

***Educational reform in Ukraine:
language aspect of influence to minorities and youth***

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There is no doubt about the need for a consistent and balanced policy of the state with regard to ethnic and linguistic minorities. Especially when it concerns youth and state policy in the sphere of education.

Ukraine is a multinational and multicultural country in which more than 100 ethnic groups live. According to the latest census of 2001, about 10 million Ukrainians belonged to national minorities (22.5% of the population), and every third Ukrainian considered their mother tongue to be one of the languages of national minorities. For 14 million 273 thousand Ukrainian citizens, the native language is Russian, 320,000 for Romanian, 230,000 for Crimean Tatar, 150,000 for Hungarian, 131,000 for Bulgarian, and so on.

Traditionally, for the citizens of Ukraine, the Constitution of Ukraine formally guaranteed broad rights to use the mother language in education - Article 10 guarantees the free use and development of minority languages, Article 53 - the right to study in schools and universities in their native language.

At the same time for the period 2004-2017 the number of school kids in Romanian was reduced almost 2 times, in Hungarian - by 20%, in Moldovan - 2 times, in Russian 3.5 times. Although, for today, more than 400 thousand children are studying in the schools of Ukraine in the languages of national minorities. At the same time they are studying the Ukrainian language - the state language - as an object. The higher education of minority languages at the state level is practically not preserved.

Moreover, in September of this year in Ukraine a new law on education was adopted, according to which from 2018 only in the junior school will be able classes with the teaching of subjects by the languages of national minorities. Since the 5th year of study, the teaching of subjects in the languages of national minorities has been almost completely eliminated. Since 2020, education in Ukraine will become fully Ukrainian-studying. In the language of national minorities will be possible only individual subjects. 400 thousand pupils will no longer be able to study on their native languages.

The adoption of this law caused an extremely negative reaction not only among representatives of national minorities of Ukraine. Its norms have also been sharply

criticized by the governments of Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Greece and other countries. In particular, Hungary promised to stop cooperation with Ukraine within the framework of the EU and NATO. The need to preserve the rights of minorities to education at the current level is stated in the documents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the resolution of the Eastern Partnership Summit of the EU.

The necessity to support and develop the state Ukrainian language is beyond doubt. And the Ukrainian authorities argued for the adoption of this law by a low level of knowledge of the state language in some compact ethnic groups - Romanian and Hungarian. Around this issue in Ukraine today there is a high wave of political speculation, which is powered by the high level of radicalism among Ukrainian youth and the war in the Donbas. Artificially, another socio-political crisis was created in Ukraine.

At the same time, we are convinced that the interest of the development of the state language doesn't go against the rights of national minorities to study in their native language. In this issue, a compromise is quite possible. To this end, the state has the right to improve the quality of teaching the state language, the number of hours to study it, without any prohibition on teaching the languages of national minorities. But, unfortunately, the issue is very politicized and the Ukrainian state does not conduct an effective dialogue with national minorities and a specialized expert community on this issue. In the establishment of such dialogue and mediation of the problem, the role of international organizations like UN and the community is very important.

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