



MINORITY HISTORY TEACHING

Information reported by
FUEN Member Organisations
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History plays a fundamental role in identity building by providing individuals and societies with a sense of continuity, orientation, and meaning over time. Through engagement with the past, people develop an understanding of shared experiences, values, and reference points that shape how they perceive themselves and others. History contributes to the formation of collective memory, frames social norms and cultural narratives, and helps explain present realities by linking them to earlier events and processes. The way history is taught and remembered influences self-understanding, civic consciousness, and belonging, while silences or omissions can narrow perspectives and weaken the ability to relate personal and societal identities to a broader historical context.

Historical narratives have a significant impact on intercultural relations by shaping how groups perceive one another and their place within society. When different communities hold competing interpretations of the past, these narratives can reinforce boundaries between “us” and “them,” particularly if one version is privileged while others are marginalised or excluded. Such asymmetries may foster mistrust, resentment, and feelings of injustice, as groups experience their histories as denied, distorted, or delegitimised.

In majority–minority relations, contested historical narratives are often present. Ignoring minority history, however, does not help to neutralise the clashing viewpoints – it leaves underlying tensions unaddressed. Ignoring alternative experiences and omitting them from education and public discourse, implicitly affirms dominant narratives as the only legitimate ones, reinforcing unequal power relations. Such avoidance can foster misunderstanding, weaken opportunities for dialogue, limits critical engagement with the past, and undermines efforts to build inclusive and trust-based intercultural relations grounded in mutual recognition. Conversely, acknowledging the plurality of historical interpretations can support mutual recognition and contribute to more balanced and respectful intercultural relations.

Addressing history through multiple perspectives—including regional, local, or social viewpoints alongside national narratives—allows for a more complete and accurate understanding of past events. Grounding interpretation in evidence by recognising differing memories and acknowledging past injustice can help achieve reconciliation and preventing emotional reconnection with the past from negatively affecting the future.

When societies engage critically with their past, accept responsibility where harm has occurred, and validate the experiences of all groups, history can become a shared space for learning rather than division. Such an approach lays the foundation for historical reconciliation, enabling mutual recognition, reducing antagonism, and strengthening cohesion and integration in the present.

Against this background, FUEN invited the participants in the 7th Annual Meeting of the Working Group Education to report on the teaching of minority history in their countries. By mapping where and how minority histories are included, marginalised, or omitted, FUEN seeks to identify structural gaps, recurring challenges, and positive practices that influence intercultural relations and social cohesion. This exercise is not intended to impose a single historical narrative, but to highlight the importance of plural, evidence-based approaches to history education that acknowledge different perspectives and lived experiences. Understanding the current state of minority history teaching is a necessary step toward promoting inclusive education policies, supporting dialogue, and contributing to reconciliation processes that strengthen cohesion, democratic participation, and integration in diverse societies.

The current report is based on the inputs provided by the FUEN member organisations at the 7th Annual Meeting of the WG Education (Komotini, 2025) and submitted online contributions. It presents the situation concerning 10 minorities from 8 European states (Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Spain, and Ukraine).

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

Challenges in Teaching Minority History

Despite the differences in legal frameworks, recognition models, and educational systems, across the examined countries and minority contexts, teaching of minority history faces a set of recurrent and structurally similar challenges. These challenges can be grouped into several interrelated categories.

Lack of Systematic Approach to Teaching Minority History

Overall, the submitted reports outlined that in general, teaching of minority history falls outside of the scope of the educational systems and is weakly addressed also by minority educational institutions.

A common challenge across almost all cases is that even in bilingual or minority schools, minority history is not systematically embedded in compulsory curricula. The reports outline that minority history is:

- » included only sporadically or selectively (Germany – Sorbs; Austria – Burgenland Croats; Croatia – national minorities, including the Serbian minority);
- » confined to optional modules, electives, or project-based learning (Germany, Hungary – German minority, Netherlands – Frisians; Croatia – minority education models B and C);
- » limited to brief references or specific historical periods, without continuity (Hungary – Roma; Ukraine – Greek community; Croatia – minority history reduced to folklore, customs, or isolated events);
- » entirely absent from school curricula (Greece – Macedonian minority; Greece – Turkish minority).

The lack of a structural and systemic approach means that the teaching of minority history is highly dependent on individual teachers, schools, or local initiatives. This results in uneven knowledge provision, even among students belonging to the same minority within a single state. In practice, minority history is delivered through a variety of ad hoc arrangements, including:

- » individual teacher initiative (Germany – Sorbs; Austria – Croats; Croatia – minority-language schools and motivated individual teachers);
- » project-based or extracurricular activities (Hungary – German minority; Hungary – Roma; Croatia – minority cultural days, commemorative projects, and local initiatives);
- » civil society organisations and community actors (Netherlands – De Fryske Beweging; Hungary – Roma NGOs; Ukraine – Greek community; Croatia – minority councils and cultural organisations).

While these efforts represent important positive practices and demonstrate strong local engagement, they also underline the absence of structural, state-led approaches. As a result, access to minority history education remains inconsistent and uneven across schools and regions.

Structural factors and governance constraints also play a significant role. The reports indicated that:

- » decentralised education governance leads to fragmentation and inconsistency (Germany – Länder competence; Croatia – dependence on local enrolment thresholds and municipal capacity);
- » absence of enforcement mechanisms allows curricular provisions to be ignored (Netherlands; Hungary; Croatia – limited monitoring of minority content in mainstream curricula);
- » war and destruction of educational infrastructure severely disrupt minority history education (Ukraine – Greek community).

Insufficient Teacher Training and Professional Preparation

Another consistent cross-cutting structural challenge is the lack of systematic teacher training on minority history and intercultural education. In many contexts:

- » minority history is not included in initial teacher education (Germany outside Sorbian schools; Greece – Turkish and Macedonian minorities; Croatia – mainstream teacher education);
- » teachers report uncertainty about subject knowledge, leading to avoidance of minority history topics (Hungary – German minority; Croatia – politically sensitive minority histories, particularly related to the 1990s);
- » training opportunities depend on NGOs or civil society initiatives, rather than public institutions (Hungary – Roma; Netherlands – Frisian advocacy; Croatia – minority organisations and academic initiatives).

This gap limits both the quality and the confidence with which minority history is taught.

Lack of Dedicated Teaching Materials and Textbooks

Another recurring structural challenge concerns the insufficient preparation of teachers for addressing minority history and intercultural perspectives in educational practice. Across cases:

- » modern, state-approved textbooks on minority history are missing or underdeveloped (Austria – Burgenland Croats; Hungary – Roma; Ukraine – Greek community; Croatia – minority histories largely absent from mainstream textbooks);
- » existing materials are often language-restricted, limiting broader classroom use (Austria – Croatian-language textbook without German version; Croatia – minority-language materials not integrated into Croatian-language instruction);
- » minority perspectives are underrepresented, stereotyped, or fragmented in mainstream textbooks (Hungary – Roma; Greece – Turkish minority; Croatia – minorities reduced to folklore and cultural heritage);
- » historical narratives are reduced to ancient history or isolated events, omitting long-term minority presence and contributions (Ukraine – Greeks; Netherlands – Frisians; Croatia – shared and entangled histories largely erased).

As a result, minority history is rarely integrated into the broader national historical narrative. And when it is, it appears “marginalised”.

Low Visibility of Minority History in Mainstream Education and Public Discourse

Another shared challenge is the low visibility of minority history beyond minority-specific schools or regions. This is evident in:

- » limited references to minorities in mainstream curricula (Germany; Austria; Croatia);
- » absence of minority history in national civic education (Netherlands; Croatia);
- » lack of pluralistic or multicultural approaches in history education (Greece; Croatia).

This invisibility undermines intercultural understanding and reinforces social ignorance rather than mutual recognition.

Clashing or One-Sided Historical Narratives

Clashing narratives emerge as a major obstacle, particularly where minority perspectives challenge dominant national histories:

- » national curricula prioritise majority-centred narratives, marginalising minority experiences (Hungary – Roma; Greece – Turkish and Macedonian minorities; Croatia – minorities positioned outside the dominant national narrative);

- » minority histories are seen as controversial or politically sensitive, limiting their inclusion (Hungary – Roma; Greece; Croatia – minority histories related to the 20th century and the 1990s conflict);
- » parallel national frameworks promote conflicting historical interpretations (Catalonia vs. Spanish national curriculum; Croatia – minority histories externalised to neighbouring nation-states).
- » In some cases, minority histories are actively distorted or replaced by dominant narratives (Ukraine – Greek community under Soviet/Russian historiography; Croatia – minority history treated as “foreign” or external knowledge).

Positive Practices in Teaching Minority History

Despite structural constraints and uneven implementation, the reviewed cases reveal a set of positive approaches that contribute—directly or indirectly—to the inclusion, preservation, and transmission of minority history in education. The analysis of the reported information highlighted that across countries, positive practices are most effective when they combine community expertise, teacher engagement, and institutional anchoring—even if only at a local or project level. While these practices do not yet compensate for the lack of compulsory, system-wide inclusion of minority history, they demonstrate viable models for enriching curricula, countering one-sided narratives, and fostering intercultural understanding.

Minority-Specific Schools and Subjects as Key Transmission Spaces

Across several countries, minority-specific schools or subjects function as primary spaces for teaching minority history:

- » In Germany, Sorbian history is addressed most consistently within Sorbian schools, particularly through the subject Sorbisch.
- » In Hungary, German minority schools integrate minority history as part of their standard curriculum.
- » In Catalonia, Catalan history is embedded centrally within the regional curriculum and treated as a core component of collective identity.
- » In Croatia, minority education models (particularly Model A) provide spaces where minority language, culture, and history can be taught in a structured manner, although largely confined to minority-only settings.

While these approaches are often limited to minority-language or region-specific settings, they provide structured environments in which minority history is treated as legitimate and meaningful.

Project-Based and Experiential Learning Approaches

Project-based and experiential learning approaches, together with civil society and community-led initiatives, represent important ways of advancing the teaching of minority history, particularly where formal curricular space is limited:

- » In Hungary (German minority), minority history is frequently taught through school-level and nationwide projects.
- » In Hungary (Roma), community-based storytelling and school projects involving Roma elders help contextualise history and counter stereotypes.
- » In Germany, elective modules allow teachers to integrate minority history through thematic, project-based learning.
- » In the Netherlands, De Fryske Beweging actively advocates for the inclusion of Frisian history and bilingual heritage in compulsory education.
- » In Hungary, Amrita and Phiren Amenca provide teacher workshops, educational modules, and digital resources focused on Roma history and inclusion.
- » In Austria, the Burgenland Croat Cultural Association has published a Croatian-language schoolbook on Burgenland Croat history.
- » In Croatia, minority councils, cultural organisations, and academic initiatives support project-based learning, commemorative activities, and supplementary materials addressing minority history.

These approaches enable flexibility and depth in teaching and introduce minority perspectives into educational practice, while at the same time illustrating the strong reliance on projects and civil society initiatives in the absence of structural, state-led frameworks.

Integration of Minority History into Teacher Training

Although uneven, some systems have taken steps to integrate minority history into teacher education:

- » In Hungary (German minority), courses on minority history are incorporated into educator training.
- » In Ukraine, regional studies on the Greek community are used in the training of history specialists at Mariupol State University.
- » NGO-led teacher training initiatives for Roma history in Hungary provide practical pedagogical tools and inclusive approaches.
- » In Croatia, academic research and expert contributions increasingly highlight the need for integrating minority and shared histories into teacher education, although this has not yet translated into systematic training programmes.

Teacher education initiatives are particularly important in building confidence and reducing avoidance of minority topics.

Development of Dedicated Educational Materials

Several positive practices involve the creation of minority-specific teaching materials:

- » Workbooks and project materials for German minority history in Hungary.
- » The Croatian-language textbook “Povijest gradišćanskih Hrvatov” for Burgenland Croats.
- » Digital resources and online modules developed by NGOs for Roma history.
- » Academic research and regional studies informing higher education teaching on Greek minority history in Ukraine.
- » Supplementary materials and research outputs produced by minority organisations and academic institutions in Croatia, primarily used within minority education contexts.

Although often limited in reach, these materials provide foundational content where none previously existed.

Advocacy for Systemic Curriculum Change

In some cases, minorities have collectively pursued systemic change:

- » Recognised minorities in Germany jointly submitted recommendations to federal and Länder education authorities to integrate knowledge of autochthonous minorities into curricula.
- » In the Netherlands, advocacy explicitly links minority history education to broader goals of linguistic equality, civic education, and pluralism.
- » **In Croatia, academic experts and minority representatives increasingly call for the integration of shared and minority histories into dominant curricula as part of broader intercultural education reform.**

Such collective advocacy represents a shift from isolated initiatives toward structural reform.

SPECIFIC SITUATION BY COUNTRY/MINORITY

Austria: Croatian minority (Burgenland Croats)

The inclusion of Burgenland Croat history and culture in Austrian education is inconsistent. Coverage in national curricula and textbooks varies considerably and is uneven across schools and regions. In practice, whether and how minority history is taught often depends on individual teachers.

Teacher training related to Burgenland Croat history is limited, and there is a shortage of modern teaching materials. Since 2024, Austrian curricula formally include references to Volksgruppen (ethnic minorities); however, no specific textbooks or teaching materials have yet been developed to support this inclusion.

Challenges

Teachers are often insufficiently prepared for bilingual or intercultural history education. There is a lack of state funding for minority history materials and for relevant teacher training. Burgenland Croat heritage has low visibility in mainstream Austrian education and public discourse, and minority perspectives are frequently underrepresented. This absence of balanced narratives limits intercultural understanding.

Positive practices

Publication of the Croatian-language schoolbook "*Povijest gradišćanskih Hrvatov*" (History of the Burgenland Croats) by the Burgenland Croat Cultural Association, providing minority-specific historical content for school use (although limited to Croatian language).

Catalonia (Spain)

Catalan history is perceived as an integral part of Catalan society and identity and is widely taught. Key historical events, such as the War of the Spanish Succession and the events of 1714, are broadly covered and occupy a central place in historical education.

Challenges

A key challenge arises from clashing narratives between Catalan and Spanish frameworks. While the Catalan curriculum centres Catalonia as a historical and cultural subject, Spanish national curricula tend to emphasise a broader Spanish historical narrative, sometimes minimising Catalan particularities.

Positive practices

Catalan history is treated as an integral and legitimate part of society and identity and is widely taught within the regional curriculum.

Key historical events, such as the War of the Spanish Succession and the events of 1714, are broadly covered and occupy a central place in historical education.

Croatia: Serbian minority

The inclusion of minority history and culture in Croatian education is highly uneven and largely marginalised within the dominant curriculum. While Croatia provides a clear legal framework for minority education through Models A, B, and C, the teaching of minority history is predominantly confined to minority-language programmes and is not systematically integrated into mainstream education. National curricula, particularly the Croatian Language and Literature curriculum (2019), largely exclude regional, minority, and shared histories, resulting in the erasure of intercultural connections and the historical presence of minorities within Croatian society. In practice, minority history is often treated as supplementary or optional content rather than as an integral part of general education.

In minority education—most notably for the Serbian minority—history and culture are frequently framed in a depoliticised and decontextualised manner. They remain reduced to folklore, customs, and traditions, and confined to an “imagined past.” Minority histories are commonly externalised and taught through the lens of neighbouring nation-states (e.g. Serbian history as the history of Serbia), rather than as histories of minorities within Croatia. Teacher preparation for intercultural and minority-sensitive history education is limited, and minority perspectives are rarely addressed in mainstream teacher training or textbooks.

Challenges

Minority history is structurally excluded from dominant curricula and mainstream textbooks, limiting visibility and reinforcing ethnic boundaries within education. Minority education programmes position history as an add-on rather than as knowledge in dialogue with general curricula. There is insufficient teacher training on shared histories, intercultural education, and the historical mechanisms of ethnic violence and exclusion. The exclusion of scripts and linguistic heritage—such as the near-total removal of Cyrillic from general education—

further weakens historical literacy about shared cultural and historical space. Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms ensuring balanced representation of minority histories remain weak.

Positive practices

The existence of legally defined minority education models (A, B, and C) provides a structural basis for teaching minority language, culture, and history where sufficient capacity exists. Minority institutions and cultural organisations play an active role in developing supplementary materials and preserving historical knowledge within minority education. Academic and civil society initiatives, including critical research and expert contributions to international forums, increasingly articulate the need for integrated intercultural history education and for addressing “broken” or excluded knowledge within the dominant education system.

Germany: Sorbian minority

The history of the Sorbs is included only selectively in the German education system. References to Sorbs as part of the population of Germany appear sporadically in the curricula of Saxony and Brandenburg. Where included, Sorbian history is usually addressed at different grade levels and across various subjects, most often as part of optional or elective modules, meaning that teachers may choose between several thematic options.

Within Sorbian schools, minority history is addressed primarily in the subject *Sorbisch*, where aspects of “Sorbian history” are discussed. The depth and scope of this teaching largely depend on the individual teacher. Outside the Sorbian school system, teachers are not trained in Sorbian or minority-specific topics.

Beyond the Sorbs, there is very little information in curricula or textbooks about other recognised minorities in Germany.

Challenges

A key structural challenge is that education policy falls under the competence of the federal states (Länder), resulting in fragmented approaches and uneven inclusion of minority history.

Positive practices

- » Sorbian history is taught most consistently within Sorbian schools, primarily through the subject *Sorbisch*.
- » Elective modules allow teachers to integrate Sorbian history through thematic or project-based approaches.

- » Recognised minorities in Germany jointly submitted a recommendation to the Ministers of Education of all federal states, calling for the systematic inclusion of knowledge about autochthonous minorities in school curricula.

Greece: Macedonian minority

There are no curricula, textbooks, or teacher training programmes dedicated to Macedonian minority history. Apart from some university studies that mention limited historical facts—mainly related to 20th-century events—minority history is not taught.

Challenges

No teaching of Macedonian minority history exists within the Greek education system.

Greece: Turkish minority

The Greek national history curriculum applies uniformly to all schools and does not include minority-specific history. The curriculum lacks pluralism and presents a one-sided historical narrative. There are no specialised materials or multicultural reforms addressing Turkish minority history.

Teachers in Turkish schools follow the Greek curriculum and receive no special training in minority history or in working with Turkish pupils. Teachers are appointed by the Ministry of Education without consultation with Turkish school boards or parents' associations.

Challenges

Minority history is not taught in Turkish schools. History lessons are delivered in Greek by Greek teachers using the same textbooks as in all public schools.

Hungary: German minority

The minority curriculum specifies the content to be taught regarding German minority history. Teaching materials exist but require further supplementation, and instruction often takes place on a project basis.

Courses on minority history are integrated into teacher education and training, providing a formal pathway for educators to acquire relevant knowledge.

Challenges

Although the curriculum stipulates that minority history should be taught, in practice this is often neglected due to lack of time and teachers' uncertainty about their subject knowledge.

Positive practices

- » The minority curriculum explicitly specifies content related to German minority history.
- » Courses on minority history are integrated into teacher education and training.
- » A dedicated workbook on German minority history is available.
- » School-level and nationwide projects are used to stimulate engagement with minority history.

Hungary: Roma

Roma history has limited coverage in national curricula and is often mentioned only briefly, typically in connection with World War II or local history. Textbooks frequently marginalise Roma experiences or reproduce stereotypes, and few integrate Roma contributions to Hungarian culture and society.

Teacher training rarely includes comprehensive Roma history. Some initiatives exist through NGOs such as Amrita and Phiren Amenca, which provide workshops and modules on inclusive education and minority history.

In minority-language schools for other minorities (German, Slovak, Romanian), the history of the respective community is taught, but in general Hungarian schools, coverage of Roma history remains minimal.

Challenges

Teaching Roma history is affected by:

- » Clashing narratives prioritising majority perspectives;
- » Stereotypes and prejudice in classroom discussions;
- » Resource limitations, including lack of updated and bilingual materials;
- » Political sensitivities surrounding minority history.

Positive practices

- » NGO-led initiatives (Amrita, Phiren Amenca) provide teacher workshops, educational modules, and training on Roma history and inclusive education.
- » Community-based storytelling and school projects involving Roma elders support contextualised and experiential learning.
- » Digital resources and online teaching materials on Roma history have been developed by civil society actors.
- » Minority-language schools for other minorities (e.g. German, Slovak) demonstrate comprehensive inclusion of minority history as part of standard education, serving as reference practices.

The Netherlands: Frisians

The teaching of minority language history, including Frisian history, remains marginal in Dutch education. Frisian history and identity appear mainly in optional local projects or elective materials (e.g. *Fryske Kanon*) and are absent from the national curriculum.

Challenges

- » Recognition without education sustains a one-sided national narrative and leads to ignorance rather than respect. Frisian history and bilingual heritage are not part of compulsory civics or history education.
- » The histories of Low Saxon, Limburgish, Roma, Sinti, and Jewish communities are likewise underrepresented in education.

Positive practices

- » Frisian history and identity are included in optional local projects and elective materials, such as the Fryske Kanon.
- » Strong civil society advocacy by De Fryske Beweging promotes the inclusion of Frisian history and bilingual heritage in compulsory education and public discourse.
- » Policy instruments (Wet gebruik Friese taal, BFTK 2024–2028, Taalplan Frysk 2030) formally acknowledge the importance of Frisian language and culture, providing a framework within which history education can be further developed.

Ukraine: Greek minority

The history of the Greek community of Ukraine is only briefly mentioned in Ukrainian history textbooks, primarily in relation to ancient Greek colonies and the 18th-century resettlement of southeastern Ukraine.

Challenges

According to the Forum “*Greeks of Ukraine — Preserving Identity under Russian Aggression*” (26 September 2024), challenges include:

- » Imperial distortion of historical narratives;
- » Loss of educational and cultural infrastructure due to the war;
- » Lack of modern Ukrainian-authored teaching materials;
- » Insufficient teacher training on Greek community history.

Positive practices

- » Academic research on the history of the Greeks of Ukraine has been conducted by institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.
- » Regional studies on the Greek community, particularly in the Donetsk/Azov region, are used in the training of history specialists at Mariupol State University.
- » Higher education programmes include Greek-related historical and cultural studies within philology and regional studies contexts.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this report show that, despite differing legal frameworks and educational systems, the teaching of minority history across the examined countries remains largely marginal, uneven, and weakly institutionalised. Minority history is seldom embedded in compulsory curricula and is most often addressed through optional modules, projects, or the initiative of individual teachers and civil society actors, leading to inconsistent access and fragmented knowledge provision. Persistent challenges include insufficient teacher training, lack of dedicated and modern teaching materials, low visibility of minority perspectives in mainstream education, and the dominance of one-sided or contested historical narratives.

At the same time, the report highlights meaningful positive practices—such as minority-specific schools, project-based learning, community engagement, and advocacy for curricular reform—that demonstrate the potential for more inclusive and plural approaches to history education. Overall, the analysis highlights the need for structural, state-led solutions to systematically and sustainably integrate minority histories into education systems, thereby strengthening intercultural understanding, reconciliation, and social cohesion.

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