



**Parliament of Montenegro  
Parliamentary Institute  
Research Centre**

Research paper:

**Minority language newspapers - legal framework, status and  
funding policy**

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*\*The contents of this document do not reflect the official views of the Parliament of Montenegro.*

## Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>4</b>
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.....	6
CZECH REPUBLIC .....	6
ESTONIA.....	7
FINLAND .....	8
GEORGIA.....	9
CROATIA.....	9
LITHUANIA.....	11
HUNGARY.....	11
MACEDONIA .....	12
NORWAY.....	12
GERMANY.....	13
POLAND.....	14
ROMANIA.....	15
SLOVAKIA .....	15
SLOVENIA.....	16
SERBIA.....	16
SPAIN .....	17
SWEDEN .....	18
UNITED KINGDOM.....	20
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>21</b>

## FOREWORD

A fundamental right belonging to minority national communities, apart from the right to education, culture, official use of language and alphabet, is also the right to information in their own language. This right is generally guaranteed by country's Constitution or governed by law. Therefore, it is very important that each multiethnic society provides the conditions for the national minorities to fully enjoy their civil and special - minority rights.

The issue of informing national minorities in their own language is therefore governed by a set of regulations, which stipulate the exercise of the right of national minorities to public information, as well as by ratified international agreements, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities<sup>1</sup> and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages<sup>2</sup>.

The aim of this paper is to provide information related to the status, operation and financing of minority language newspapers in countries in the region and certain European countries. In order to collect the aforementioned data, the Research Centre of the Parliament of Montenegro submitted a questionnaire<sup>3</sup> through the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) network, which included questions regarding the issues defined in accordance with the aim of the research. In addition, the information presented in the research paper are grounded in the constitutional framework and legislation governing the status of minority nations. In addition, information is grounded on legislation regarding the media and freedom of expression in the countries included in the analysis, which contains provisions on the definition of rights of persons belonging to minority nations in terms of freedom of expression in their own language, through newspapers.

After having collected the data, the Research Centre systematised them and presented information on the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Macedonia, Norway, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Legal framework and practice in relation to the subject varies from country to country. The newspapers in the national minority languages are available in all of the countries included in the research, except Bosnia and Herzegovina; and are available at local, regional and state level. They are generally held under private ownership, except when it comes to financing, where a number of countries are guaranteed state budget funds, as a form of support to providing information in national minority languages. For instance, in the Czech Republic, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain, certain financial support to newspapers in national minority languages is guaranteed by the state itself, through subsidies and grant programmes managed by competent ministries. In addition, there is a special press subsidies system in Sweden, governed by the Press Subsidies Council, a government agency. The system also guarantees subsidies for the national minority newspapers; however, newspapers which are founded by the state or municipality aren't entitled to subsidies.

On the other hand, in Germany and Macedonia, the state does not provide financial support to newspapers in national minority languages, since they are funded from their own resources, generally through donations and membership fees. In Lithuania, the largest daily newspaper

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<sup>1</sup> <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/157.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/148.htm>

<sup>3</sup> ECPRD Request 2652, *Minority language newspapers*, October 2014.

published in a national minority language is guaranteed financial support from its native country, but not from the Lithuanian budget, while in Estonia, the state may provide its financial support to certain NGO publications in minority languages, which are published once or six times a year.

The complete document in Montenegrin language can be found at:

[http://www.skupstina.me/images/dokumenti/biblioteka-i-istrazivanje/%C5%A0tampana\\_glasila\\_na\\_jezicima\\_nacionalnih\\_manjina\\_pravni\\_okvir\\_status\\_i\\_politika\\_finansiranja.pdf](http://www.skupstina.me/images/dokumenti/biblioteka-i-istrazivanje/%C5%A0tampana_glasila_na_jezicima_nacionalnih_manjina_pravni_okvir_status_i_politika_finansiranja.pdf)