

The analysis of the possibilities and conditions for lifelong learning in the minority languages of the EU

Abstract

The study represent a comparative analysis of the use of the minority languages in the national educational systems of the EU countries.

For those of a language minority the right to learn their minority language and the right for schooling in their minority language is a key issue for language preservation and cultural transfer from one generation the other. The right to schooling in the minority language has always been among the basic requests made by a minority and reflects the level of protection the majority is giving to the minority. In accordance with their legislation, States fulfil their obligation towards the demands of learning the minority language and schooling in the minority language in different ways. The differences among the selected key studies (25) are visible in term of the educational systems and their structures as well as in term of the presence of the minority language in the systems. For each key study three elements are analysed: the state of the minority (the status of the language, its level of protection and the national policy towards the language), the presence of the minority language inside the educational system and the possibilities for schooling in the minority language. For the analysis of the last two elements the following categories were considered: primary education, secondary education, higher education and education of adults. The analysis shows that the presence of the minority language in the national educational systems and the possibilities for schooling in the minority language are truly different at an international level. For the comparative analysis of the provision of education in the minority languages the author has categorised the presence of the minority language into macro categories, which form five different levels. In many realities different categories co-exist and do not exclude each other. Generally the minority languages are mainly present, in different forms, at primary level. At secondary and higher levels the provision of education in the minority language is falling. Among the minorities, where the minority language is present as a medium, the possibilities for higher education and lifelong learning in the minority language are higher.