# National minorities in Romania revisited.
## Educational policies and the protection of the linguistic (human) rights

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**Abstract:**

The paper provides a broad overview of the linguistic landscape of present-day Romania and of the official educational policies dealing with the protection of the linguistic rights of the persons belonging to the national minorities, in accordance with the international legislation. Comparing data from 1999 and 2013, the paper examines several components of the educational system for national minorities in Romania (types of tuition, the school network, teaching experiences by language of tuition, framework plans, curricula, textbooks, principles of assessment, the training of the teaching staff, acquisition of L2) and points out both the undeniable achievements and the shortcomings.

**Key-words:** national minorities, language / educational policy, additive bilingualism

## I. Introduction

The main goal of my paper is to provide a broad overview of the linguistic landscape of present-day Romania, as well as of the educational policies dealing with the protection of the linguistic rights of the persons belonging to the national minorities[2], in accordance with the international legislation.

[2] See the definition of "national minority" given by the *Recommendation 1201* (1993) *of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, Section I, Article 1: "group of persons in a state who reside on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof; maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state; display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics; are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of population of that state or of a region of that state; are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitute their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language".



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Over the last two decades, we have witnessed the fast pace of the progress made by Romania, in the field of language, educational and cultural policies dealing with national minority issues. After almost half a century of totalitarianism, which promoted nationalistic policies of assimilation and linguicide, Romania, as other former communist states, has been engaged in a dynamic process of improving the protection of the linguistic (human) rights (LHR) of the national minorities, especially by reforming the legislation, the educational system, by extending the school network or by encouraging the access of minorities to mass-media and cultural arena. The changes have been substantial, but they are, unfortunately, not widely known to the public opinion inside or outside the borders of Romania. Therefore, I will revisit the topic of national minorities in Romania in order to provide a descriptive account of the official educational policies in practice. My methodological approach relies basically on sociolinguistics (subfields: language policies, language planning, bilingualism), and will be grounded especially on the official statistical data available for the period 2000-2013 (Murvai 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008; Sarău 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Kovács 2009; Saramandu, Nevaci 2009, Ministerul Educației Naționale - Secretariatul de Stat pentru Minorităţi, Congresul Educaţiei 2013, *Anuarul Statistic al României* 2015).

Central to such a research is the concept of language or linguistic rights (LRs). According to C. Bratt-Paulston (1997: 75), the LRs cover all those rights to language use in various socio-cultural settings (inside one's own language group, in public life, schooling, religious life, politics, administration, courts of law etc.). The protection of LRs is fundamental to the recognition of non-dominant ethnic groups' identity. LRs are usually classified as negative (prohibit discrimination on a linguistic basis) and positive (ensure equal treatment of the language groups) (T. Skutnabb-Kangas 2009a: 537).

The linguistic human rights (LHRs) represent a sub-set of the more general LRs. They are of vital importance to the basic needs of a person and for living a dignified life, hence no state is supposed to violate them: the right to language-related identity, access to mother tongue(s), right of access to an official language, no enforced language shift, access to formal primary mother-tongue-medium education, and the right for minorities to reproduce themselves as distinct groups.

The linguistic rights apply in accordance with two possible principles:

(a) The principle of territoriality – the LRs are strictly linked to a specific living territory of a minority community (e.g. Switzerland cantons);

(b) The principle of personality – a person belonging to a minority group enjoys access to all mother-tongue services on the whole territory of his/her country (e.g. Canada);



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## II. Ethnic and linguistic diversity in Romania

In Romania live 20 officially recognized national minorities, which represent 11.08 % of the total population. The diversity of the ethnic groups (the highest in Eastern Europe and one of the highest in Europe), the linguistic diversity (languages / dialects that are different from a genealogical and structural point of view), as well as the non-uniform territorial distribution of the minority language communities, pose specific difficulties which are to be taken into consideration in developing and implementing transparent and coherent language policies.

In this sub-chapter, I will present some basic information on the ethnic structure of the population of Romania and on its linguistic diversity, as a preliminary account of the main topic of my paper. According to the 2011 Census, the population of Romania, by nationality, counts as follows:

| ETHNIC GROUP | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE | TERRITORY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Romanians | 16,792,868 | 88.92% | Romania |
| Hungarians (incl. Szeklers) | 1,227,623 | 6.50% | 16 counties in Transylvania |
| Roma | 621,573 | 3.29% | spread all over the country, especially in Mureş and Călăraşi counties |
| Ukrainians | 50,920 | 0.27% | Maramureş, Timiş, Bukovina counties |
| Germans (Transylvanian Saxons, Swabians) | 36,042 | 0.19% | 14 counties in Transylvania |
| Turks | 27,698 | 0.15% | Dobrogea region |
| Lippovan-Russians | 23,487 | 0.12% | Brăila, Tulcea and Suceava counties |
| Crimean Tartars | 20,282 | 0.11% | Dobrogea region |
| Serbs | 18,076 | 0.10% | Arad, Timiş, Caraş-Severin, Mehedinți counties |
| Slovaks | 13,654 | 0.07% | Timiş, Arad, Bihor, Sălaj counties |
| Bulgarians | 7,336 | 0.04% | Banat region, Suceava county and along the Danube river |
| Croats (Krashovani) | 5,408 | 0.03% | Caraş-Severin county |
| Greeks | 3,668 | 0.02% | Dobrogea region |
| Jews | 3,271 | 0.02% | esp. Bukovina, Bucharest |
| Italians | 3,203 | 0.02% | esp. Bucharest, Timiș county |
| Poles | 2,543 | 0.01% | Suceava county |
| Czechs | 2,477 | 0.01% | Caraş-Severin and Mehedinți counties |



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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chinese* | 2,017 | 0.01% | Bucharest |
| Csángós** | 1,536 | < 0.01% | Western Moldavia (Bacău county) |
| Armenians | 1,361 | < 0.01% | Gherla |
| Macedonians (Slavs) | 1,264 | < 0.01% | esp. Dobrogea county |
| Others (Albanians, Ruthenians, Slovenians etc.) | 18,524 | 0.10% | |

* Recent migrants

** An ethnic group of Roman Catholic faith, speaking an old Hungarian dialect

Source: *http://www.rpl2011.djsct.ro/inceputj.php?cod=9&codj=0; http://www.rpl2011.djsct.ro/inceputj.php?cod=10&codj=0*

The Hungarians, the most important national minority in Romania, account for 6.5 % of the total population. According to the 2011 Romanian Census reports, they are a dominant ethnic group in two counties in Transylvania, Harghita and Covasna, where they account for 85.2%, respectively 73.7% of the population in the area. Important demographic percentages are also recorded in Mureș county (37.8%**)**, Satu Mare County (34.5%**)**, Bihor county (25.3%), S**ălaj (23.3%)** etc.

In Romania, the national minorities speak a wide range of languages. The status of these languages in terms of linguistic geography is quite diverse. Most of them correspond to official languages spoken in the states neighbouring Romania (Bulgarian, Crimean Tartar, Hungarian, Serbian, Ukrainian), in the Balkan area (Albanian, Croat, Greek, Macedonian[3], Slovenian, Turkish), or in territories which are not in direct linguistic contact with the Romanian language (Armenian, Czech, Italian, Ivrit (Modern Hebrew), Polish, Russian, Slovak). Other idioms are dialects historically related to a language of origin: it is the case of Swabian (orig. *Schwäbisch*) and Transylvanian Saxon (orig. *Sächsisch*) which must be related to German language. Carashovenian dialect and Croat have a comparable situation**.** Similarly, Csángó idiom is an old dialect of medieval Hungarian. A special status has the Ruthenian or Rusyn**,** an East Slavic idiom, recognized in Romania as a minority language, but considered by the Ukrainian scholars a dialect of Ukrainian language. Yiddish is an old Germanic dialect adopted by the Jewish population in many parts of Europe, and the Romany language represents an old dialect originally spoken by the Roma (Gypsy) nomad groups coming from India. In the instructional process, the speakers of most of these (oral) dialects study the corresponding standard language of origin. In the case of Romany, remarkable efforts have been made in recent years for the standardization of the written language (by elaboration of grammars, pronunciation guides, dictionaries, textbooks etc.) (Sarău 2005; 2008).

[3] Macedonian is recognized in Romania as a minority language in its own right. Bulgarian linguists consider it a western dialect of Bulgarian language.



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From a genealogical and structural point of view, most of these minority languages are very different from the official language of the country, Romanian, which belongs to the family of Romance languages. Most of them are inflected languages. Bulgarian, Croat, Czech, Macedonian, Polish, Russian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Ukrainian are languages of Slavic origin. *Schwäbisch*, Sächsisch and Yiddish are Germanic language varieties. Hebrew belongs to the West Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, Romany is an Indo-Aryan language, Albanian is of Thracian origin, whereas Greek and Armenian are independent branches of the Indo-European family of languages. A few are agglutinative languages: Turkish and Crimean Tartar are of Turkic origin, and Hungarian belongs to the Uralic family. The only minority language that is intimately related to Romanian from a genealogical and structural point of view is Italian.

The great diversity of these minority languages, as well as their non-uniform distribution on the territory of Romania, raises specific problems which should be taken into consideration when designing and implementing a mother tongue medium instruction and a high-quality teaching of the official language of the country.

## III. The right to teach and learn: instruction through the medium of minority languages

The protection of LRs by means of education represents the key element for the preservation of language related identity and the reproduction of cultural values of the ethnic minorities. According to Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1999:49-51; 2000:580 sqq.), the main targets of a strong and efficient educational policy for national minorities would be:

- Full access to education through the medium of one's own mother tongue at all levels of tuition (primary, secondary and tertiary education, but with minimum 8 years of study);
- Promotion of strong forms of bilingual education, such as language maintenance (language shelter) programmes and two-way bilingual programmes which stimulate the strengthening and development of mother tongue skills at a native-speaking level, and also ensure a full command of the official language(s) of the state;
- Cultivation of such values as tolerance, mutual respect and understanding of diversity;
- Combat against any form of discrimination on a linguistic, cultural or religious basis, any form of nationalistic hatred or exclusion.

The reform of the Romanian educational system by the end of the '90s, mainly from 1996 through 2000, has produced a visible turn from an ethnocentric educational model to a more flexible one, open to negotiation of alternatives. This change of perspective has encouraged the students to un-



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derstand language against the background of linguistic and cultural diversity, first and foremost by getting acquainted with the common heritage of the European culture and its linguistic patrimony.

The reform of the system has started in moderate forms after 1990, but it has been coherently implemented between 1997 and 2000 owing to the open-minded Minister of Education of that time, Andrei Marga. The policy of the Ministry of Education and Research in the following years has continued the already existing directions of development. The climax was achieved in 2007 when Romania officially ratified The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and engaged in fully putting into practice its provisions.

A brief overview of the educational policies for national minorities in Romania will be presented in the further sub-divisions of my paper:

## (A) Types of tuition

The instruction for national minorities in Romania at pre-school, primary and middle - / upper-secondary education, vocational education, post-secondary education levels is organized by means of three different programme types, according to the option of the students (of their parents or of their legally appointed guardians), and to the demographic specificity of the region. From the point of view of language and educational policies, they fall into two categories:

1. *Strong educational models* designed to ensure that the minority children maintain and develop their mother tongue at a native-speaking level, including the access to a high formal register:
    a) Language maintenance (language shelter) programmes which are the strongest form of complete tuition in one's own mother tongue: the minority language is used as a medium of instruction in all subjects, at all levels of tuition (1st to 12th grades).
    b) Two-way bilingual programmes: they are based on partial tuition through the medium of one's own mother tongue, and partial tuition in Romanian;
2. *Weak educational model*: children are instructed in Romanian, but they can study their mother tongue by request (3-4 classes per week). This type of tuition is preferred by persons who belong to numerically small minorities or to minorities which are dispersed over the territory of the state and, therefore, have difficulties in attending a strong form of bilingual education.



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## (B) The school network for national minorities related to the Romanian educational system

A few comparative statistical data on the school network for minorities, furnished by the Ministry of National Education in Romania (MEN), can offer an overall picture of its size and evolution. I find it relevant to compare data regarding the first years of the real reformation of the educational system (L. Murvai, 2000) to data publicly communicated at the Congress of Education, 2013:

| SCHOOL YEAR 1999-2000 | | | SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Language of tuition** | **School Units and Sections** | **%** | **Language of tuition** | **School Units and Sections** | **%** |
| **Total Romania** | **27,512** | **100** | **Total Romania** | **19,000** | **100** |
| **Total minorities** | **2,755** | **10.01** | **Total minorities** | **2,872** | **15.11** |
| Hungarian | 2,388 | 8.67 | Hungarian | 2,198 | 11.56 |
| German, Serbian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Czech*, Croatian** | 367 | 1.33 | Romany | 304 | 1.6 |
| | | | German, Ukrainian, Serbian, Slovak, Czech (only pre-school and primary education ), Croatian (pre-school, primary and upper secondary education – college), Turkish, Bulgarian, Italian, Greek | 370 | 1.94 |

Source: *Parametrii importanţi ai învăţământului cu predare în limbile minorităţilor din România*, Bucureşti, Ministerul Educației Naționale - Secretariat de Stat pentru Minorități, Congresul Educației, 14-15 iunie 2013.

If we take a quick look at the statistical data, we can easily observe the general tendency of the system to expand both in terms of quantity (greater number of school units, greater percentage of the minority educational network related to that of Romania), and of scope (a wider range of minority languages under protection). Whereas in 1999-2000 school year tuition was conducted in 7 minority languages, by contrast, in 2012-2013 the number of mother tongues used as teaching languages (monitored by the Ministry of National Education) increased to 12. Besides the engagement of Romania



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in applying the provisions of part III of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* to 10 languages (i.e. Bulgarian, Czech, Croat, German, Hungarian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Turkish, Ukrainian), efforts have been made to organize instruction in languages which fall under the provisions of part II of the Charter (i.e. Greek, Italian and Romany). Noticeable results have been recorded in creating and developing a school network for Roma children, which is indispensable for teaching the Romany language to a community that is very much dispersed over the territory of Romania.

In spite of the general decline in population, the educational system for minorities (pre-school, primary and middle - / upper-secondary education, vocational education, post-secondary education) has not only preserved what had been gained in time, but has also developed certain components, as shown in the above table. This tendency can be also illustrated by examining the number of pupils enrolled in language shelter and two-bilingual programmes, as well as the number of teachers (increase in the number of teaching languages, in the number of teachers for most of the languages, the higher access of Hungarian pupils to upper-secondary education despite de decrease of population etc.):

| **Minority pupils enrolled in language shelter and two-way bilingual programmes in 1999-2000 school year** | **Minority pupils enrolled in language shelter and two-way bilingual programmes in 2012-2013 school year** |
|---|---|
| **Total minorities: 215,542** | **Total minorities: 193,768** |
| Hungarians 193,635 out of which:<br>Pre-school level 40,207<br>Primary schools 59,982<br>Secondary (middle) schools 59,175<br>Colleges 26,430<br>Vocational schools 5,747<br>Post-secondary colleges 2,094 | Hungarians 165,130 out of which:<br>Pre-school level 35,375<br>Primary schools 53,346<br>Secondary (middle) schools 41,824<br>Colleges 33,650<br>Vocational schools 935<br>Post-secondary colleges -<br>no information available from MEN (2013) |
| **Teaching staff in 1999-2000 school year** | **Teaching staff in 2012-2013 school year** |
| **Total minorities: 13,338** | **Total minorities: 17,718** |
| Hungarians 12,473 | Hungarians 15,978 |
| German 515 | German 746 |
| Ukrainian 32 | Ukrainian 268 |



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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Serbian | 146 | Serbian | 76 |
| Slovak | 147 | Slovak | 91 |
| Czech | 3 | Czech | 7 |
| Croatian | 22 | Croatian | 17 |
| | | Romany | 430 |
| | | Italian | 263 |
| | | Russian | 31 |
| | | Polish | 18 |
| | | Bulgarian | 10 |
| | | Greek | 6 |
| | | Armenian | 2 |

Apart from the students who enjoy the right to instruction through the medium of their mother tongues, an important number of persons belonging to national minorities choose to enrol in schools with tuition in Romanian and to study their mother tongues as subject by request. It is well-known that this type of *weak language programme* can lead to the displacement of the mother tongue, to non-symmetrical bilingualism or diglossia (functional asymmetry between $L_1$ and $L_2$) or even to the replacement of the first language (Tove Skutnabb-Kangas 1999; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b). Nevertheless, taking into consideration that, before 1989, some of the national minorities in Romania had no form of access to education in their mother tongue or had a limited one, the development of such programmes must be regarded as beneficial for the moment. A comparison between the number of students who enrolled in such programmes in 1999-2000 school year and in 2012-2013 will point out a significant increase for most of the languages (the most spectacular being Romany), and a few exceptions (Russian, Czech, Croatian, Greek). The diminished number of students interested in German mother tongue by request is due to the extended network of schools offering *language shelter programmes*, which are usually preferred.



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| SCHOOL YEAR 1999-2000 | | SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Tuition in Romanian, Mother tongue as subject of study by request** | **Number of pupils** | **Tuition in Romanian, Mother tongue as subject of study by request** | **Number of pupils** |
| **TOTAL** | **22,688** | **TOTAL** | **48,331** |
| Hungarian | 2,845 | Hungarian | 3,957 |
| Ukrainian | 8,132 | Ukrainian | 8,205 |
| Russian | 1,630 | Russian | 1,383 |
| Turkish | 3,133 | Turkish[4] | - |
| Polish | 397 | Polish | 573 |
| Bulgarian | 478 | Bulgarian[5] | 538 |
| Serbian | 381 | Serbian | 898 |
| Slovak | 88 | Slovak | 100 |
| Czech | 123 | Czech | 85 |
| Croatian | 539 | Croatian | - |
| Greek | 193 | Greek | 160 |
| Romany | 4200 | Romany | 32,158 |
| Armenian | 11 | Armenian | 70 |
| Italian | 19 | Italian | - |
| German | 519 | German | 204 |

## (C) Teaching experiences: minority education by language of tuition

Teaching to monolinguals or to gradually becoming bilinguals through the medium of their mother tongue is a complex process that has to take into consideration specific socio- and psycholinguistic constraints. As Kinga Bakk-Miklósi & Rita Fóris-Ferenczi (2011:179) observe, bilingual minority education must be treated as a distinct case of bilingualism, since the educational policies and the $L_1$-$L_2$ related teaching techniques are context and culture sensitive. The structural characteristics of each minority language at

[4] For Turkish, Croatian and Italian the data provided by MEN (2013) is not explicit: the figures cover indistinctly persons who study through the medium of their mother tongue, and persons who study their mother tongue as a subject by request.

[5] As regards Bulgarian and Greek, the figures include a small number of learners who study through the medium of their mother tongue at Hristo Botev Bulgarian College in Bucharest (14-15 per year for each language), based on the agreement between the two ethnic minorities.



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a phonetic, lexical or grammatical level, the pragmatic rules, the territorial distribution of the language communities, the language status and prestige, the language evolution and cultural history will specifically shape the teaching process and the learning relationship with the language of the dominant group (the official language of a state).

An efficient and sound minority education should lead to a type of additive bilingualism, that is "to a high communicational competence in both languages, stability and symmetry in connection with the standard variant, keeping the dominance of the mother tongue" (Bakk-Miklósi & Fóris-Ferenczi 2011: 182).

For this purpose, mother-tongue-medium instruction should respect a number of important principles based on best teaching experiences in the world. As Tove Skutnabb-Kangas advocates (1999; 2009b), mother tongue instruction should be conducted in linguistically homogenous study formations by bilingual teachers and it should be consistently maintained throughout all levels of education (1st to 12th grades, but at least 8 years). The official language as subject of study must benefit of a high quality teaching throughout the schooling period (3-4 classes per week). The minority language will be used as medium of instruction for all subjects (including foreign languages training) for at least 8 years, so that pupils could acquire a high formal linguistic register. During the 3rd to 7th grades, a limited number of cognitively less demanding or practical subjects will be taught in $L_2$. But it is only after the 8th grade that the $L_2$-medium teaching could be partially extended to the cognitively more demanding subjects. The cognitively and linguistically most demanding subjects will be delivered in the mother tongue of the students during the 11th-12th grades. The final goal of such a teaching model would ideally be that all pupils reach a high level of balanced or symmetrical bilingualism (i.e. the speaker has comparable levels of proficiency and communicative skills in both languages) which proves to be stimulating for their cognitive and linguistic development. On the contrary, asymmetry in the usage of $L_1$-$L_2$ can generate negative types of verbal behaviour in bilinguals, as Erika-Mária Tódor observes (2015): communicative anxiety, avoidance of speech, laconism, scarcity of vocabulary, inter-linguistic errors (negative transfer of elements or structures from $L_1$ to $L_2$) etc.

Organizing instruction for a wide range of minorities – as it is the case of Romania – raises practical difficulties which are caused by linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Even though the democratic legislative framework ensures an equal treatment to each and every language in the instructional process "there is an urgent need for a differential approach, as the different linguistic communities greatly differ in number, regional distribution, clear aims (which are connected to the centuries-old educational traditions), in the intellectual potential stemming from the number, as well as the characteristics of the languages (type, standardization, etc.)." (Bakk-Miklósi & Fóris-Ferenczi 2011: 184)



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The situation described above, although desirable, is far from being frequently implemented within the educational systems worldwide. As T. Skutnabb-Kangas (1999: 43) puts it, "the education for minorities in most countries, especially in the West, is organised in ways that counteract sound scientific evidence".

Given the diversity of minority languages in Romania and their teaching traditions, I will continue my presentation by providing basic information about their position within present-day Romanian educational system (data for 2012-2013 school year).

## $C_1$. Minority languages that fall under the provisions of Part III of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages:

### The Bulgarian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Arad, Timiș, Bucharest | **6** | **538** | **10** |
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Bulgarian | *Hristo Botev Bulgarian College,* Bucharest (opened in 1998) | 1 study group (14-15 pupils / year) | | |
| **Remarks:** Limited mother-tongue based education; downward trend in the last 3-4 years | | | | |

### The Czech language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți | **3** lower secondary schools | **85** | **7** |
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Czech | | **3** pre-schools and primary schools | **59** | |
| **Remarks:** Insufficient number of teachers; decline in school population | | | | |



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### The Croatian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Croatian | Caraș-Severin, Timiș | **9** pre-schools and primary schools (Carașova, Clocotici) | **466** | **17** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | **2** lower secondary schools<br>**1** college | | |
| **Remarks:** Decline in school population; diminished number of teachers | | | | |

### The German language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in German | Alba, Arad, Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Bucharest, Craș-severin, Cluj-Napoca, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu-Mare, Splaj, Sibiu, Timiș | **216** | **20,784** | **746** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | **204** | |
| **Remarks:** Upward trend; Bilateral agreement between Romania and the Federal Republic of Germany for setting up special sections in Bucharest and Timișoara (German type of baccalaureate) | | | | |

### The Hungarian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Hungarian | **17** counties and the capital: Alba, Arad, Bacău, Bistrița-Năsăud, Bihor, Brașov, București, Cluj-Napoca, Caraș-Severin, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu Mare Sălaj, Sibiu, Timiș | **2198** | **165,130**<br>Pre-schools: **35,375**<br>Primary schools: **53,346**<br>Secondary schools: **41,824**<br>High schools: **33,650**<br>Vocational schools: **935** | **15,978** |
| in Romanian or German, mother tongue by request | | | **3957** | |



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**Remarks:** extensive LHRs protection

* **Pupils defective in hearing** belonging to the Hungarian minority benefit of special schools with tuition in their mother tongue. Based on *Note No. 28260 / March 9, 2000* of the Minister of National Education, the first experimental primary school of this type was put into practice.

* **Training courses** for teachers of Hungarian are organized by inspectorates, the *Union of Hungarian Teaching Staff in Romania*, Romanian and Hungarian universities.

## The Lippovan / Russian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Tulcea (the Danube Delta), Constanța, Brăila, Iași, Suceava, Botoșani, Ialomița | **43** | **1383** | **31** |
| **Remarks:** Weak type of mother-tongue based educational programme; downward trend | | | | |

## The Serbian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Serbian | Arad, Caraș-Severin, Timiș, Mehedinți | **27** | **630** | **76** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | **898** | |
| **Remarks:** Diminished number of teachers; upward tendency of the weak form of tuition | | | | |

## The Slovak language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme – tuition in Slovak | Arad, Bihor, Sălaj, Timiș | **16** | **990** | **91** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | **100** | |
| **Remarks:** Diminished number of teachers; slight decline in school population | | | | |



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**The Turkish language**

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme – tuition in Turkish | Constanța, Medgidia, Tulcea, Bucharest | **4** | **4583** | **72** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | | |
| **Remarks:** increase in school population; upward trend | | | | |

**The Ukrainian language**

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Ukrainian | Arad, Botoșani, Caraș-Severin, Marmureș, Satu Mare, Suceava, Timiș, Tulcea | **93** | **8205** | **268** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | | |
| **Remarks:** upward trend; increased number of teachers | | | | |

## $C_2$. Minority languages that fall under the provisions of part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

**The Albanian language**

The Albanians are a small community (520 persons), spread over the territory of Romania. There is no public education through the medium of Albanian language. Language courses are offered to a limited number of learners by a few Language institutes and by the *League of Albanians in Romania*.

**The Armenian language**

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Bucharest, Constanța, Gherla, Iași | Courses supported by the *Armenian Union from Romania* | **70** | **2** |
| **Remarks:** Limited mother-tongue based education | | | | |



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### The Modern Greek language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Prahova County, Bucharest, Galați | courses supported by *The Hellenic Union* from Romania, the *Hellenic Community* in Bucharest | **160** | **6** |
| **Remarks:** Limited mother-tongue based education | | | | |

### The Italian language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Italian | Bucharest | *Dante College in Bucharest* | **263** | **33** |
| **Remarks:** Maintanance programme implemented from 2007 through 2012 supported by the *Association of Italians from Romania*. Upward trend. | | | | |

### The Macedonian language

The Macedonian community accounts for 1,264 persons (2011 Census). There is no public education through the medium of Macedonian language. Courses by request were sporadically organized in the public schools (e.g. in 2007 at the Urzicuța middle school, Dolj County). Language courses are offered to a limited number of learners by a few Language institutes and by the *Association of the Macedonians in Romania*.

### The Polish language

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | Suceava county, Bucharest (by support of the *Polish Union* and the *Embassy of Poland*) | **11** | **573** | **18** |
| **Remarks:** Upward trend; the project "Children of Bukovina" implemented by the Suceava Inspectorate and the Embassy of Poland; language courses at the *Educational Centre for Diaspora* in Lublin, Poland (starting 2005). | | | | |



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**The Romany language**

| Tuition | Area | School units | Students | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maintainance programme - tuition in Romany | All counties, except for Ilfov and Sibiu | **302** | **863** | **430** |
| in Romanian, mother tongue by request | | | **32,158** | |
| **Remarks:** upward trend; increased number of teachers: intense efforts have been made to organize training and summer courses for the formation of young Roma teachers. | | | | |

It is widely known that children coming from Roma communities represent a disadvantaged social category, which has traditionally been an object of discrimination, with dramatic consequences upon education. Cases of (intra-school) segregation were recorded in Romania especially at a primary and pre-school level, as shown in the *Report on Discrimination of Roma Children in Education* of the European Commission (2014: 21). The percentage of such cases reported by the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights* (FRA, *Roma Survey*, 2014) is 2%, much lower compared to other EU member states.

According to the same document, in Romania, the illiteracy rate in young Roma aged 16-24 is 22% (higher in women), and even higher in adults aged 25-44, i.e. 34%. As regards the low rate of school attendance and the increasing phenomenon of school dropout in Roma pupils, a Research Report carried out by Gelu Duminică and Ana Ivasiuc and supported by UNICEF (2010) states that 70% of the children who abandon school in an early stage in Romania are of Roma origin. Other statistical data presented in a research conducted by the Institute of Educational Sciences and UNICEF show that 44.2 % of Roma children, 7-11 years of age, do not attend primary schools, and 64.62 % of Roma children, 12-16 years of age, are not enrolled in lower secondary schools or dropout school in an early stage (Apostu *et al.* 2012: 43, 50). Several detailed parameters measuring the access of Roma pupils and adults to education in Romania are to be found in the above mentioned FRA report (Roma survey, 2014). Within the limits of my paper, I will quote only some relevant figures proving the vulnerable situation of Roma children and youngsters in the field of education: 24% of Roma aged 16 or above have never attended formal education; 68% of Roma pupils leave school before the age of 16; 93 % of Roma aged 18–24 did not complete upper secondary education etc.

In order to encourage the inclusion of Roma children, the Ministry of National Education has developed, especially after 1996, programmes for the positive discrimination of this national minority within the field of education. The most important affirmative measures taken in this respect have been the following (Sarău 2005; 2008a):



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• The Roma pupils are granted separate places in high-schools, pedagogical colleges and universities without having to take an admittance examination (Orders No. 3577 /April 15, 1998; No. 5083 / November 26, 1999; No. 3294 / March 1, 2000 of the Minister of the National Education; Order No. 4129 / June 9, 2003). For instance, in 2016, a number of 1571 pupils of Roma origin were enrolled in high-schools following such a procedure, according to the official data (MEN, *Admiterea în licee 2016*).

• Territorial school inspectors of Roma origin have been appointed starting 1999 (Order No. 3363 / March 1, 1999 of the Minister of National Education).

• Educational mediators of Roma origin have been appointed; their task is to facilitate the overpassing of cultural barriers between the majority and the Roma minority.

• Several intensive training programmes for the formation of qualified teachers of Romany language and culture have been financed by the state in cooperation with approx. 80 NGO-s and institutions (for example: CEDU 2000+, UNICEF, CREDIS College from the University of Bucharest, the Embassies of France and Great Britain, etc.). For instance, only from 1999 through 2000, 380 teachers were trained, out of which 250 have continued their training within the long distance system of education;

• A Bachelor programme for Romany Language and Culture was opened in 1998, within the University of Bucharest, for the training of future teachers of Romany language and culture;

• *Second chance* programmes for Roma who have abandoned the educational system have been launched, especially from 1998 through 2000, aiming at the eradication of illiteracy. School caravans for the tuition of the nomad Roma were organized so that the pupils could attend school, irrespective of their place of residence etc.

• Curricula, textbooks, pronouncing guides, dictionaries, grammars, and auxiliary instruments for the study of Romany language, history and culture have been elaborated.

• *The Education 2000+ Centre*, a well-known NGO successfully working in the field of education, has organized training sessions for school teachers of Roma origin and summer camps so as to reduce the ethnic discrimination in education. The project "*Roma Girls go to School as well!*" (2005-2006) aimed at reducing the school drop-out rate caused by early marriage and early pregnancy among Roma girls, and at improving their performance in primary and secondary schools.



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Despite the multitude of successful educational programmes dedicated to the Roma community, the shortcomings are far from being solved. Many Roma still declare themselves as ethnic Romanians, refuse the study of Romany language in school and prefer to preserve it inside their community. Poverty, marginalization, social stigma, lack of collaboration between the community leaders etc., all these explain the still unsatisfactory results of the social and educational policies devoted to Roma minority and, consequently, the low status of Romany language in society. The *Strategy of the Government of Romania* (2001) with regard to the improvement of the economic and social situation of Roma for a period of 10 years (2001-2010) did not produce spectacular results and had to be revised and postponed for a new interval (2012-2020), as I have already mentioned before. A monitoring of 2012 governmental strategy reveals a number of shortcomings in the process of implementation of the educational programmes for Roma children and adults: lack of communication and collaboration between institutions, almost exclusive attention to primary cycle, inadequate use of financial resources, out-dated legislation etc. (Neagu 2012).

**The Ruthenian language**

The Ruthenian community accounts for little over 200 persons. Ruthenian or Rusyn is not studied in the public schools in Romania. Language courses are delivered to community members by the *Cultural Union of Ruthenians in Romania*.

**The Tartar language**

The Tartar community accounts for 20,282 members. The Tartar language has been introduced as an optional subject (1 class per week) in a few public schools from Dobrogea region (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Agigea, Lumina, Valu lui Traian, Medgidia and Constanța) in 2008-2009 school year. Tartar had been eliminated from the Curriculum of communist Romania in 1956. Today it is considered an endangered language in Europe. Language courses are also delivered to community members by *The Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tartars of Romania*.

**The Yiddish language**

There is no public education (for pre-school, primary and secondary levels) through the medium of Yiddish language.

## (D) Curricula and Framework Plans

Minority languages, alongside Romanian language and literature and foreign languages, is part of the *Language and communication curricular area*



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of the National Curriculum, which proposes pragmatically and communication-oriented objectives.

The schools providing tuition in the mother tongue(s) of the minorities traditionally ensured the study of the language(s) and literature(s), according to the *Framework Plans* for primary and secondary education, as follows: 5-8 classes per week for the primary schools, 4-5 classes per week for lower secondary schools, 3 classes per week, included in the common trunk, for upper secondary schools (high-schools). The number of mother-tongue classes in pre-schools and primary schools was reduced to 5-7 per week, according to the new *Framework Plan* approved in 2013. In middle schools, a constant number of 4 classes per week are maintained during the 5th-8th grades, as indicated in the *Framework Plan* for lower secondary education adopted in April 2016.

At all levels of tuition, the subjects are taught through the medium of the mother tongue of the students, according to The Law of National Education, 2011, art. 46 (1). The teaching language in which should be delivered such subjects as the History and Geography of Romania had been a matter of intense controversy between the majority and the Hungarian minority. After a long period of dispute in society, the Law of National Education, 2011, art. 46 (8) settles that the two disciplines are to be taught through the medium of minority languages, on the condition that proper names and toponyms are indicated in Romanian too.

The study of the Romanian language and literature, as the official language of the state, is provided for 3-4 classes per week during the entire period of schooling.

In schools providing tuition in Romanian, students belonging to national minorities have the possibility of studying their mother tongue by request (see Orders No. 4646; No. 3533 / March 31, 1999; No. 3113 /January 31, 2000 of the Minister of National Education). The number of classes allotted to the study of the mother tongue is 3-4 per week during the entire period of schooling, and they are included in the common trunk of the curriculum. The study is organized in forms (15-25 pupils) or groups (7-15 pupils or less, with the special approval of the Ministry for National Education and Research). Any pupil has the right to begin the study of the mother tongue in whatever grade, from the level of beginners, or to join an existing more advanced study group after taking a language test. Pupils who usually come from mixed marriages and live in two minority cultures have the right to study both languages according to a special timetable scheme.

As regards the content of the language curriculum, I would highlight its functional and communicational approach, which enables the learners to efficiently develop a native-speaker level of proficiency. As an example, the general competences specified in the Curriculum for minority languages and communication (2013, Pre-school and 1st-2nd grades) are: (a) reception



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of oral messages in familiar communicational contexts (b) production of oral messages in various communicational contexts (c) reception of various types of written messages in familiar communicational contexts (d) production of written messages in various communicational contexts.

## (E) Textbooks

According to the Orders of the Minister of National Education No. 3593/1998, 3811 /1998, 3643/1999, national minorities can benefit of original textbooks for the study of their mother tongue and literature, of their history and traditions and of music. For other subjects, the textbooks can be translated from Romanian, can be elaborated in European cooperation, or can be brought from the mother-tongue countries of the minorities and submitted for approval to the Ministry for National Education. The textbooks for the basic education (grades 1st-10th) are ensured free of charge.

In 2002, the Department for Interethnic Relations initiated a subsidizing programme for the printing of high-school textbooks for national minorities. Usually, the high-school textbooks for the Romanian majority are not financially supported by the State. Since the lack of textbooks was frequently invoked especially by the numerically small minorities, the programme was intended to be an affirmative measure of protection. As an example, a number of 17 textbooks in Hungarian and 10 in German (but no one for other minorities) were printed in 2013, according to the *Romanian Statistical Yearbook - 2015*.

Nevertheless, shortcomings have been often reported by (some of the) minorities regarding the printing and the delivery of the necessary textbooks in due time.

## (F) The assessment of students

According to the Romanian methodology of assessment, by the end of the trimester, the 5th-12th grades pupils have to take a final written test in their mother tongue and literature, as well as in Romanian language and literature. At the same time, all the national exams (graduation exams of lower and upper secondary schools, university admittance exams) can be taken through the medium of the mother tongue of the national minorities.

**(G) The training of the teaching staff for minority schools** is an important issue, closely associated with the reform of the educational system. In the '90s, the need for qualified teachers was tremendous for some of the national minorities, especially for those who had not benefited in the past of mother-tongue based education, or for those who suffered a dramatic loss of their school network during the communist regime (for example Roma, Bulgarians, Poles etc.).



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Based on Orders No. 3578/1998, 4758/1998, 4681/1998, 5165/1998, 3003/1999, 3005/1999 of the Minister of National Education, starting with 1999/2000 school year, the training of the teaching staff coming from pre-schools or primary school units has been conducted in pedagogical colleges (with full or partial mother-tongue tuition), for all minorities, in cities such as Aiud, Sibiu, Timişoara, Braşov, Constanţa, Cluj-Napoca, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Târgu Secuiesc, Satu Mare, Suceava, Mediaş (*The German Centre for Life-long Learning*) etc. The training of the teachers coming from lower and upper secondary schools or from vocational schools takes place in several Romanian universities mentioned bellow, under **(I)**.

## (H) Second language acquisition: the teaching of Romanian to national minorities

A persistent and widespread criticism on the part of Romanians is directed against those Hungarian speakers coming from compact ethnic areas who prove a poor or even non-existent command of the official language, despite the fact that Romanian language is a subject of study during the whole period of schooling.

The demand of the majority that national minorities should avoid linguistic isolationism or segregation on a linguistic basis is perfectly reasonable. Nevertheless, some of the real causes should not be ignored either. One of them was related to the structural deficiencies in the teaching process of Romanian as second language in minority schools. As Sándor N. Szilágyi (1998: 131-148) convincingly explains, in primary schools, the Hungarian children coming from homogenous mother-tongue communities usually start the study of Romanian as a foreign language from the level of beginners. For this level, adapted $L_2$ syllabi and textbooks were in use. Ignoring the specificity and the gradual character of the second-language acquisition process, the provisions of the old Law of Education No. 84 / 1995 stipulated that the study of the Romanian language and literature in minority secondary schools would be conducted on the basis of curricula and textbooks identical to those of the Romanian native speakers. This provision generated, in many cases, great difficulties in the language learning process for native Hungarians, causing their low proficiency levels and a negative attitude towards bilingual education. The Law of Education, republished in *1999*, modified this provision (article 120, 1), allowing special curricula and textbooks in minority lower secondary schools, but identical to those of the Romanian natives in minority upper secondary schools. It is only in 2011 that the Law of Education (art. 46 (2)) provides that, at all levels of tuition, Romanian as secondary language will be taught on the basis of different curricula and textbooks.

Apart from the particular case discussed above, teaching a second language to persons belonging to national minorities should require the capacity of the educator / educational instruments (curriculum, syllabus, textbooks,



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auxiliary materials etc.) to adapt to each mother tongue characteristics and to each language community and culture. This principle, fundamental in applied linguistics (didactics of languages) and communicational studies, is of major importance for effectively teaching Romanian to a wide range of different linguistic minorities. A fully trained bilingual teacher will have in view not only the linguistic level of the didactic communication, but also other important factors that could shape the instructional process, as Mariana Norel points out (2009: 51-52): (a) the social organization of the study formation should satisfy the cultural model of the students; (b) the cognitive scenario should follow the usual steps students are used to in their own culture; (c) the inner motivation of the students to acquire and develop $L_2$ proficiency should be stimulated, as well as (d) the acceptance of the official language as a necessary instrument of communication.

In recent years, a remarkable progress has been made in elaborating theoretical studies and modern practical auxiliaries (textbooks, audio aids) for teaching Romanian to pupils belonging to national minorities (Platon coord., 2011-2014).



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**(I) Academic instruction through the medium of minority languages**

The persons belonging to national minorities in Romania have also access to mother-tongue-medium tertiary education (public and private universities), mainly in Hungarian and German.

Romania respects the *Hague Recommendations* (1996) regarding the minority education at tertiary level. In several Romanian universities, the minority languages, literatures and civilizations are offered as A or B subjects of study. Bachelor and master courses are delivered entirely in the respective languages according to a more general practice in Romania regarding language teaching at an academic level. Here is an extensive list of such philological programmes or optional language courses:

- *Albanian*: University of Bucharest (optional);
- *Armenian*: University of Bucharest (optional);
- *Bulgarian*: University of Bucharest (BA); University of Craiova (lectureship);
- *Croat*: University of Bucharest (BA); West University of Timișoara (BA);
- *Czech*: University of Bucharest (BA);
- *German*: in almost all Romanian universities (as modern language)(BA, MA);
- *Greek*: University of Bucharest (BA); University of Iași (optional course);
- *Hebrew, Judaic studies, Yiddish*: University of Bucharest (BA, MA); University Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca (BA);
- *Hungarian*: University of Bucharest (BA); University Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca (BA, MA);
- *Italian*: in several Romanian universities (as modern language)(BA, MA);
- *Macedonian*: University of Craiova (lectureship);
- *Polish*: University of Bucharest (BA); University of Iași (optional course); University of Craiova; (optional course); University Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca (optional course);
- *Romany*: University of Bucharest (BA – as B subject, since 1998-1999 academic year; BA – as A subject, since 2005-2006 academic year. See Sarău 2008b: 199);
- *Russian*: in several Romanian universities (as modern language)(BA, MA);
- *Serbian*: University of Bucharest (BA); West University of Timișoara (BA);
- *Slovak*: University of Bucharest (BA);
- *Turkish*: University of Bucharest (BA); University of Constanța (BA);



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• *Ukrainian*: University of Bucharest; University Babeș-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca; University of Suceava (BA).

Tartar and Ruthenian languages are not represented at an academic level. At the University of Bucharest functioned a section in Tartar between 1957-1977.

A matter of controversy between the majority and the Hungarian minority has been for a long time the necessity of a separate public university with tuition in Hungarian. The Romanian officials have always considered that the academic system for minorities is balanced, fulfil their needs and should be developed in a multicultural milieu, not in isolation.

The Hungarian minority enjoy the possibility to attend a wide range of study fields through the medium of their mother tongue in several Romanian universities.

The multicultural *University Babeș*-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca has 3 lines of study (Romanian, Hungarian and German) and offers 64 Bachelor programmes and 10 Master programmes in Hungarian; 12 Bachelor programmes and 5 Master programmes in German. Some of these study programmes are held in localities situated in geographical areas of high Hungarian demographic concentration, such as: Sfântu Gheorghe, Gheorgheni, Târgu Secuiesc, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Satu Mare, and Târgu Mureș. Apart from the above mentioned university, Hungarian is used as a teaching language in the University of Medicine and Pharmacy and the University of Arts (Performing arts, Stage directing) in Târgu Mureș or in the University of Oradea (Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education programme). In accordance with the provisions of the Law of National Education, in order to fulfil their educational and theological needs, the Hungarians set up and manage a few private universities: *The Partium Christian University* in Oradea (1990); *The Sapientia University* with sections in Miercurea-Ciuc and Târgu-Mureș (2001-2002); *The Protestant Institute* in Cluj-Napoca; *The Romano-Catholic Institute* in Alba-Iulia.

Courses in German are also delivered at the West University of Timișoara (Accounting and Business Informational Systems, International Relations and European Studies, Performing arts), at the *Lucian Blaga University* in Sibiu (Intercultural Communication for the Economic Field, Protestant Pastoral Theology, Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school education), at *Transylvania University* in Brașov (Applied Informatics, E-Business, Intercultural Studies), at *The Polytechnic University* in Bucharest (Engineering), at *The Polytechnic University* in Timișoara (Civil engineering, Mechatronics and Robotics), and at *The Academy for Economic Studies* in Bucharest (Business Administration) etc.



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## IV. Conclusions

My presentation focused on the quantitative data illustrating the undeniable change of view on minority education in Romania, as well as the firm determination of the State to increase the number of protected minority languages within the educational system and to improve the protection of the LHRs of the persons belonging to the respective communities.

During the last two decades, the education for national minorities has been monitored several times as the legislating and implementation process was in progress. The inevitable shortcomings are not beyond the scope of my paper. Many of them have been already noticed by previous scholars or officials. István Horváth & Alexandra Scacco (2001: 266-271) underlined the necessity for more flexible educational policies, able to fulfil the specific needs of each national minority, provided that communities differ from one another according to a multitude of parameters. Their analysis puts into contrast the educational objectives of the Hungarian and Roma communities in order to emphasize the differences. G. Andreescu (2004) observed, among others, the difference in the protection degree offered to the numerically important minorities (e.g. Hungarian) and to the small ones, criticised the absence of some minority languages from the Romanian schools (e.g. Tartar that was replaced by Turkish), rejected any form of segregation in the field of education (the case of Roma), raised the problem of an independent Hungarian university, and recommended a better collaboration of the authorities with the NGOs working in the educational field. Mária Kovács (2009) offered an extensive analysis of the minority education with a view to the implementation of the objectives of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority languages*. Among the visible deficiencies of the system, she mentioned the lack of teachers especially for pre-school and primary education in certain minorities (Czech, Greek, Romany, Russian, Polish etc.), the low quality of various textbooks or the lack of alternative ones (with a few exceptions), the delay in delivering the textbooks to the schools, the limited book stocks in the libraries of the minority schools etc.

I myself pointed out the vulnerable position of the minority languages used only or mostly as medium of tuition in the weak type of programme (mother tongue by request): Bulgarian, Russian and most of the languages that fall under the provisions of part II of *The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (except for Italian which is studied as a modern language too). Some of the languages are not at all part of the public pre-academic system, certain courses being offered thanks to the efforts of the minorities' associations (Albanian, Armenian, Macedonian, Ruthenian, Tartar etc.). The problems of the Roma community are, also, far from being solved in Romania. The protection of their linguistic and cultural identity goes hand in hand, in this case, with an appropriate policy of positive discrimination at a social and economic level.



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Needless to say that there is still much to be done to change the mentality of the people, to fight against the nationalistic tendencies or the ethnic stereotypes which are still present in a part of the Romanian contemporary society, bearing the traces of the communist past.

Many people in Romania, as in other countries, learn widely spoken languages, but very few seem really interested in the lesser used ones or in the minority languages of their own country. Even the Romanian linguists have done little for the multilingual education policy and research. But there is always hope for a fresh start in the future. Those who deal with language policies should feel encouraged to continue, thinking of Katarina Taikon, an ethnic Roma from Sweden, who learned to read and write at the age of 26, and became a successful actor, writer and Roma activist later on.

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