

Models of interethnic relations in Europe and in the post-Soviet space

**ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme:
National Minorities and Ethno-Political Issues
Belarus – Moldova – Ukraine**

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System of protection and promotion of national and ethnic minorities' rights in Europe

Council of Europe

European Union

**Organization for Security and Co-operation in
Europe**

Minorities in Europe and in the EU - statistics

Minorities in Europe

- 50 states with 850 million citizens
- Among them there are more than 400 ethnic and national minorities
- One out of seven citizens belongs to an ethnic or national minority
- Cultural and linguistic diversity – more than 125 languages:
 - 41 as national, state, official
 - 84 as non-official

Minorities in the EU

- 28 states – 507 million citizens
- 46 million belong to an ethnic or national minority
- 40 million use a minority or regional language

Historical, national and ethnic minorities in Europe – interstate organizations and their approaches

1. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – OSCE

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Recognition of minorities and their inclusion in social life as a cultural and democratic value

- Security and stability

2. Council of Europe – CoE

Human rights, cultural values, non-discrimination and democratic development

Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity, protection and promotion of human rights and minority rights

3. European Union – EU

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Economic and social inclusion of all citizens and non-citizens, residing on the territories of the Member States, freedom of movement for workers

Minority Issues in Europe – Legal obligations and sphere of policies

- Minority rights and non-discrimination – what is the difference?
 - **Minority rights** – maintenance of diversity, preservation of identity – the right to be different
 - **Non-discrimination** – maintenance of equality, removal of all obstacles for its full-fledge implementation
- International standards and national recognition
 - Supremacy of international law over national laws; incorporation of international laws into domestic legal acts, including minority-related legislation
- Policy spheres in Europe
 - ❖ Equal social and economic opportunities and prevention of discrimination
 - ❖ Participation in public life
 - ❖ Preservation of identity and language
 - ❖ Culture and education
 - ❖ Mass-media
 - ❖ Collection of statistical data
 - ❖ Freedom of movement – migration processes

Institutions and advisory bodies

- **Institutions**
 - National human rights institutions/Ombudsman
 - Parliamentary plenipotentiary
 - Political representative
 - Representation at public bodies
- **Advisory bodies**
 - Minority council with democratically elected representatives
 - Local councils at political, administrative and cultural bodies
 - Organizations of specific groups

Integration, tolerance, non-discrimination

MODELS OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS – A SYSTEMIC OVERVIEW

Strategies and practices of the CIS and other post-Soviet states

There are different modes of minorities which includes the following categories:

- 1. Indigenous population**
- 2. “Traditional” minorities**
- 3. Migrant diasporas in the country but beyond their “historical” territories**
- 4. Migrants from other countries**

BELARUS

- **Minorities: 16%**
- **State bodies** : Ministry of culture; Republican Center for National Cultures; Authorized Representative for Religious and National Affairs; departments for ideology, culture and your affairs at regional administrations
- **Institutions** (i.e. stable organized structures independent from state bodies): none
- **Inter-ethnic coordinating council**

MOLDOVA

Minorities: 25%

State bodies – Bureau of Interethnic Relations (BIR) at the Government of the Republic of Moldova

Institutions – Parliamentary Ombudsman and Equality Council

- ❖ Coordinating council of minority organizations at the BIR
- ❖ Minority organization in the regions
- ❖ Structures of local self-government for the consultations with minorities

Initiatives

- individual strategies of national minorities' promotion and integration;
- Integration strategy of the Roma population

MOLDOVA:

Gagauzia, Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU)

Minorities: 20%

Distribution of powers between ATU and central government

Languages of Gagauzia – Gagauz, Russian and Moldovan/Romanian

Usage of other languages

State bodies – Gagauzian People's Assembly

Bureau of Interethnic Relations (BIR) at the Government of the Republic of
Moldova

Institutions – Parliamentary Ombudsman of the Republic of Moldova

MOLDOVA: Transnistrian (Pridnestrovian) Moldovan Republic

No minorities: all population groups are considered equal

Official languages – Russian, Moldovan (Cyrillic), Ukrainian

State bodies – Supreme Council and its Committee on social issues

Institutions – Parliamentary Ombudsman

❖ Organizations of individual ethnic groups

UKRAINE

Minorities: 22 - 15% (no exact data)

State bodies:

- Ministry of Culture
- Commissioner (Plenipotentiary) for Ethnonational Policy at the Government of Ukraine

Institutions:

- Parliamentary Ombudsman (his mandate includes *inter alia* non-discrimination issues)
- Coordinating council of nationalities at the Commissioner for Ethnonational Policy

Initiatives

- Individual strategies of the Ukrainian regions on integration (target groups: migrants);
- National Strategy on the Protection and Integration of the Roma national minority into Ukrainian Society up to 2020

GEORGIA

- **Minorities: 16%**
- **State bodies:** Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, department of civic integration and regional departments in the regions of minorities' compact settlement. Develops integration strategies
- Human rights commission at the Prime Minister
- **Advisor of the President of Georgia for minority issues**
- Ministry of education – Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration; local self government: learning of the state language by minorities
- **Institutions** – Ombudsman and Centre of Tolerance
- **National Minorities Council** as a part of the Ombudsman's office
- **Religious Council** as a part of the Ombudsman's office

Central European Models

Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic

- All states have ratified CoE conventions and adopted laws on national minorities
- All states define minorities taking into account a minimal period of actual presence of the ethnic group in the country (usually 100 years)
- Bilateral treaties on support of specific minorities by their kin-states
- Roma and Sinti integration policies – in compliance with the EU requirements

Central European Models 2

1. **Hungary – cultural autonomy** – minorities themselves define their needs, elect self-governance bodies at local, regional and national levels; they are financed from the state and local budgets.
2. **Poland – cultural and representative autonomy** – existence of minority parties (the biggest one represents German minority, has its MPs at the national level and lobbies minority-related issues on behalf of all minorities).

Cultural and linguistic issues are decided at the local level. In the municipalities where minorities constitute at least 20% of the population (compact residence) minority language and bilingual signs can be used.

Financing from the state budget (project-based) and local budgets. Responsible body: Ministry of Administration and Digitization.

Central European Models 3

3. **Slovakia** – cultural and social strategy of inclusion of all into social and economic sphere and integration through the language
4. **Czech Republic** – cultural and social model – same approach as in Slovakia
5. **Romania** – cultural and representative model
assignment of quotas for each minority in local councils and in the national parliament; specific groups define their own priorities. Managed through the Department for Interethnic Relations of the Romanian Government.
Project-based financing from the state and local budgets.

Western European Models

- 1 Scandinavian countries: indigenous groups, traditional minorities and migrants**
 - full social inclusion and special rights of minorities, as well as common trans-border organizations and structures of specific groups (the Sami parliament)
- 2. Germany, Austria, Spain, UK – migrants – social inclusion and human rights (education, housing)**
 - federal structure, very high level of decentralization
 - representation of minorities at local and national parliaments
- 3. Special issues of the Roma inclusion**

Contact

Thank you for your attention!

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