficient implementation of inclusive education policies.

Specific Developments Affecting Roma Education in Hungary

Positive developments

One of the most significant positive developments is the work of the Christian Roma College Network. As of 2025, the network operates 11 colleges in nine cities. A total of 746 Roma students have completed university degrees through the programme, including 20 who have earned doctoral degrees, and over 90% of graduates are reported to be in employment. These outcomes demonstrate strong effectiveness in supporting both educational attainment and labour market integration.

At secondary level, the Dr. Ámbédkar School, operating in Bódvalenke, Sajókaza, and Alsózsolca, continues to provide inclusive and high-quality education for disadvantaged Roma youth. The school combines academic instruction with community empowerment and moral education, and its graduates increasingly continue into vocational training and higher education.

Additional positive initiatives include mentorship schemes, community-based support programmes, and teacher training initiatives implemented by organisations such as Amrita and Phiren Amenca, which contribute to improved retention, motivation, and educational outcomes for Roma students.

Legal action has also produced concrete results. In early 2025, Roma-only kindergartens in Kalocsa were closed following legal proceedings initiated by the local community, marking a significant step towards reducing early childhood segregation and reinforcing the principle of equal access to education.

Negative developments

Despite these advances, segregation and discrimination remain deeply entrenched. In March 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education reported “systemic educational isolation” of Roma pupils in Hungary, including their placement in special education on biased and discriminatory grounds.

Persistent access barriers continue to exacerbate inequality. In Tiszavasvári, in May 2025, Roma children were required to walk up to seven kilometres daily to attend school due to the absence of school transport. The Ombudsperson subsequently found this situation to be discriminatory, highlighting ongoing deficiencies in basic infrastructure and service provision affecting Roma communities.

Other / structural developments

While Hungary supports mother-tongue education for ethnic Hungarians abroad through the 2025 Hungarian in the Homeland programme—funding textbooks and educational materials for Hungarian-language schools outside the country—this approach has drawn attention to an imbalance in minority policy. The strong emphasis on Hungarians abroad contrasts with more limited and fragmented support for minority communities, including Roma, within Hungary, raising questions about policy coherence and long-term sustainability of inclusive education efforts.

The Netherlands: Frisians

Report submitted online

General Educational Situation Regarding Minority and Regional Languages in the Netherlands (With a Focus on the Frisian Language)

The Netherlands officially recognises six regional or minority languages: Frisian (Frysk), Limburgish (Limburgs), Low Saxon (Nedersaksisch), Papiamentu, Yiddish, and Romani (Romanes), alongside Dutch Sign Language (NGT). Frisian holds a special status as a co-official language in the province of Fryslân, as established by the Wet gebruik Friese taal (Use of the Frisian Language Act), adopted in 2013 and in force since 2014.

Despite this formal recognition, the Dutch minority-language regime is predominantly permissive rather than rights-based. The legal framework generally allows the use of minority languages but does not ensure their use as an enforceable right. This approach limits the practical impact of recognition, particularly in the education system.

In the case of Frisian, this permissive model is clearly reflected in Artikel 1.55 Wet Kinderopvang (Childcare Act), which merely permits the use of Frisian in early childhood education rather than guaranteeing it. According to De Fryske Beweging, this formulation structurally weakens the linguistic position of Frisian-speaking children by treating Frisian as a regional exception rather than as a co-equal language. The Dutch state continues to operate on the assumption that Fryslân is a Dutch-speaking province with a Frisian minority, whereas sociolinguistic reality indicates that it is historically a Frisian-speaking region where Dutch dominates institutionally.

Empirical data point to an ongoing language shift. Research published by the Leeuwarder Courant (23 February 2024) found that 11% of children from Frisian-speaking families respond in Dutch when addressed by their parents, indicating early and rapid language shift driven by Dutch-dominant institutional environments.

Beyond Frisian, the educational situation for other recognised languages remains uneven. Limburgish and Low Saxon benefit from regional covenants but lack national guarantees in education. Papiamentu, spoken on Bonaire, is used as the medium of instruction only in grades 1–2 of primary education, after which Dutch becomes dominant; secondary education is conducted exclusively in Dutch. Yiddish is permitted within Jewish schools in Amsterdam, but the government assumes—without documented consultation—that there is no demand for Yiddish as a subject, a position contested by community actors such as Stichting Jiddisch. Romani remains entirely absent from formal education; while dialogue is facilitated through the Nationaal Roma en Sinti Contactpunt (NRSCP), no structural provisions exist for language or history teaching.

Across all recognised languages, De Fryske Beweging highlights a systemic lack of enforcement. Legal obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) are treated as aspirational rather than binding, with no effective inspection, monitoring, or sanctions when obligations are not met. In practice, the overwhelming majority of schools continue to provide education almost exclusively in Dutch.

Specific Developments Affecting Frisian Language Education in the Netherlands

Positive developments

The legal and policy framework for Frisian has been further elaborated through a combination of instruments: the Wet gebruik Friese taal, the Bestjoersôfspraak Fryske Taal en Kultuer 2024–2028 (BFTK), and the Taalplan Frysk 2030. Together, these aim to establish a continuous bilingual learning pathway (Frisian–Dutch), ensure full implementation of attainment targets by 2030, and gradually phase out exemptions from Frisian-language obligations.

National funding for Frisian education has increased, with €1.4 million allocated annually since 2024 and an additional €200,000 earmarked for curriculum renewal. In early childhood education, the Sintrum Frysktalige Berne-Opfang (SFBO) plays a key role in supporting bilingual childcare, and the BFTK sets a target for 80% of childcare locations in Fryslân to operate bilingually by 2030.

In vocational education (mbo), new steps have been taken under the 2024–2028 BFTK and the Wy binne mbû partnership. A Praktoraat Fryske taal en geletterdheid yn in meartalige kontekst has been established at Firda, with funding from the Ministry of Education (OCW), aiming to strengthen Frisian language and literacy in a multilingual vocational context and better align education with the bilingual labour market.

Negative developments

Despite increased funding and policy commitments, measurable outcomes remain weak. In primary education, the number of schools meeting full Frisian standards (A-profile schools) has declined by approximately 20%, and around 40% of schools have downgraded their Frisian profile compared to 2018. These trends indicate that state policy has allowed decline rather than actively counteracted it.

In secondary education, Frisian is formally compulsory in the first two years, yet only around 18% of schools teach it in both years. Frisian is currently offered as an exam subject in only 16 schools, with a further 21 planning to introduce it. De Fryske Beweging warns that exemptions continue to be granted precisely in areas where Frisian is weakest, accelerating language erosion rather than stabilisation.

At vocational level, although Article 8(1)(d) of the ECRML formally applies to Frisian, implementation remains minimal. According to The Frisian language in education in the Netherlands (Mercator, 2024), Frisian is widely used informally in mbo institutions but has no formal status within the core curriculum.

Other / structural developments

De Fryske Beweging stresses that progress across all educational levels will remain fragile without enforceable milestones, inspection mechanisms, and consequences for persistent non-compliance. While policy documents such as Taalplan Frysk 2030 articulate ambitious goals, the absence of binding targets and sanctions undermines their credibility. Without a shift from permissive language policy to enforceable rights, the long-term sustainability of Frisian—and other recognised minority languages—within the Dutch education system remains uncertain.

Ukraine: Greek Minority

General Educational Situation of the Greek Minority in Ukraine

The Greek minority is one of the recognised national communities in Ukraine and is included within the state framework aimed at safeguarding access to education in the native languages of national minorities and indigenous peoples. Greek-speaking communities in Ukraine are historically concentrated in the Azov region, particularly around Mariupol, although significant numbers of community members are currently displaced due to the war.

Overall, while Ukraine has taken a number of institutional and policy-level steps to support linguistic diversity and minority language education, the educational framework for the Greek minority is characterised primarily by consultative mechanisms, strategic initiatives, and supportive educational materials rather than by a comprehensive, structured system of formal education in minority languages. Measures focus mainly on language preservation, awareness-raising, and inclusion, with policy development processes still ongoing and practical implementation uneven, particularly in the context of war-related disruption.

At the institutional level, the Council of Representatives of Public Associations of Indigenous Peoples and National Communities operates under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine as an advisory body. Its mandate includes supporting access to education in the native languages of ethnic groups and facilitating dialogue between state authorities and national communities, including the Greek minority. The council functions as a consultative platform rather than a decision-making body and does not exercise direct governance over minority education provision.

Within the state policy framework, minority languages are increasingly addressed through preservation-oriented instruments. On 7 June 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Resolution No. 670 approving the list of endangered languages of national minorities and indigenous peoples. This list includes the languages of the Greeks of Ukraine—Urum and Rumeika—alongside Karaim, Crimean Tatar, Yiddish, and Romani. Inclusion in this list formally recognises the vulnerability of these languages and places them within a dedicated policy framework for protection, although concrete educational implementation measures remain limited.

In September 2025, a public discussion was held on the Strategy for the Development and Preservation of Endangered Languages, initiated by the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience. Representatives of national communities, including Greek organisations, submitted proposals concerning education, documentation, and teacher training. These proposals remain under consideration by state authorities, and the strategy has not yet resulted in binding educational measures.

In terms of educational resources, the Ukrainian Institute for Education Development has supported the publication of textbooks for minority languages, including Modern Greek, as well as Gagauz, Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish, and Hungarian. In addition, general education textbooks have been produced in Romanian and Hungarian, contributing to multilingual education more broadly. For Greek-language education, this support is largely limited to language instruction rather than comprehensive bilingual or mother-tongue education.

Beyond language instruction, initiatives such as the manual *Culture of Good Neighborhood* (Aradzhioni M., Unguryan I., 2023) and the corresponding educational course aim to foster intercultural understanding and inclusive school environments. These initiatives are designed for use across the general education system and indirectly benefit students from Greek minority backgrounds by promoting awareness of cultural diversity rather than providing targeted minority-language education.

Specific Developments Affecting Greek Minority Education in Ukraine

Positive and mixed developments

Modern Greek is currently taught within higher education under the specialty V11.081 "Modern Greek Language and Literature, including Translation." In 2025, Bachelor's programmes were offered by Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv National Linguistic University, and Mariupol State University, which has been relocated to Kyiv following the occupation of Mariupol. At Master's level, enrolment was conducted exclusively by Mariupol State University. Modern Greek is also taught as a second foreign language or elective at Odesa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and the National Aviation University in Kyiv. Despite this institutional presence, the number of applicants has been steadily declining, reflecting reduced demand and limited career prospects associated with the language.

In secondary education, Modern Greek is currently taught in eight general secondary schools, two of which were relocated from temporarily occupied territories in the Azov region. Before the full-scale Russian invasion, Modern Greek was taught in 32 schools. The number of students studying Modern Greek declined sharply from more than 3,434 in 2021 to approximately 1,096 in 2025. This decline reflects school closures, displacement, and the loss of educational infrastructure in areas under occupation. Work continues on updating and reprinting Modern Greek textbooks, including the publication of a Grade 9 textbook in 2025. However, textbooks for Grades 10 and 11 require revision and reprinting within the next two years.

Structural and negative developments

The languages Urum and Rumeika face particularly severe challenges. Neither language is fully codified, both lack standardised orthographies, and neither has officially approved educational materials. Rumeika is studied only within limited higher education contexts, such as folklore and poetry courses at Mariupol State University, while Urum is included within Turkic language programmes at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Both languages are classified as endangered, with the majority of speakers residing in temporarily occupied territories. Preservation efforts are constrained by a lack of qualified specialists and insufficient, non-systematic state funding.

According to an internal NGO survey of teachers conducted in the 2024–2025 academic year, several critical challenges persist. Recent changes to state textbook approval and pilot-testing procedures have significantly complicated publication. Two Grade 8 Modern Greek textbooks

were initially rejected for state-funded printing, and approval was secured only after prolonged administrative procedures. The situation is compounded by a severe shortage of qualified teachers capable of participating in textbook testing: the number of Modern Greek teachers has fallen from 75 before the full-scale invasion to just 21 in 2025. As a result, the publication of new state-funded textbooks is at risk.

Access to minority language learning is further constrained by the classification of Modern Greek, Urum, and Rumeika as languages that are not “high-demand” within the education system, limiting institutional incentives and financial support. Community-led initiatives, including online courses and weekend schools, rely primarily on volunteer efforts and lack stable funding, physical spaces, and long-term sustainability.

In higher education, international cooperation has been significantly weakened by the war. Partnerships with universities in Greece and Cyprus have declined, and opportunities for professional development, native-speaker lecturers, scholarships, internships, and student mobility are extremely limited compared to other language fields. Declining motivation has already resulted in the reduction of Modern Greek courses at Taras Shevchenko National University, where instruction has been scaled down to a limited number of electives.

Continuity in school-based Greek-language education has been further disrupted by structural reforms. The only school in Ukraine that previously offered Modern Greek from Grades 1 to 11 lost this status in 2025 following its transformation into a gymnasium under Cabinet of Ministers Decree No. 438-2019-p, which permits such reclassification when upper-grade enrolment falls below statutory thresholds. This change eliminated upper secondary Greek-language instruction at the school and contributed to declining enrolment in Greek philology programmes.

The impact of occupation remains a decisive negative factor. Most Greek-language schools are located in temporarily occupied territories, particularly in the Azov region. Only a small number have relocated or continue to operate online, and these remain exceptions. Restoring even pre-war levels of provision would require targeted state support, integration of minority languages into curricula, and timetable accommodation within general education schools.

Finally, there is a recognised need to strengthen intercultural awareness within the education system. Greek organisations highlight insufficient visibility of the Greek minority in history curricula, where Greeks of Ukraine are often referenced only in the context of ancient colonies. Greater inclusion of the centuries-long presence of Greek communities—from Nizhyn to Mariupol—could enhance interest in minority languages, support identity preservation, and contribute to social cohesion, particularly among internally displaced persons from the Azov region.

CONCLUSION

As the provided information by the FUEN member organisations reveals, the minority education in Europe remains highly uneven, fragmented, and structurally dependent on national recognition regimes and political will. While some minorities benefit from formal legal recognition and relatively well-developed educational infrastructures, legal guarantees frequently fail to translate into consistent, enforceable practice. Territorial restrictions, insufficient monitoring, teacher shortages, and declining language use repeatedly undermine the sustainability of minority education systems.

The analysis highlights three broad patterns:

- **System-integrated models**—most notably in Catalonia and parts of Germany and Hungary—show that minority-language education can be viable when it is embedded in public systems, adequately resourced, and institutionally supported.

- **Permissive or preservation-oriented approaches**, such as those observed in the Netherlands and Ukraine, allow minority languages to survive but leave them vulnerable due to the absence of enforceable rights and continuity across educational levels.

- **Cases of non-recognition and exclusion**, particularly affecting the Macedonian minority and parts of the Turkish minority in Greece, reveal persistent non-compliance with international obligations and result in the complete denial of minority education.

Across contexts, civil society initiatives and targeted programmes often compensate for state shortcomings and produce tangible positive outcomes, especially for structurally disadvantaged groups such as Roma. However, these efforts cannot substitute for comprehensive public frameworks.

Overall, the report confirms that formal recognition alone is insufficient. Sustainable minority education requires enforceable rights, stable funding, qualified teachers, territorial inclusiveness, and effective oversight mechanisms. Where these elements are absent or fragmented, minority education remains vulnerable, symbolic, or inaccessible, with long-term consequences for linguistic diversity, social cohesion, and equality in Europe.

REPORTS SUBMITTED BY:

- Austria: Croatian minority
  Croatian Centre in Vienna
- Catalonia (Spain)
  Plataforma per la Llengua
- Croatia: Serbian minority
  Serb National Council
- Germany: Sorbian minority
  Domowina - Bund Lausitzer Sorben
- Greece: Macedonian minority
  NPO Krste Misirkov
- Greece: Turkish minority
  Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe ROISDER
- Hungary: German minority
  UMZ (Ungarndeutsches Methodisches Zentrum)
- Hungary: Roma
  NGO Amrita
- The Netherlands: Frisians
  De Fryske Beweging
- Ukraine: Greek minority
  Federation of Greek Communities of Ukraine

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Gefördert durch:

Bundesministerium des Innern

aufgrund eines Beschlusses des Deutschen Bundestages

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