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Marácz, László PhD

l.k.maracz@uva.nl
assistant professor (Department of European Studies, University of Amsterdam)

Empowering Hungarian Ethno-Linguistic Minorities in Central- and Eastern Europe

Abstract The paper adopts the position that language is an intrinsic and largely non-negotiable part of individual culture and identity. The recognition of one's own language receives more and more support in international political and institutional frameworks. The promotion of linguistic diversity has become the official policy of the European Union. Due to such policies it is to be expected that languages will be and will remain in contact in the context of all sorts of levels of governance. In order to manage linguistic diversity in multilingual and multicultural areas the introduction of a global regime of language policies is unavoidable. These policies will need to satisfy transnational requirements and conditions, like universal human rights and Europeanization norms and standards set by the EU, OSCE, Council of Europe, and so on. However, because there are manifold connections between language and power, as we know from the work of the well-known political scientists, like Pierre Bourdieu, and sociolinguists, like Peter Nelde. The latter claims that an intergroup conflict has always a language element to it.[1] Hence, it is to be expected that language policies will be subject to power conflicts and hegemonic strives. In order to support my claim I will analyse the language policies of states with Hungarian language minorities in Central Europe, particularly Romania, Slovakia, Serbia (Vojvodina), and Ukraine (Trans-Carpathia). These policies can be studied in terms of concrete variables, like individual/collective rights, territorial or personal arrangements, thresholds, the Language Charter, multilingual education, the linguistic landscape, and so on. The range in which these variables are implemented is determined by local politics. Hence, this is subject to the politics of language policy. The ordering of these variables and vectors result into a typology of language policy representing a categorization of liberal language rights for minorites.

Keywords multilingualism, politics of diversity, typology of language policy, empowerment of Hungarian language minorities, Central Europe

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[1] Nelde 1995.

Hungarian Minority Languages

Hungarian in the Carpathian Macroregion

In 1867, the Hungarian kingdom became an autonomous entity within the Habsburg Empire. As a consequence, the Hungarian language became the official state language and functioned also as a language of regional communication. In the Hungarian parts of the Habsburg Empire, the Nationality Law XLIV (1868) resulted into a hierarchy of the regional languages of communication stipulating that Hungarian is the language of the state but it did allow the use of any other (regional) vernacular language as an official language at the local level, both in governmental administration, judiciary, church organizations, and in education.[2] This state of affairs lasted until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War.

Due to the peace treaties ending the First World War, including the Treaty of Trianon (1920)[3], the Hungarian language functioned as the state language in the truncated kingdom of Hungary, while it received a minority status in the newly established or enlarged states of Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Austria. Due to the nationalist climate of the Interwar period the borders in Central Europe became closed. Hence, the Hungarian language remained in all areas outside Hungary a local vernacular language being formally granted a minority status.[4] However, even these minority language rights were hardly realized in practice. Because of the fact that Czechoslovakia seceded its easternmost parts to Soviet Ukraine a Hungarian ethnic minority came into existence in Ukraine as well after the Second World War. The situation characterized by isolation in the Interwar period remained more or less unchanged during the Cold War. Only at the end of the Soviet period cross-border traffic increased and the Hungarian language started to develop into a regional vernacular language.

Due to the collapse of communism and the new state formation in Central and Eastern Europe ethnic Hungarians have come to live in eight different countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Republic of Hungary (10,558,001), Romania (1,604,266), Serbia (339,491), Croatia (22,355), Slovenia (7,637), Austria (6,763), Slovakia (567,296) and Ukraine (155,711).[5] Compare the following table based on the census data of 1991:

1. ÁBRA ❖ *Ethnic Hungarians in the states of the Carpathian Macroregion*

	Carpathian Macroregion
Hungary	10,558,001
Slovakia	567,296
Ukraine	155,711
Romania	1,604,266
Serbia (Vojvodina)	339,491
Croatia	22,355
Slovenia	7,637
Austria	6,763
Total	13,261,520

Source: Kocsis – Kocsis-Hodosi (1995. 17)

[2] The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement no. 613344. See Bideleux – Jeffries 1998; Marácz 2010b. 55–96; and Gal 2011. 1–24.

[3] Compare Teleki 1923; Chaszar 1982. 479–491.; Hupchick – Cox 2001; Goldstein 2002. 31–33.; Bowman 1923.

[4] See Van Der Plank 2004.

[5] Marácz 1999. 69–91.; Van Der Plank 2004; Fenyvesi 2005; Gal 2008. 207–232.

Recall that ethnic Hungarians who live in all these states are autochthonous inhabitants of the region. In present days the former Hungarian parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire almost match with the so-called Carpathian Macroregion that is being surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains.[6] This region is defined by specific geographical, common socio-cultural, ecological and linguistic features.[7] It has been observed that there is a characteristic geo-ethno-linguistic distribution and diversity of the languages spoken in the Carpathian Macroregion. In table 2, the most important ethno-linguistic groups are listed based on the census data of 2001.[8]

Table 2 ❖ *Geo-ethno-linguistic distribution in the Carpathian Macroregion*

Group	Number	Percentage
Hungarians	11,706,000	39.7
Romanians	5,464,000	18.5
Slovaks	4,716,000	16.0
Croats	2,828,000	9.6
Serbs	1,497,000	5.1
Russians/Ukrainians	1,125,000	3.8
Roma	579,000	2.0
Germans	372,000	1.3
Slovenes	82,000	0.3
Czechs	60,000	0.2
Montenegrins	38,000	0.1
Russians	33,000	0.1
Bosnyaks	27,000	0.1
Others	105,000	0.4
Unknown	828,000	2.8

Source: Kocsis – Bottlik – Tátrai 2006. 28.

Table 2 demonstrates that the biggest ethno-linguistic group in the Carpathian Macroregion is the ethnic Hungarians, i.e. ethnic Hungarians have a relative majority of almost forty percent. It has been noted that there is a strong correlation between ethnicity and the mother-tongue or L1 spoken in this region.[9] The L1 of ethnic Hungarians in the Carpathian Macroregion is Hungarian; the L1 of ethnic Romanians is Romanian, and so forth. However, the reverse of this correlation does not have to be true. An L1-speaker of Hungarian can be a person of non-

[6] Teleki 1923; Marácz 2009. 117–118.

[7] The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has arranged a special status for the region of the Carpathian Mountains which is a territory with a specific biodiversity in Central and Eastern Europe (see website: <http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/black_sea_basin/danube_carpathian/>, 9 June 2012). In 1998, the WWF has founded the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) that is an international coalition of NGOs and research institutes working towards a common vision and sustainable developments in the territory of the Carpathian Mountains. The CERI includes the Carpathian regions of seven different countries covering the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine (see website: <www.carpates.org>, 9 June 2012).

[8] Kocsis – Bottlik – Tátrai 2006. 28.

[9] Smith 1991; Brubaker – Feischmidt – Fox – Grancea 2006; Marácz 2009. 117–141; Marácz 2010a. 77–116.

Hungarian ethnicity, and so on. The following table based on the census data of 2001 presents the distribution of the ethnic Hungarians living in the Carpathian Macroregion in the eight different states. The corresponding percentages including ethnic Hungarian minority groups in eight different states are spelled out in table 3 as well:

Table 3 ❖ *Geo-ethno-linguistic distribution in the states of the Carpathian Macroregion*

Territory	Percentage of state nationality	Percentage of national minorities
Hungary	91.2	1.3
Slovakia	85.5	11.5
Sub-Carpathia (Ukraine)	80.5	18.3
Transylvania (Romania)	74.6	23.8
Vojvodina (Serbia)	65.0	26.7
Pannonian/ Slavonian Croatia	90.1	7.7
Mura region (Slovenia)	85.0	9.5
Burgenland (Austria)	87.4	12.5
Carpathian Macroregion	83.7	11.5

Source: Kocsis – Bottlik – Tátrai 200. 29.

From table 3 it follows that most of the ethnic Hungarians live in the Republic of Hungary where they constitute more than ninety per cent of the population.[10] In all other seven countries ethnic Hungarians form numeric minorities which have legal minority rights. However, they do not enjoy equal rights to the majority nation. The use of the minority language is severely restricted compared to the majority vernaculars, i.e. the languages of the state in the official domains.[11] The Hungarian minority language is subject to language laws that specify the use of the Hungarian language in terms of a threshold in the public domain and in contact with local authorities. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Multilingual Regions with Hungarian Minorities

Ethno-linguistic Hungarian communities live mostly in compact territories bordering to the Hungarian kin-state.[12] In Slovakia, almost the entire ethno-linguistic Hungarian group lives in the southern parts of the country in a stroke of thirty kilometres along the border with Hungary that is 681 kilometres long.[13] Although the ethnic Hungarians form a substantial group in Slovakia, i.e. more than ten per cent of its inhabitants counting more than 560.000

[10] See Tóth 2005.

[11] Kontra – Hattyár 2002; Nádor – Szarka 2003.

[12] Schöpflin 1993; Tóth 2004. 14–25.; Kovács – Tóth 2009. 151–176; Batory 2010. 31–48.; Marácz 2009. 77–116.

[13] Szabomihály 2003. 95–110.

people their geographic distribution is rather complex. The ethnic Hungarians do not always have an absolute or relative majority in the areas they live in. In the Sub-Carpathian region (or Trans-Carpathian region seen from Ukraine), the ethnic Hungarian communities are located along the Ukrainian-Hungarian border.[14] In Romania, most of the ethnic Hungarians live in the north-western part of the country, i.e. Transylvania which is a traditional multi-ethnic, multilingual region.[15] In fact, the Hungarian minority in Transylvania lives in the northern part of the area stretching from the Hungarian-Romanian border to the Szeklerland at the feet of the Eastern Carpathians mountains deep into the centre of present-day Romania.[16] In Serbia, the Hungarians live in the northern part of the country, i.e. Vojvodina.[17] In Croatia, the ethnic Hungarian community lives in the Slavonian or Pannonian part of the country.[18] In Slovenia, the ethnic Hungarian community lives in the Mura region and in Austria the Hungarians live in Burgenland.[19] Due to the fact that in these ethnic areas outside Hungary the official language of the states involved, i.e. Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovene, and German is used next to the Hungarian language these areas are multilingual. In fact, all Hungarian speakers are plurilingual speakers using the local Hungarian vernacular and the official language of the state they are citizens of.[20]

The most important factors governing multilingual and transnational communication in the regions with ethnic Hungarian minorities are historical and traditional customs, the role of borders and language policy. Let us discuss first the historical pattern of two types of multilingual and transnational communication.

These two types are opposing each other, including real multilingual or plurilingual communication and separate multilingualism. In the former type non L1-speakers share each other's language. This is illustrated by the communication traditions in the historic region of Vojvodina. This region in the southern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire has received an autonomous status within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later on during the twentieth century in the former Yugoslav republic. In Vojvodina, traditionally six languages are being spoken, including Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian and Ruthenian. Furthermore, there is a tradition for ethnic groups to speak each other's languages or to use a mode of communication like intercomprehension, when both interlocutors speak their L1 and at the same time are able to understand each other's languages.[21] The tradition of multilingual and transnational communication in the region of Transylvania differs from the one in Vojvodina, however. In Transylvania, traditionally three languages are spoken, i.e. Hungarian, Romanian and German. The German variant has been a Saxon dialect that was brought to Transylvania in the early Middle Ages by German settlers from the Mosel area. Here in this region multilingualism has traditionally been a case of "separate" or parallel monolingualism where the three

[14] See Beregszászi – Csernicskó 2003. 110–123.

[15] Cadzow – Ludanyi – Elteto 2005; Péntek – Benő 2003. 123–148; Péntek 2006. 267–273; and see the contribution of Csata, Zsombor in this issue.

[16] Schöpflin 1993.

[17] Korhecz 2009. 1313–1321.

[18] Lábadi 2003. 176–190.

[19] Szarka 2003. 15–37.; Kolláth 2003. 190–204; Szoták 2003. 204–219.

[20] Fenyvesi 2005.

[21] See Korshunova – Marácz 2012. 57–79.

language communities hardly spoke each other's languages.[22] With the exception of a civic and ecclesial regional elite, most of the inhabitants of Transylvania have displayed a monolingual attitude.[23] Separate multilingualism was further strengthened due to the hegemonic relations between the languages involved. Before the First World War Hungarian was the official language in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to which Transylvania also belonged. Standard German also enjoyed an important position because it functioned as the lingua franca in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[24] Romanian did not receive an official status on the national level but only at the community or regional level.[25] A minimum number of twenty per cent of the speakers had to be speaker of a regional vernacular language in order for that language to be recognized as an official language in a fixed administrative-territorial domain. Although in the Habsburg Empire multilingualism was recognized as a positive value the monolingual attitude became the prevailing one supported by a nationalist language policy. In Transylvania, multilingualism came to be characterized by an asymmetry. L1-speakers of Hungarian mostly also speak Romanian but there are hardly any L1-speakers of Romanian that speak Hungarian.[26] The nation-states in the twentieth century manage their multilingual regions with language policies that are dominated by a monolingual attitude. The hegemonic language, i.e. the official language of the state is often promoted at the expense of so-called minority languages.[27] An exceptional case in the Carpathian Macroregion is the recent language policy of the Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina that can be qualified as "multilingual".[28]

Hence, the Hungarian language in the states with Hungarian minorities has a limited distribution restricted to the areas where the ethnic Hungarians live. These regions, including southern Slovakia, Sub-Carpathia, Transylvania, Vojvodina, Pannonian/Slavonian Croatia, Mura region and Burgenland are traditionally mixed, multilingual areas where you find next to the language of the state, i.e. Slovak, Ukrainian/Ruthenian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovene and German especially Hungarian and the languages of various smaller linguistic minorities.

Multilingual and Transnational Communication in Regions with Hungarian Minorities

The linguistic situation is not the same in all of these subregions in the Carpathian Macroregion discussed above. Different factors guide the multilingual and transnational communication in these regions. In this paper, we will adopt Vertovec's concept of "transnationalism". Transnationalism has been studied in detail in the context of globalization in the work of Vertovec.[29] According to Vertovec, transnationalism, or sustained cross-border relationships, are patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation-states.[30] When referring to sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors based across national borders – business, non-government-organizations, and individuals sharing the same interests – we can differentiate these as "transnational". In fact, transnational relations do not only appear in the

[22] See Marácz 2010b. 55–96.

[23] See Gal 2011. 1–24.

[24] See Rindler Schjerve 2003.

[25] Marácz 2010b. 55–96.

[26] Brubaker – Feischmidt – Fox – Grancea 2006.

[27] Rindler Schjerve – Vetter 2012. 139.

[28] Hagan 2009.

[29] Vertovec 2010.

[30] Vertovec 2010.2.

case of spanning nation-states but they appear also in the case of national or social communities speaking different languages.[31] Hence, the border between the communities does not need to be a concrete territorial border, it can also be a virtual one.

Janssens, Mamadouh and Marácz (2011) distinguish two vectors in order to classify languages of communication, i.e. firstly the scope of communication that can be local, regional or global and secondly the language abilities of the interlocutors participating in the communicative event, i.e. mother-tongue (L1) or foreign language speakers (L2). If only L2-speakers are involved in the communicative event and they share the same language, we refer to a regional lingua franca. This results into the following language constellation from the perspective of the Hungarian speakers in the Carpathian Macroregion. Hungarian is a 'transnational regional vernacular' in a wider region: L1-speakers in Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Croatia. The Hungarian language is used by Hungarian minority speakers in order to communicate with Hungarian speakers from Hungary and with the other Hungarian minorities in Central and East European states. The official state language is however used by Hungarian minority speakers – being plurilingual speakers – with the authorities and L1-speakers of the Slovak, Romanian and other Central – and Eastern state languages. L1-speakers of the state languages display a monolingual attitude.[32] Note that this asymmetric relation is a source of conflict. The language of the majority speakers is more powerful than the one the minorities speak and in some countries their language is excluded from the official and public domain. On the other hand, there are a number of non-Hungarian L1-speakers who have developed a receptive competence of Hungarian in the Carpathian Macroregion. Hence, it is expected that the use of communication modes, such as 'intercomprehension' or 'code-switching' will be more frequent. As a consequence, the position of Hungarian as a regional vehicular language is becoming stronger in the Carpathian Macroregion resulting into increasing multilingualism.[33]

Language Policies in the Carpathian Macroregion

In the twentieth century, the language policies towards ethnic and national minorities depended on several different factors. The European nation-states pursued a policy of monolingualism in which the official language of the state enjoyed a stronger, i.e. hegemonic position, than other smaller "minority" languages.[34] This was also the case in all the states of the Carpathian Macroregion, maybe with the exception of former Yugoslavia's Vojvodina, although the position of the Serbo-Croatian lingua franca was clearly promoted across the board, especially in territories where a number of linguistic minorities lived together like in the historic region of Vojvodina.[35] In the period after the collapse of communism a further fragmentation of the system of states in the Carpathian Macroregion took place. As was pointed out above, the Hungarian minorities came to live in seven states, including Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. The language policy with respect to the Hungarian minorities in these states was depending on different factors, like size, reciprocal minorities, the relation of the state with

[31] Vertovec 2010.3.

[32] Brubaber – Feischmidt – Fox – Grancea 2006.

[33] Smith 1991. 172; Vertovec 2010.

[34] Mintzel 1997; Maurais – Morris 2005.

[35] Ivanova 2012. 81–111.

the Hungarian minority and kin-state Hungary and so on.[36] There is a pattern that the larger the size of the Hungarian minority the more difficult it is for the minority to receive minority and language rights from the state these minorities live in. The Hungarians in Transylvania with around 1.5 million official speakers are certainly in a difficult position. The fact that they are the biggest minority group clearly plays a role in the discrimination of their language not being treated as equal to the Romanian state language. Another factor that affects the rights of minorities and minority languages is the fact whether there is a reciprocal minority of comparable size. This is the case between Hungary and Slovenia where on both sides of the border there is a small reciprocal language minority enjoying equal minority and language rights compared to the nationality of the state.[37] A third factor that plays an important role in granting minority rights to Hungarian minority speakers is governed by the relation of the kin-state Hungary and the host country of the Hungarian minority.[38] There is a structural tensed relation between Slovakia and Hungary causing pressure on the Hungarian minority in southern Slovakia.[39] The tensed situation in southern Slovakia affects the relations between Slovakia and Hungary in its turn.

In the grouping of the seven states discussed above two dividing lines appear. First of all, there is a nationalist versus a non-nationalist, multicultural language policy. Note that in the latter case the policy is "inclusive", if democratic rights and equality are granted to the speakers of minority languages as well. The only multicultural language policy in which the Hungarian language displays an equal position to all other languages, including the official state language is the one of Serbia's AP of Vojvodina. Hence, the position of the minority languages in the Carpathian Macroregion, including the Hungarian language is the best in Vojvodina. This traditional region has become an AP within Serbia.[40] The statute of the AP of Vojvodina has been agreed upon by the Serbian Parliament on November 30, 2009, afterwards it has been ratified in the Parliament of Vojvodina on December 14, 2009 and it has entered into force on January 1, 2010. This statute defines the AP of Vojvodina as a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural community. The Hungarian minority has received the status of a national community as well being equal with the Serbian majority community (see article 25 of the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina). According to article 26 (see Official Journal of the AP no. 17/09) the AP of Vojvodina recognizes six official languages, including Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian, and Ruthenian. In this case, we can speak of a language policy of inclusion in a multicultural setting.

Within the domain of the nationalist language policies which is characterized by a hegemonic position of the state language there is a further division between states with nationalist language policies that are inclusive and states with nationalist languages policies that are exclusive. To the former group belong Austria, Slovenia and Croatia where a Hungarian language minority is living in specific regions, i.e. Burgenland, the Mura region and the Pannonian/Slavonian part of Croatia respectively. In these areas the Hungarian language enjoys equality next to the official state language, i.e. German in Austria, Slovenian in Slovenia and Croatian in Croatia.[41] In these countries, although the minority language is spoken in a country pursuing a nationalist

[36] Sasse 2005. 13.

[37] Kolláth 2003. 190–204.

[38] Fowler 2002; Kántor – Majtényi – Ieda – Vizi – Halász 2004; Gal 2008. 207–232.; Deets 2010.

[39] Csergo 2007.

[40] Szilágyi 2009.

[41] Nádor – Szarka 2003.

language policy supporting the official language without restrictions, minority languages have an official status in the areas where the Hungarian minorities are present.[42]

The situation is however substantially different in Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine where the Hungarian language is not equal in legal terms to the official state languages, i.e. Slovak, Romanian, and Ukrainian respectively, not even in the territories where the ethnic Hungarians live and sometimes form a majority.[43] This means that in these countries the Hungarian language and culture face restrictions in the administrative, educational, judicial and public domains. These states follow a policy of 'exclusion' which is characterized by inequalities like hierarchies, subordination, asymmetries, additional provisions, anomalies, discrimination or language laws restricting the use of the minority languages or promoting the use of the official language discriminating at the expense of the Hungarian language in the official and public space.

❖

In sum, table 4 presents the languages policies of states with Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Macroregion:

Table 4 ❖ *Language policies in the Carpathian Macroregion*

	Nationalist language policy	Multicultural Language Policy
Policy of Inclusion	Austria (Burgenland) Slovenia (Mura region) Croatia (Slavonia)	Serbia (Vojvodina),
Policy of Exclusion	Slovakia, Romania (Transylvania) Ukraine (Sub-Carpathia)	

Source: Marácz 2011a.

Although the patterns of language policies are more or less fixed along the lines of this scheme, the policies are clearly affected by the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe. The process of Europeanization covers actually two separate processes that are connected.[44] First of all, there is the transfer of the European Union's acquis communautaire, i.e. the system of rules and regulations within the Union that is promoting democratic rights and the rule of law into the Central and Eastern European region.[45] The extension of the rule of law reaches also countries that are not members of the Union but are in the orbit of the Union, like the Balkans.[46] Other forums closely linked to the European Union, like the Council of Europe are also promoting human and minority rights protection in this area.[47] The second process induced by Europeanization is the widening of the European communicative space, that is borders becoming porous and in countries joining the European Union multilingual and transnational communication is getting more intensive. Let us consider in more detail how Europeanization has affected the position of the Hungarian minority languages in the Carpathian Macroregion.

[42] Szarka 2003. 15–37.
[43] Péntek 2006. 267–273; Csergo 2007.
[44] Wiener – Diez 2009; Dinan 2010.
[45] Schwellnuss 2005. 51–71.
[46] Bache – George – Bulmer 2010.
[47] Skovgaard 2007. 12.; Grabbe 2006; Marácz 2011b. 155–185.

Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe

The European Union has acknowledged that linguistic diversity will remain an essential feature of European culture.[48] "Europe" will become increasing Babylonian due to urbanization, migration, globalization, and Europeanization itself.[49] For technical and political reasons the Union has not identified a unique language of communication. As the former commissioner for multilingualism, Leonard Orban (2009) puts it "In a Union where diversity is cherished, a *lingua franca* can never be enough to satisfy every communication need." In the resolution "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" the European Union declares that: "Europe's linguistic diversity constitutes a major cultural asset and that it would be wrong for the European Union to restrict itself to a single main language (see article 4)."[50]

In Volman (2012) it is argued that linguistic diversity is now anchored in the legal system of the EU. Policies of multilingualism will set through, even if they meet with strong resistance from the Member States.[51] According to him, article 3 of the consolidated Treaty on European Union, the so-called Lisbon Treaty describing its aims, stipulates amongst other things that the Union "shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity**,** and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced." The provision mirrors article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (ECFR), which states that: "The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity."[52] Volman stresses that these articles will also be referred to by those who want a system that is even more multilingual. According to him, the enhancing of minority and regional languages only just has begun. Any attempt to use the new linguistic provisions of the Lisbon Treaty to influence language policies in the Member States, for example those affecting linguistic minorities, both autochthonous minority and migrant communities, will be considered in this context.

Apart from the 24 official languages on the territory of the Union, around sixty indigenous regional or minority languages are spoken.[53] Indigenous minority languages are languages that are spoken by a minority community distinct from the majority constituting the state nation. Sometimes these minority languages can be official languages in the regions where they are spoken by the minority groups, as was discussed above in the case of nationalist, exclusive language policies. No special European Union convention protects minority languages, although the right to use one's mother tongue is recognized as a fundamental right in the EU.[54] The European Parliament has adopted several resolutions to protect minority rights, including language rights.[55] Article 24 of the recent resolution "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" states that the Union "Encourages and supports the introduction of mother tongue minority, local and foreign languages on a non-compulsory basis within school

[48] See Extra – Gorter 2008. 3–63.

[49] Holton 2011; Marácz 2011c. 14–31.

[50] This resolution has been adopted by the European Parliament on 24 March 2009.

[51] See for this claim also the studies of Will Kymlicka, especially Kymlicka 1996; Kymlicka – Patten 2003; Kymlicka 2007.

[52] See article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union concluded in Nice on December 7, 2000 which states that the Union "shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity."

[53] See Extra – Gorter 2008.

[54] See Vizi 2003. 37–56.

[55] In 1981, 1983, 1987, 1994, 1996, 1997 and 1998; Jutila 2009; and Trifunovska 2001. 145–147.

programs and/or in the context of extracurricular activities open to the community."[56] Article 26 from the same document states that the Union "Reiterates its longstanding commitment to the promotion of language learning, multilingualism and linguistic diversity in the European Union, including regional and minority languages, as these are cultural assets that must be safeguarded and nurtured; considers that multilingualism is essential for effective communication and represents a means of facilitating comprehension between individuals and hence acceptance of diversity and of minorities."[57]

Even more robust policies in support of indigenous minority languages have been adopted by Council of Europe. Note that all the Member States of the European Union are members of the Council of Europe too. The Council of Europe has no sanctioning mechanism, if these resolutions are not met, however.[58] The Council of Europe has formulated the most clear legal treaties to protect national minority languages: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) signed on February 1, 1995 in Strasbourg and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) signed on November 5, 1992 also in Strasbourg.[59] The Framework Convention supports the positive discrimination of national minorities on the basis of human rights and general freedom rights, it recognizes the fact that minority rights are group rights and that cross-border cooperation is not only restricted to states but also local and regional authorities can take part in this. The Language Charter has been motivated by similar considerations. Languages are part of a common cultural heritage and the protection of languages is necessary to counterbalance assimilatory state policy and uniformization by modern civilization.[60] Note that all the Central and Eastern European states with Hungarian linguistic minorities have ratified these charters as well:

Table 5 ❖ *Framework Convention (FCPNM, CETS no. 157)*

States	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Romania	01/02/1995	11/05/1995	01/02/1998
Serbia	11/05/2001	11/05/2001	01/09/2001
Slovakia	01/02/1995	14/09/1995	01/02/1998
Austria	01/02/1995	31/03/1998	01/07/1998
Croatia	06/11/1996	11/10/1997	01/02/1998
Slovenia	01/02/1995	25/03/1998	01/07/1998
Ukraine	15/09/1995	26/01/1998	01/05/1998
Hungary	01/02/1995	25/09/1995	01/02/1998

[56] See footnote 50.
[57] See footnote 50.
[58] Marácz 2011b. 155–185.
[59] Trifunovska 2001. 145–147.
[60] Consider Brubaker – Feischmidt – Fox – Grancea 2006; Marácz 2010a. 77–116; and Marácz 2010b. 55–96.

Table 6 ❖ *Language Charta (ECRML, CETS no. 148)*

States	Signature	Ratification	Entry into Force
Romania	17/07/1995	24/10/2007	01/05/2008
Serbia	22/03/2005	15/02/2006	01/06/2006
Slovakia	20/02/2001	05/09/2001	01/01/2002
Austria	05/11/1992	28/06/2001	01/10/2001
Croatia	05/11/1997	05/11/1997	01/03/1998
Slovenia	03/07/1997	04/10/2000	01/01/2001
Ukraine	02/05/1996	19/09/2005	01/01/2006
Hungary	05/11/1992	26/04/1995	01/03/1998

In principle, the Hungarian language communities all over the Carpathian Macroregion enjoy a modest legal protection due to these two conventions. These conventions provide protection for the speakers of Hungarian in the states where the Hungarian language is a minority language.[61] Note that the connection between territory and language in case of minority languages is not recognized by the Council of Europe these linguistic rights are framed in terms of the personality principle.[62] It should be possible to lift the norms and standards of minority rights protection, including language rights in the future. However, the legal implementation as a part of the language policy subject to European Union's leverage, local political measures can and have neutralized the implementation of these language policies.

Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania are confronted with hierarchies and asymmetries. International agreements, like the FCPNM and ECRML can be and are violated by national legislation and practice as the completion of the Slovak language law no. 270/1995 unambiguously demonstrates. This law promotes the language of the majority at the expense of the minority languages in Slovakia. Neither Slovakia nor Romania are urged to undertake special measures in order to promote the identity of their Hungarian minorities. Therefore, there is no effective policy against assimilation in Slovakia and Romania. The use of the Hungarian language in education and all areas of life is seen as a special right to be regulated by law. Language laws include special provisions in order to restrict the use of the Hungarian language, like a threshold of at least twenty per cent of ethnic Hungarians making up the population in an administrative-territorial unit.[63] Although the contact with other ethnic Hungarians from the Carpathian Macroregion is in principle unhindered, the Romanian and Slovak authorities often view these contacts as a threat to the state. The Slovak border police regularly control visitors from Hungary in the areas inhabited by the Hungarian minorities, although formally there should be no border control because both Hungary and Slovakia are members of the Schengen Agreement.

In sum, the legal situation created by the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe is favouring the position and the use of minority languages. Minority rights protection in the region although far from perfect has improved.[64] When improved it owes much to Union's leverage and conditionality but in some cases domestic politics drives the process and has worsened the situation.[65] This is true for the ethnic Hungarian communities as well. It is allowed to speak Hungarian, to open Hungarian schools, to use the Hungarian language, although conditioned

[61] Skovgaard 2007. 12.
[62] Dembinska – Marácz – Tonk 2014.
[63] Marácz 2014.
[64] Kántor – Majtényi – Ieda – Vizi – Halász 2004.
[65] Sasse 2005. 15–17; Grabbe 2006.

in public space as was pointed out above. Ethnic Hungarians are able to organize themselves and to form political parties and other societal interest groups and organizations to raise their voice to protect the Hungarian language and culture both in regional and national parliaments and in the European Parliament. The position of minority languages is strengthened due to the general climate within the European Union and support from other supranational forums, like the Council of Europe and the United Nations cooperating with the Union in this respect. As a result, the nationalist language policies that were discussed in table 4 are moderated by the Europeanization of the Central and Eastern European space. With the establishment of the Union the role of the monolingual state has been reduced, and multilingual regions have been given opportunities to develop.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that the position of the Hungarian minority languages in the New Europe has improved due to universal human rights conventions and the norms and standards of Europeanization. However, it can still be hampered by the local politics of language policy. Hungarian is being spoken in the Carpathian Macroregion as a national, official language in Hungary and as a minority language in multilingual regions in the seven neighbouring states of Hungary, including Slovakia, Ukraine (Sub-Carpathian region), Romania (Transylvania), Serbia (Vojvodina), Croatia (Pannonian/Slavonian part), Slovenia (Mura region), and Austria (Burgenland). Within the European governance framework, it is to be expected that multilingual and transnational communication will intensify in the Carpathian Macroregion. Hungarian and other national languages will function as a transnational regional vernacular language. Different language repertoires and communication modes are being developed to make multilingual and transnational communication easier and more effective. In these strategies plurilingual speakers, like minority speakers are in a key position demonstrating that their Hungarian minority variant has become more important.

The Hungarian minorities in the states they live in have been confronted, especially in the twentieth century, with a nationalist language policy favouring the official language of the state, i.e. the majority language. The discrimination of minority languages in the Union is however not only a problem for the Hungarian minority speakers in the Carpathian Macroregion. Nationalist language policies are losing their strength, however. There are several reasons for this. Due to all sorts of globalization effects, like Europeanization, the role of the nation state becomes less prominent and borders become porous. The implementation and transfer of regimes of human and minority rights within the Union and to its periphery have strengthened the language rights of minority speakers. The Union is acting in concert in this field with other supranational organizations, like the Council of Europe and the United Nations. This has led to the implementation of minority rights protection conventions, like the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. With the help of the Europeanization drives, the implementation of a real multilingual language policy has recently been realized in Vojvodina and Kosovo that might set some benchmarking for other multilingual regions in Central and Eastern Europe.[66] Although the intervention of the European Union in the language policy of the individual Member States remains a sensitive issue – language issues are closely related to the identity of the Member States – the Union has now

[66] See Sarnyai – Pap 2011.

the legal tools to make the protection of minority language rights more effective.[67] However,at a local level, states still have the possibility to avoid the general implementation of universal conventions and norms and standards. Hence, language policies are very much depended on local political decisions that might take different variables into account. As a result, a heterogeneous pattern of language regimes arise. ❋

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[67] Compare Volman 2012. 37–56.; Vizi 2012. 155.

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