



Cultural Autonomy, Safe Haven or Window-Dressing? Institutions Maintained by Minority Self-Governments in Hungary

Balázs Dobos

1 INTRODUCTION

Although the concept, forms, types and necessary components of minority autonomies have been highly disputed in the relevant literature, many agree that its crucial objective is to enable non-dominant ethno-cultural minorities to decide those issues that affect them, to manage their own affairs, and to do so within an institutionalised, legally defined framework. In the case of non-territorial autonomies (NTAs) and NCAs, this entails primarily the administration of their own linguistic, educational and cultural issues. It also raises the additional questions of whether they actually have the necessary decision-making powers in these matters, or at least some influence on the work of these institutions, whether they are able to establish, or take over, and maintain such institutions and, not least, whether they have the necessary resources to carry out these tasks.

This work was supported by the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office – NKFIH (under grant number 134962), the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the ÚNKP-21-5-Corvinus-131 New National Excellence Programme of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology.

B. Dobos (✉)
Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: Dobos.Balazs@tk.hu

Among the central and Eastern European countries after the fall of the communist regimes, Hungary was one of the first to refer to the notion of NCA in its laws and policies concerning the country's relatively small and highly assimilated minorities. Act 77 of 1993 introduced the system of elected MSGs at different levels, the local variant of NCAs and in theory allowed them to become institutional maintainers in the cultural and educational fields along with public institutions and others, e.g. private and church-based service providers. In practice, however, this remained largely on paper for more than a decade. Changes began later, in the mid-2000s, when the emphasis tended to be placed on so-called institutionalisation, a concept which in this context primarily meant the aim of MSGs establishing, or taking over, and maintaining the various cultural and educational institutions, with appropriate budget support. As a result, there are now hundreds of institutions—kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, halls of residence, museums, archives, libraries, theatres, radio stations, publishing houses, research institutes, etc.—that are run by minority groups. (For the total numbers of educational institutions, see Appendix 1) In this way, MSGs have become one of the main actors in implementing linguistic, cultural and educational minority rights in the country. This is all the more important because recent studies have demonstrated that language shift among minorities is a gradual and irreversible process (see e.g. Borbély, 2015), which in practice often means that the transmission of minority languages and identities in families is now largely interrupted, and therefore minority educational institutions in particular have an increasingly important role to play in preserving minority identities.

However, the process of institutionalisation of MSGs has by no means been uncontroversial, and such controversy still characterises minorities to varying degrees, of which those who were already recognised in the communist era and thus had already an extensive network of institutions are in a better position (Croats, Germans, Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks and Slovenes). In contrast, the establishment of institutions for those minorities recognised later under the 1993 Minority Act (Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Poles, Roma, Rusyns and Ukrainians) could only begin in the last two decades. The efforts of minorities to take over institutions from other maintainers have sometimes been viewed with concern and suspicion. Institutionalisation has in some cases provoked conflicts between MSGs and municipal leaderships, and/or led to serious debates about representation and authenticity, as well as the fraud commonly known as *ethno-business*,¹ even within the communities themselves, when the idea of taking over institutions met the resistance of parents and other members of the local population. In other instances, presumably external political actors prevented the takeover of local institutions, which suggests that

¹ The term was coined in Hungary in the 1990s and was used later elsewhere 'to denote the strategies of political entrepreneurs who exploited the existing legal framework for the protection of national minorities to obtain material, financial and political gains' (Carstoccea, 2011, p. 163).

minorities are allowed to exercise their declared autonomy only to a limited extent, and in a controlled manner. Moreover, during the Orbán governments of the 2010s, the takeover meant a kind of escape route for local communities so that the school in the municipality would not be closed, or maintained by the centralised state administration or the churches. Such factors show that the transfer of institutions depends largely on the local conditions, in particular the relationship between the minority and the local governments. The situation further requires adaptation from all relevant stakeholders, including the minorities themselves, whose budgets have increased significantly with the introduction of central financial support for institutional maintenance (see Appendix 2). It is also a question of how these schools perform on a variety of indicators, and thus whether it is worthwhile for parents to enrol their children in them. In addition, while the financial incentives that have resulted in the increase in the number of minority institutions, some of them can hardly be considered real institutions, especially certain research centres that employ only one person. This latter raises the question of the extent to which the process of institutionalisation serves merely as window-dressing, thereby seeking to portray the country's minority policy as generous towards the domestic ethnic minority groups.

Although the process started almost two decades ago, interestingly enough the whole issue of the transfer of institutions and the various aspects of institutionalisation have significantly lacked serious academic research, so there has been an enormous gap in relevant literature, including in Hungary. Therefore, to address these issues, the major aim of this study is to introduce and analyse this complex process, to summarise and evaluate its main experiences, especially with regard to the impact of these institutions on the linguistic, cultural and educational rights of minorities. To illustrate the contradictions of the process, the paper also seeks to explore both constraints and incentives, illustrated by some telling local examples, thus shedding light on the various kinds of both inter- and intra-group conflicts and debates surrounding the increasing institutionalisation of NCA in Hungary—which might also serve as a lesson for other countries. In the absence of much relevant literature, the study relies mainly on primary sources, such as various policy documents and media reports.

2 NON-TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY, NATIONAL CULTURAL AUTONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS: CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

Matti Wiberg aptly states that autonomy itself is an extremely diffuse concept, which has been closely associated with many other synonyms in discourse, as well as a number of other controversial terms (Wiberg, 2005, p. 177). Thus, inevitably, many different interpretations of the tremendously broad concept of autonomy have become known, and consequently, quite diverse arrangements have often been labelled as autonomy in practice. Complicating matters

is the fact that the term has become attractive for the policies and communications of some governments, and experts have also begun to use it as a kind of measure when evaluating cases (Peleg, 2007, p. 44). The significant differences in existing practices throughout Europe ranging from rather symbolic functions to even co-decision-making power as well as the controversy between the continued dominance of the nation-state model, the large extension of state control over minority issues and inter-ethnic relations in the post-communist central and Eastern Europe, and all those positive expectations that led to the spread of various NTA regimes in this part of the continent, allowed Osipov (2013, p. 133) to argue that using the concept of cultural autonomy as a descriptive-conceptual and analytical tool is highly questionable in general, which not only underscores the need to conduct empirical and comparative research in this area, but also the need for students of NTA to examine what actually exists under that broad label.

For many, Ghai's definition of autonomy serves as a point of departure, which, while it can take many legal forms, refers to a means of enabling ethnic groups with distinct identities to exercise direct control over matters important to them, while leaving the larger entity to manage common affairs (Ghai, 2000, p. 8). However, the challenges in definition are no different for NTA and its numerous synonyms, especially in light of the various scholarly references to segmental, corporate, personal, cultural autonomies or self-governments. The attempts to give a precise definition undoubtedly pose a serious challenge to students of NTA, as the commitment to each notion may have different consequences and raise different questions and problems: for example, some of the former concepts refer to the organising principle of autonomy (non-territorial/personal), while others focus much more on its content (cultural). Furthermore, the question whether the very term 'NTA' refers to a kind of special ethnicity-based organisation and/or a general principle for establishing group representation has still not been clarified (Suksi, 2015, p.84). Both approaches are in use: while the latter, basically as a normative principle, refers mostly to the idea that an ethnic group has or should have some freedom in the conduct of its own cultural affairs, thereby representing a kind of multiculturalism, the former, being primarily an institutional solution, emphasises that an ethnicity-based, even hierarchically organised, self-government performs certain public functions from public funds for the benefit of minority communities. The practice of cultural autonomy thus carries a number of statements that can be related to the theories of multiculturalism, while the task of institution-building has remained mostly associated with the school of consociational democracy (Conversi, 2014, p. 31), and there has been also a debate as to whether NTA can be defined as part of consociational models at all.

At the same time, it has been widely accepted that NTA is merely an umbrella term that describes different practices and includes various theories with the aim to represent a specific ethno-cultural segment of the society

and that does not seek exclusive control over territory. As a narrower subcategory within the broader concept of NTA, non-territorial cultural or NCA was systematically elaborated by the Austro-Marxists Renner and Bauer in the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century (Smith & Hiden, 2012). However, the attempts to develop a definition have been divided as to whether they distinguish between personal autonomy in a narrower sense and the broader cultural autonomy, and to what extent they put emphasis on individual or collective rights, and further, whether and to what extent, and at which administrative levels they find it necessary to create power-sharing arrangements and to establish either private or public institutions to manage internal group affairs.

Among the various scholarly attempts aiming at elaborating a definition of NTA, a number of experts focus on institutionalisation, tending to exceed the minorities' right to freely associate. In their view, the different forms of NTA tend to move beyond the right that simply allows the exercise of communal culture and traditions at the individual level, to where members of minority communities can become mobilised within a possible institutional framework of autonomy in order to preserve their identities and peculiarities (O'Leary, 2008, p. 55). According to Lapidoth, the institutions created by the community can provide the framework within which those belonging to the community can preserve their distinctive features (Lapidoth, 1997, p. 175). Eide (1998, p. 251) holds that cultural autonomy means the right of self-government for a culturally defined group in those matters that involve the preservation of its own culture. Roach takes a similar approach when he defines cultural autonomy as a form of non-territorial self-government that allows the culture of the group to survive, for example through councils or formal unions (Roach, 2004, p. 411). According to McGarry and Moore (2005, p. 68), state-established or 'official' institutions are necessary in order to realise a group's self-government in certain cultural matters on a non-territorial basis. Brunner and Küpper (2002) argue that an NTA could be observed when a group has different rights and powers in the form of at least one aspect of self-government, with institutional structures that can be established on a private and public legal basis. According to Decker, cultural autonomy is a public body within which registered group members can conduct their own educational and cultural affairs through the imposition of taxes, with state and, where appropriate, kin-state support (Decker, 2011, p. 102). Consequently, in order to separate minority cultures from the state, those MSGs or councils operating in Hungary or Serbia, for example, and established primarily in the field of linguistic and cultural affairs, can be interpreted as autonomous (Ghai, 2005, pp. 41–42).

Overall, a common element of the definitions centred around different levels of autonomy (personal, cultural, functional, territorial, etc.) and possible transitions and combinations among these levels is that the subject of NTA, in contrast to territorial autonomy, is not necessarily an administrative-territorial unit, but the community itself, and it may be suitable especially for small and

territorially dispersed ethno-cultural groups to administer their own linguistic, cultural and educational issues—or family law matters in the case of religious communities. Thus, it focuses on narrower policy areas in which it typically has less extensive political participatory and decision-making rights, i.e. it cannot, for example, adopt legal acts at the same level as state law. The institutions of autonomy are less entrenched by legal guarantees and, although in principle they may have the option of levying their own taxes, in fact they are more financially dependent on the central budget than a territorial form of self-governance. These factors can be said to apply to the Hungarian model of NCA (discussed in the next section), where—in line with the findings of the authors mentioned above—institutions run by minorities themselves constitute the key components of cultural autonomy in the country.

3 THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONALISATION WITHIN THE HUNGARIAN MODEL OF NCA

Historically, the associations, literature circles and other institutions of the minorities were nationalised after 1945 with the communist takeover. The centralised political system did not tolerate separate and ethnic-based organisations and therefore, between 1950 and 1952, abolished the local organisations of the main Slovak and ‘Southern Slav’² associations and created the Romanian and German so-called alliances in a top-down manner, and with no local basis or membership, leaving only easy-to-manage centres with centrally appointed leaders. The change of regime in 1989 allowed for the democratic transformation of these state-controlled organisations, in addition to which various new, local, national and umbrella associations were formed from below, as the right to association was guaranteed in the same year. In addition to the growing number of associations, this was also the period when the first formalised institutions were established, including the Romanian and Slovak research centres—as well as the Croat, German and Serb theatres. After lengthy preparation, Act 77 of 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities declared that ‘minority communities have the right to establish their own educational, training, cultural and scientific institutional network at national level within the boundaries of existing laws’. The law also stipulated that both local and national MSGs could establish institutions especially in the fields of education, print and electronic media, and culture in the interest of developing the cultural autonomy of the given minority. However, for the next period, although the first MSGs were elected in 1994, this remained largely an empty promise because, although some institutions—such as the Slovenian-language radio station—were established by the early 2000s, the appropriate detailed legislative and financial support was lacking. Until 2003, there was no separate item in the central budget to support minorities in taking control of their

² This term commonly referred only to Croats, Serbs and Slovenes living in Hungary in the Communist era, whose kin-state was the neighbouring Yugoslavia.

institutions. When they did so, they had to be covered by other appropriations, projects and individual applications. Normative support was only available for schools but, during this period, only the Croats were able—in 2000—to take over a school complex (Government of Hungary, 2005).

In their letter sent after the 2002 parliamentary elections, the heads of the national MSGs detailed their most important policy expectations and requests from the new socialist-liberal government, which included the creation of a financial fund for the takeover of minority institutions. On 6 June 2002, Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy met with a delegation of minority leaders, promising to support the takeover and maintenance of institutions by minority groups.³ Accordingly, the 2003 amendment to the Education Act included an appropriate amendment to the 1993 Minority Act, which sought to lay down the conditions and rules for the establishment, maintenance and takeover of educational institutions, mostly for national MSGs, including the issues of financing. Its most important provision was that, at the request of the national MSG, the municipal self-government was obliged to transfer the right to maintain the public educational institution that performed national or regional minority tasks. In addition, the 2003 central budget established a special fund to support minority institutions, for which MSGs had to apply. The resulting experience indicated that the amendment did improve the conditions for taking over institutions, even in the short run: the Germans could take over a schools complex and a high school in 2003, while the Slovaks took over a school complex in the following year (Úton a kulturális autonómia felé, 2004). Those minorities that did not have a developed education system within the public education inherited from past periods—the Bulgarians, Greeks and Poles for instance—started to establish so-called supplementary minority education for their students from 2004, replacing their previous Sunday schools (Government of Hungary, 2007).

However, with the exception of schools, funding from annual tenders proved to be a serious concern and uncertainty for the maintenance of any other types of institutions, especially in the first months of the year until the new calls were issued. The 2003 amendment did not cover cultural institutions: therefore, two years later, the 2005 amendment to the Minority Act sought to improve the conditions for the establishment, maintenance and takeover of these institutions. As a result, MSGs became entitled to establish and maintain cultural institutions, and to take over the right to maintain them. The strongest power was given to the national MSGs, upon the request of which the municipal self-government maintaining the institution was obliged to transfer the right to maintain the institution that performed only minority cultural tasks.

³ Márton Ispánovity (Office for National and Ethnic Minorities): The process of institutionalisation of national minority self-governments (the edited version of the presentation at the Conference in Baja, 11–12 May 2006), in the author's possession.

With regard to the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Committee of Ministers within the Council of Europe recommended that Hungary strengthen the financial and functional autonomy of the MSGs ‘as regards the acquisition, running and managing of public institutions’ (Council of Europe, 2005). Similarly, with regard to the implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, the 2007 recommendation urged the Hungarian authorities to ‘improve the conditions for the transferral of educational and cultural bodies and institutions to minority self-governments’ (Council of Europe, 2007).

The Minority Act (Act 179 of 2011) confirmed the previous provisions: without exception, MSGs have the right to establish, maintain and take over educational and cultural institutions. At the initiative of the national MSG, the right to maintain a public education institution shall be transferred to the MSG if it is a national or regional institution, and if at least 75% of the students participate in minority education. By contrast, at local level, an institution may be transferred to the local MSG if the national MSG has given its consent, and the institution fulfils minority duties—meaning that, similarly, at least 75% of the students participate in minority education. The opinion of the kindergarten/school board, or in its absence, the opinions of parents’ and students’ self-government organisations shall be attached to the initiative. In the case of kindergartens, which are typically run by local municipal governments or, in the case of a school, maintained by the state from 2013, the maintainers may offer the local MSG the running of the relevant public education institution, which they are not however legally obliged to accept. In a similar way, cultural institutions have to be transferred to the national MSGs upon their request, if they provide for at least 75% minority-related cultural tasks.

Because of the changes in legislation and funding, the number of institutions established and taken over by minorities began to increase after 2003. However, until the autumn of 2013, the adequate funding was not provided when a local MSG wanted to take over and maintain a local educational institution. The start of the 2010s saw increasing centralisation in the sphere of education policy, in line with the new national-conservative Orbán government’s preference for state-centred solutions to social and economic issues. Responsibility for the maintenance and operation of both elementary and secondary schools was thus transferred to central government from the municipal self-governments in 2013 (Horváth, 2016 pp. 192–196). However, there was a generous financial incentive created for both churches and minorities, which in the latter case meant that, if MSGs took over educational institutions from state or municipal maintainers, the funding of kindergartens became more than two times higher, while for schools it increased by 15–30% compared to that received by the previous maintainer.⁴ The takeover—in

⁴ See, for instance, Minutes of the joint meeting of the Municipal Self-Government of Szendehely and the German Minority Self-Government of Szendehely on 15 April,

addition to strengthening cultural autonomy—served also as a kind of escape route for local communities so that schools, especially in smaller villages, would be neither closed nor taken over by the centralised state administration or a church. As a result, by the early 2020s, hundreds of institutions—kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, halls of residence, museums, archives, libraries, theatres, radio stations, publishing houses, research institutes, etc.—have become established or been taken over by minorities. In terms of takeovers by the national MSGs, this initially applied to only the most important institutions, while local governments typically became the maintainers of mostly kindergartens in those settlements where more than one operated. Due to the legal and financial incentives, this especially increased in the mid-2010s when 8–10 schools and 4–5 kindergartens were taken over almost every year.

4 THE KEY DISPUTED ISSUES OF INSTITUTIONALISATION

The first disputed issue to be addressed is the undeniably liberal approach to defining group membership: the legislation—in accordance with international standards—relies on groups' individual self-identification, which is especially striking in the case of German minority education. Given the usefulness and international prestige of knowledge in the German language, which could facilitate outward migration and the possibility of working abroad in German-speaking countries, it can hardly be surprising that already in the 1990s there were far more students attending German minority programmes than the estimated size of that community (Deets, 2002, p. 39). In 2022, with local and national German MSGs maintaining almost 70 kindergartens, primary and high schools throughout the country with the underlying principle of preserving minority identities and language, a crucial question is what percentage of the students actually belong to the German community.

The issues surrounding membership arose in other respects for the Romanian minority, of which MSGs were probably among the most affected by ethno-business, which in practice meant that those who obviously or presumably did not belong to the community, did not speak the language and were not familiar with the culture became elected to Romanian minority bodies. However, they could argue from a different perspective that, despite their Romanian background, they were assimilated into Hungary in linguistic-cultural terms, but could still declare themselves Romanian. At the inaugural session of the Romanian national MSG in 2007, the majority of the elected representatives supported neither the principle of running the session in the Romanian language nor the text of the oath being in Romanian as well as in Hungarian—which the minority ombudsman later found to be illegal if put into practice. Under such circumstances, shortly afterwards, in early 2008,

when the national MSG wanted to take over the Nicolae Balcescu Primary School, High School and College in the city of Gyula, several Romanian institutions and local Romanian MSGs (including the one in Gyula), minority associations, public figures and parents protested against the idea of taking over the most important educational complex of the Romanian minority from the municipality, highlighting, among other matters, the dubious legitimacy of the national Romanian body. Its effort was successful only a few years later, in 2013.

In other cases, the takeover of a school was not prevented by the disputes within the community itself, but by external actors and considerations, which seems to suggest that in certain cases the autonomy of the minorities has proved to be rather controlled and limited. For instance, in 2021, the national German MSG wanted to take over a local school in the Soroksár neighbourhood, the 23rd district of Budapest, because the minority lacked such an institution in the capital city. Soroksár, once a German village in the outskirts, was annexed to Budapest city in 1950 and still has a strong local German community. The majority of students attend German minority programmes and parents also supported the takeover, but it was rejected by the Ministry, probably because the school in question is the most prestigious and successful in the district with about one-third of local students enrolled in its programmes (Ónody-Molnár, 2021).

Examining the share of institutions among minorities, it is especially striking that the Roma, by far the largest ethnic minority community in Hungary, maintain relatively few institutions. Drawing on Nancy Fraser's influential distinction between claims for redistribution and recognition (2003), many observers note that the Roma face a number of social inequalities, including most notably their unfavourable socio-economic situation and the high level of ethnic discrimination that typically arises in post-communist countries, including Hungary. Redistribution and recognition are often referred to as two closely intertwined sides of the same coin yet, especially in the case of Roma, they can often be rival or conflicting principles. This is closely linked to the contested issues of how 'Roma' and their identities should be understood and shaped, how their situation should be tackled with particular regard to both their internal heterogeneity and the multiple and often conflicting narratives and criteria that have prevailed in both internally identifying and externally classifying Roma communities as a national or ethnic minority, as a social group (what is known as an 'ethno-class' or 'underclass'), or as a transnational nation (Gheorghe, 2013, p. 81; Marushiakova-Popov, 2005; Vermeersch, 2003, p. 890). Advancing inclusionary or exclusionary objectives and practices, or putting more stress on socio-economic integration and/or ethno-cultural preservation both represent long-term challenges: a narrow approach that focuses more on addressing poverty would necessarily downplay ethno-cultural issues, while a minority rights approach would not only further ethnicise some strictly social issues but would be unable to effectively tackle them in the longer term. Consequently, given that more than 80% of

the Roma in Hungary are exclusively Hungarian-speaking, many would argue that the emphasis should be placed on socio-economic inclusion and combating discrimination, in which context the idea of separate minority institutions would involve a degree of segregation from the mainstream society.

Finally, how those schools that are now run by MSGs perform on a variety of indicators remains an important question, affecting whether parents consider it worthwhile to enrol their children in them. The present analysis relies on the 2019 results of the National Assessment of Basic Competences—reading comprehension and mathematics—, which is carried out every school year on the last Wednesday of May in all primary and high schools in grades 6, 8 and 10 with all students in these grades participating. Results show that MSG schools are slightly below the national average in both mathematics (99.5%) and reading comprehension (99.3%). While Croat and German students are above the national average, Roma, Romanian, Serb and Slovenian schools are somewhat below.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Although the right of minorities to maintain their own cultural and educational institutions was already declared in the 1993 Minority Act in Hungary, this started to be put into practice within the country's NCA framework of MSGs only from the mid-2000s. The process was officially called 'institutionalisation', and involved mostly the establishment, maintenance and takeover of institutions from other providers by MSGs, creating functional autonomy. The process, especially in the 2010s, was facilitated by crucial legal and financial incentives that at first sight increased the cultural autonomy of minorities, but also entailed contradictions, including uncertainties around membership, and disproportional uptake among minorities in terms of institutional maintenance. Furthermore, a review of some cases suggests that minorities can only exercise their autonomy when they are allowed to do so. At the same time, one of the main questions concerns how these institutions perform, and whether they are still able to preserve minority languages and identities of those minority communities that are highly assimilated, the transmission of which has already been interrupted in many families.

**APPENDIX 1: THE NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
(KINDERGARTENS, SCHOOLS) MAINTAINED BY LOCAL
AND NATIONAL MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENTS, 2003–2022**

<i>Minority</i>	<i>2003– 2004</i>	<i>2005– 2006</i>	<i>2007– 2008</i>	<i>2009– 2010</i>	<i>2011– 2012</i>	<i>2013– 2014</i>	<i>2015– 2016</i>	<i>2017– 2018</i>	<i>2022</i>
Bulgarian			2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Croatian	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	4	5
German	2	3	3	2	7	12	43	56	67
Greek			1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Polish		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Roma					3	3	3	3	2
Romanian					4	6	6	7	7
Rusyn						1	1	1	
Serb					1	2	2	2	2
Slovak		2	3	3	4	6	7	7	7
Slovenian					2	2	2	2	2
Total	3	7	11	10	28	40	73	87	97

**APPENDIX 2: SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONS
MAINTAINED BY NATIONAL MINORITY
SELF-GOVERNMENTS, 2003–2022 (MILLION HUF)**

Minority	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Armenian	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	27.0	33.4	33.4	36.7	36.7	36.7	39.5
Bulgarian	4.2	13.0	33.0	12.0	15.0	15.7	19.2	19.2	19.2	28.6	30.8	30.8	50.8	50.8	72.8	72.8	80.1	80.1	80.1	134.7
Croatian	159.2	12.0	55.6	10.0	45.0	47.0	51.5	55.0	55.0	55.0	57.5	65.5	104.4	104.4	145.9	145.9	160.5	160.5	160.5	325.1
German	95.7	102.0	80.0	12.6	70.0	73.2	73.2	73.2	73.2	73.2	125.6	125.6	178.0	178.0	211.0	238.7	262.6	262.6	262.6	401.0
Greek	1.5	7.5	12.0	-	12.0	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	15.0	19.5	19.5	35.5	35.5	39.1	39.1	39.1	43.2
Polish	10.2	11.5	38.8	14.0	14.0	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	18.6	24.6	25.8	30.8	30.8	53.0	53.0	58.3	58.3	58.3	62.7
Roma	40.0	60.0	53.0	1.0	70.0	73.2	78.6	78.6	78.6	78.6	78.6	78.6	165.9	165.9	165.9	165.9	182.5	182.5	182.5	196.2
Romanian	1.5	27.0	21.1	18.0	16.5	17.2	17.2	17.2	17.2	19.7	19.7	27.5	40.8	40.8	48.0	48.0	52.8	52.8	52.8	92.1
Rusyn	-	2.0	4.4	1.5	6.0	6.3	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	13.5	13.5	35.3	35.3	38.8	38.8	38.8	54.9
Serb	25.0	15.0	27.5	6.0	27.0	28.2	32.2	32.2	42.2	54.7	54.7	54.7	69.2	69.2	114.0	114.0	125.4	125.4	125.4	180.0
Slovak	76.4	90.3	97.4	23.3	88.8	92.8	105.8	105.8	105.8	115.8	115.8	118.8	159.5	159.5	197.9	197.9	217.7	217.7	217.7	279.3
Slovenian	15.0	13.5	16.1	6.0	16.2	16.9	16.9	16.9	21.9	21.9	43.4	46.4	58.4	58.4	58.4	58.4	64.2	64.2	64.2	89.7
Ukrainian	-	-	-	-	-	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	14.5	14.5	21.4	21.4	23.5	23.5	23.5	25.3
Total	428.7	353.8	438.9	104.4	380.5	412.6	444.5	444.5	463	501.4	586	611.5	932.3	932.3	1,192.5	1,220.2	1,342.2	1,342.2	1,342.2	1,923.7

REFERENCES

- Borbély, A. (2015). Studying sustainable bilingualism: Comparing the choices of languages in Hungary's six bilingual national minorities. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2015(236), 155–179. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2015-0025>
- Brunner, G., & Küpper, H. (2002). European options of autonomy: A typology of autonomy models of minority self-governance. In K. Gál (Ed.), *Minority governance in Europe* (pp. 11–36). Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative.
- Carstocea, A. (2011). “Ethno-Business”: The unexpected consequence of national minority policies in Romania. In Z. Mansfeldová, & H. Pleines (Eds.), *Informal relations from democratic representation to corruption. Case studies from Central and Eastern Europe*. Ibidem. (pp. 163–183).
- Conversi, D. (2014). Between the hammer of globalization and the anvil of nationalism: Is Europe's complex diversity under threat? *Ethnicities*, 14(1), 25–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796813487727>
- Council of Europe. (2005). *Resolution ResCMN(2005)10 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Hungary*. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d9143
- Council of Europe. (2007). *Recommendation CM/RecChL(2007)4 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Hungary*. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d5ca7
- Decker, C. (2011). Contemporary forms of cultural autonomy in Eastern Europe: Recurrent problems and prospects for improving the functioning of elected bodies of cultural autonomy. In *The participation of minorities in public life*. Council of Europe Publishing. (pp. 101–112).
- Deets, S. (2002). Reconsidering East European Minority Policy: Liberal theory and European norms. *East European Politics and Societies*, 16(1), 30–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325402016001003>
- Eide, A. (1998). Cultural autonomy: Concept, content, history and role in the world order. In M. Suksi (Ed.), *Autonomy: Applications and implications*. Kluwer Law International. (pp. 251–276).
- Fraser, N. (2003). Social justice in the age of identity politics: Redistribution, recognition, and participation. In N. Fraser & A. Honneth (Eds.), *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange*, (pp. 7–109). Suhrkamp..
- Ghai, Y. (Ed.). (2000). *Autonomy and ethnicity: Negotiating competing claims in multi-ethnic states*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ghai, Y. (2005). Public participation, autonomy and minorities. In Z. A. Skurbaty (Ed.), *Beyond a one-dimensional state: An emerging right to autonomy?* (pp. 3–45). Martinus Nijhoff.
- Gheorghe, N. (2013). Choices to be made and prices to be paid: Potential roles and consequences in Roma activism and policy-making. In W. Guy (Ed.), *From victimhood to citizenship: The path of Roma integration: A debate*. (pp. 41–99). Kossuth.
- Government of Hungary. (2005). J/17166. sz. Kormánybeszámoló a Magyar Köztársaság területén élő nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségek helyzetéről (2003. február–2005. február) [J/17166. Governmental report on the situation of national and ethnic

- minorities living in the Republic of Hungary (February 2003—February 2005)]. http://nemzetisegek.hu/dokumentumok/keteves_korm_beszam2005.pdf
- Government of Hungary. (2007). J/4722. sz. Beszámoló a Magyar Köztársaság területén élő nemzeti és etnikai kisebbségek helyzetéről (2005. február—2007. február) [J/4722. Governmental report on the situation of national and ethnic minorities living in the Republic of Hungary (February 2005—February 2007)]. <https://www.parlament.hu/irom38/04722/04722.pdf>
- Horváth, M. T. (2016). From municipalisation to centralism: Changes to local public service delivery in Hungary. In H. Wollmann, I. Koprić, & G. Marcou (Eds.), *Public and social services in Europe: From public and municipal to private sector provision* (pp. 185–199). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lapidoth, R. (1997). *Autonomy: Flexible solutions to ethnic conflicts*. US Institute of Peace Press.
- Marushiakova, E., & Popov, V. (2005). The Roma – a nation without a state? Historical background and contemporary tendencies. In W. Burszta, T. Kamusella, & S. Wojciechowski (Eds.), *Nationalisms across the globe: An overview of the nationalism of state-endowed and stateless nations*. (pp. 433–455.) School of Humanities and Journalism.
- McGarry, J., & Moore, M. (2005). Karl Renner, power sharing and non-territorial autonomy. In E. Nimni (Ed.), *National cultural autonomy and its contemporary critics*. (pp. 64–81). Routledge.
- O’Leary, B. (2008). The logics of power-sharing, consociation and pluralist federations. In M. Weller & B. Metzger (Eds.), *Settling self-determination disputes: Complex power-sharing in theory and practice* (pp. 47–58). Martinus Nijhoff.
- Osipov, A. (2013). Non-territorial autonomy as a way to diversity policies: The case of Russia. In E. Nimni, A. Osipov, & D. J. Smith (Eds.), *The challenge of non-territorial autonomy: Theory and practice*. (pp. 133–148). Peter Lang Academic Publishers.
- Ónody-Molnár, D. (2021). Iskolabotrány Soroksáron, felháborodás a német közösségben [School scandal in Soroksár. Indignation in the German community]. *Jelen*, 5 July. <https://jelen.media/kozelet/iskolabotrany-soroksaron-felhaborodas-a-nemet-kozossegeben-1988>
- Peleg, I. (2007). *Democratizing the hegemonic State: Political transformation in the age of identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roach, S. C. (2004). Minority rights and an emergent international right to autonomy: A historical and normative assessment. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 11(4), 411–432.
- Smith, D., & Hiden, J. (2012). *Ethnic diversity and the Nation State: National cultural autonomy revisited*. Routledge.
- Suksi, M. (2015). Non-territorial autonomy: The meaning of ‘(non)-territoriality.’ In T. Malloy & F. Palermo (Eds.), *Minority accommodation through territorial and non-territorial autonomy* (pp. 83–115). Oxford University Press.
- Úton a kulturális autonómia felé. Intézmények – országos önkormányzatok fenntartásában [Towards cultural autonomy. Institutions maintained by national minority self-governments]. *Barátság*, 15 November, 2004. pp. 4386–4388. <http://nemzetisegek.hu/repertorium/2004/05/Bar02.pdf>
- Vermeersch, P. (2003). Ethnic minority identity and movement politics: The case of the Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26(5), 879–901. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987032000109078>

Wiberg, M. (2005). Ambiguities in and clarifications of the concept of autonomy. In Z. A. Skurbaty (Ed.), *Beyond a one-dimensional state: An emerging right to autonomy?* (pp. 177–190). Martinus Nijhoff.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Act 61 of 2003 on the amendment of the Act 79 of 1993 on public education.
<https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a0300061.TV>

Act 77 of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities (as in force on November 25, 2005). <http://www.kisebbségiombudsman.hu/data/files/128317683.pdf>

Act 179 of 2011 on the Rights of Nationalities (as in force on December 21, 2017).
https://njt.hu/translation/J2011T0179P_20171221_FINrev.pdf

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

