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## **Defining National Minority under Czech Law**

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### **Abstract**

There is no universal, generally accepted and legally binding definition of a national minority in international law. Similarly, domestic legislations do not offer unambiguous definitions of national minorities and although there are legal distinctions drawn between the entitlements guaranteed to “autochthonous” national minorities and “immigrants”, there are no clear-cut legal criteria on where to draw the distinction between the two categories. This article examines the ambivalent position of immigrant communities on the case study of the Vietnamese community in Czechia (Czech Republic). The methodology involves doctrinal legal analysis with the purpose to examine the syntactic and semantic ambiguities and vagueness in word meanings (cf. Solan, 2012). Thereby focusing on how Czech domestic legislative documents define national and linguistic minorities and what are the implications from thereof for the position of the communities which are typically considered as immigrant.

**Keywords:** Czech law; definition of national minority; doctrinal legal analysis; Vietnamese community

### **Introduction**

Numerous international documents grant rights to national, linguistic or ethnic minorities without defining the beneficiaries of such entitlements. Equally, there is no generally accepted,

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binding definition of a “national minority” or “linguistic minority” in legal theory. Numerous instruments of international law refer to “national minorities” and safeguard their rights ‘to preserve their culture and to use their own language’ (Capotorti, 1997: 95). Yet, there is no consensus on who should be the addressees of these provisions. Some international bodies as well as courts have attempted to define “national minority” and similarly, some definitions of a “linguistic minority” have been designed by sociolinguists. Nevertheless, the problem of defining a minority still remains.

The problem of the absence of a universally accepted legal definition of a national minority has many practical implications for minority groups seeking to practice their rights. Such difficulty is especially reinforced for groups that are commonly considered “immigrants”, such as the Vietnamese or the Ukrainian community in Czechia (Czech Republic).

Language rights of immigrants do not hold the same status as the language rights of autochthonous national minorities, neither in international law nor in most domestic legal systems. There are theoretical disagreements between legal scholars and political theorists about the extent to which, if at all, language rights of immigrants should be promoted and protected. This article illustrates the complexity surrounding the ambiguous status of immigrants in relation to minority rights by also discussing potentials for enhancing their uncertain position, through numerous existing definitions established for national minorities.

## **1. Definition of national minority in international law**

### **1.1 *Unresolved problem***

The lack of a clear definition has been commented on by numerous scholars. Shaw (1990: 14) notes that ‘international law has thus far provided us with no accepted and binding definition of a minority’. Capotorti (1977: 5), a former United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, mentions that ‘[d]espite the many references to be found in international legal instruments of all kinds [...], there is no generally accepted definition of the term “minority”’.

Additionally, John Packer, the former director of the Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities

(HCNM), resumes that ‘the problem of definition has troubled scholars so long that many have preferred simply to ignore it, by-pass it or boldly argue it is necessary to define the term’ (Packer, 1993 p. 24).

The non-existence of a universally accepted legal definition of a national minority can be regarded as problematic and challenging due to several reasons. Firstly, states can easily exclude certain groups from rights that are guaranteed to other national minorities, on the grounds of claiming that particular groups are not “national minorities” and thus are not automatically entitled to state support (Dimitras 2004: 2-3). Additionally, and closely linked to the previous point, with the absence of a clear definition, the position of “immigrant” groups is highly ambiguous. Furthermore, the distinction between immigrants and autochthonous minorities also becomes subjective and often left upon the discretion of individual authorities applying particular rights (Vélazquez 2017: 106). The protection of national minorities and the safeguarding of their rights is therefore conditioned by the recognition of their existence (United Nations 2010: 4-6) and thus minorities can only seek legal guaranties more easily once they comply with criteria set forth by legal documents.

### ***1.2 Immigrants under suggested definitions in international law***

The author of the first well-known proposal of the definition of a ‘national minority’ was Francesco Capotorti, (1977: 96), who identified it as;

a group, numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the state - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.

A second well-known definition was proposed by Jules Deschênes to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1985. In Deschênes’s wording, a “national minority” is;

a group of citizens of a state, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that state, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law.

(1985: paragraph 181)

The individual elements of these definitions have been subjected to criticism by scholars of international law. The requirement of citizenship of the “host state” is particularly relevant to the question of inclusion of immigrants under the proposed definitions.

The requirement of the nationality of the state is seen by Packer as ‘redundant in human rights philosophy’ (1993: 54). Packer states that it is not necessary to include this condition in the definition, because ‘political rights obtained through membership of the polity only apply to citizens’ (ibid.).

De Varennes also criticises the inclusion of this condition in the definitions, but not on the grounds of it being redundant. He sees this condition as inappropriate and unjust. According to de Varennes, Capotorti should not exclude non-citizens from the scope of his definition: only a few states (such as Iraq and Pakistan) expressed the view during drafting of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that non-citizens should not be included. Capotorti justifies this part of his definition by explaining that foreigners are protected by customary international law, as well as by treaties and special agreements (Capotorti, 1977: paragraph 57). According to de Varennes, such reasoning is unconvincing, as, regarding the use of a minority language and the practice of minority religion, customary international law provides no assistance to immigrant communities (Capotorti, 1977: paragraph 57).

In practice, certain minority rights are granted to recently arrived immigrant minority groups under international law. These include the freedom of enjoyment of their culture and other rights derived from the principle of non-discrimination (Vélazquez 2017: 112). The reason for the inclusion of immigrants in the minority rights framework is not only the fact that immigrants are not explicitly excluded from the scope of application of the relevant human rights instruments, but also the universal nature of human rights which indicates that they belong to all human beings regardless of nationality (Vélazquez 2017: 113).

The criterion of citizenship of the host state is relevant to the question of the enjoyment of cultural minority rights by immigrants within domestic legal systems, because some immigrant groups consist of significant numbers of non-citizens of their host states. However, in some instances (such as the Vietnamese group in Czechia), immigrants or the “new minorities” are excluded from the scope of application of certain cultural minority rights provisions, even though they comply with all the criteria included in the suggested definitions of international law.

Finally, it needs to be noted that the problem of defining national minorities under international law is often connected to the discussion on the scope of application of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992). However, it should not be forgotten that other minorities, for example, persons belonging to certain political groups or persons with disabilities, also constitute minorities. Even though these two international documents are only devoted to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, other minorities should also enjoy guarantees of non-discrimination. Additionally, the UN aims to protect persons from multiple discrimination, i.e. from situations when members of national minorities are discriminated against on other grounds, such as gender (United Nations 2010: 3).

## **2. National minorities and immigrants under Czech law**

### ***2.1 Defining national minorities under Czech law<sup>1</sup>***

The domestic legal system in Czechia reflects the provisions as well as the inaccuracies and controversies of the international law.

On the constitutional level, the Czech Charter of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1993)<sup>2</sup> anchors both negative (i.e. non-discrimination against minorities) and positive rights (i.e. including state obligations) of national minorities, while the particularities of the practice of positive rights are left to other acts.

The most essential act related to minority law in Czechia is the Czech Minority Act (2001).<sup>3</sup> It contains the definition of a “national minority” for the purposes of Czech law, the definition of a “member of a national minority” and the enumeration of minority rights granted to national minorities in Czechia and to their individual members.

The law of Czechia provides the definition of a national minority for the purposes of the Czech law in the Czech Minority Act.<sup>4</sup> The definition is stated in § 2 of the Czech Minority Act, combining objective and subjective criteria. The objective criteria of the definition of a national minority are stated in the first half of the definition:

A national minority is a society of citizens of Czechia who live in the territory of the present Czech Republic and who differ from the other citizens typically by their common ethnic origin,

language, culture and traditions and who constitute a numerical minority among the inhabitants of Czechia [...]

(Czech Minority Act, 2001: § 2(1)).

The subjective criteria follow:

[and who] at the same time express the will to be accepted as a national minority for the purposes of a common striving for the preservation and development of their uniqueness, language and culture, and at the same time for the purposes of the expression and preservation of the interests of their society which was historically created

(*ibid.*).

Similarly, the definition of a member of national minority is formulated using both subjective and objective criteria: ‘A member of a national minority is a citizen of the Czech Republic, who declares himself [or herself] to be of other than Czech nationality and who expresses the wish to be considered as a member of a national minority together with the others who declare themselves to be of the same nationality’ (Czech Minority Act, 2001: § 2(2)).<sup>5</sup>

There is no literal enumeration of the groups that are considered to be national minorities. Such enumeration would be practical for the purposes of the application of the law by state authorities, because the granting of particular rights to certain groups would not be left upon the discretion of particular authorities or individual officials. This would lead to more consistent treatment of minority groups and would establish greater legal certainty for national minorities and their members.

The reasons for not including the enumeration criterion have not been discussed during the adoption of the Act. The Parliament published a detailed report of the changes to the original proposal initiated by the central government of the Czech Republic, as they were discussed throughout the process of adoption in both parliamentary chambers. These changes were suggested by the Committee for European integration, the Committee for science, education and culture, the Committee for press and the Committee for constitutional law, with the aim of precisising the formulations in the entire Act. However, the question of enumerating the groups to be considered minorities was not raised (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 1998-2002).

In practice, those groups that are represented in the Czech Minority Council are considered to be minorities. There are no official criteria for a community to be reserved a seat on the Minority Council and thus there are no clear criteria for a community to obtain the official minority status. According to the Secretary of the Minority Council, Milan Pospíšil, the community has to become ‘consistent enough in the Czech society’ in order to be represented (Pospíšil, 2008, personal communication).

Thus, the definition is imprecise and is based on terms which are difficult to define, such as ‘the will to be accepted as a national minority’, and ‘the expression and preservation of the interests of their society which was historically created’. The use of such theoretical terms is appropriate and in accordance with the overall formal style of the Czech Minority Act. However, such terms need to be accompanied by enumerated and specified groups which are considered to be minorities.

## **2.2 *Special rights granted to “traditional” minorities***

The Czech Minority Act mentions the special importance of a certain sub-group of national minorities in Czechia – those who have been present in the Czech territory ‘traditionally and for a long time’ (Czech Minority Act, 2001: §§ 8-11). Again, the Act does not enumerate the groups which have such status.

The rights guaranteed to the members of all national minorities in Czechia, regardless of the “traditional” or “immigrant” status of the minority, include the right of free choice of membership of a national minority (Czech Minority Act, 2001: § 4), the right of association of members of a national minority (§ 5), the right of participation in dealing with matters concerning a national minority (§ 6), the right of using name and surname in the language of a national minority (§ 7), the right of development of culture of the national minority (§ 12, paragraph 1), and the right to disseminate and receive information in the language of the national minority (§ 13, paragraph 1).

The second group of rights, guaranteed only to the “traditional minorities”, includes the right of multilingual signs and inscriptions (§ 8): traditional minorities are entitled to official multilingual signs and inscriptions in minority languages, including the name of the municipality of which the minority members are the citizens, streets, sites, and public spaces of the municipality, and the signs on the buildings of public authorities and on the electoral rooms of the municipality. The Czech Minority Act (2001) refers to the Czech Act on Municipalities (2000) <sup>6</sup> regarding the specific conditions of this right. The Act on Municipalities (2000) specifies the requirement of a 40 percent threshold, i.e. the required numbers of minority members in the community, for this right to be exercised (§ 28).

Additionally, “traditional” minorities are entitled to state support for the development of their cultures (§ 12, paragraph 2) and for dissemination of information in their languages (§ 13, paragraph 1). While all minority groups are free to exercise the rights of § 12 and § 13, only

those who are considered traditional are guaranteed state support for their activities while exercising these rights.

Rights guaranteed to the members of “traditional” minorities also include the right of using the language of a national minority in official communication and in hearing before a court (§ 9), the right of using the language of a national minority during elections (§ 10), and the right of education in the language of a national minority (§ 11).

Because there is no literal enumeration of which minorities should be regarded as traditional, the application of §§ 8-11 and of the second paragraphs of §§ 12 and 13 is ad hoc. Very often, the minorities that are represented in the Minority Council of the central government are those considered as “traditional”. This is for instance the case regarding state funding for cultural practices (§ 12, paragraph 2 and § 13, paragraph 2) which is by law reserved to “traditional” minorities. For example, according to the records of the Czech Ministry of Culture, the Vietnamese and Belarusian communities have been receiving funding and thus have been treated as “traditional” only since 2014 (Úřad vlády České republiky, 2014). This date corresponds to the date when these two groups have been included in the Minority Council.

The lack of literal enumeration of national minorities and of traditional minorities is in accordance with the overall style of the Act which purposefully avoids regulating unnecessary details: for example, §§ 12 and 13 grant minorities state support for cultural practices, but details of such support are not dealt with by the Act itself and are regulated by a decree of the central government. Regulation by a government decree allows for easy amendments because decrees, contrarily to acts, are not adopted and amended through parliamentary procedures. However, while the effort of the Act to purposefully avoid the regulation of unimportant details is laudable, it would be more meaningful if the Act was more explicit in the case of enumeration of national minorities and traditional minorities. The enumerations of groups which are to be considered as national or traditional minorities are not subject to frequent changes. Thus, such enumeration should be explicitly included in this Act so that it could serve as the base of the Czech minority law.

### ***2.3 The Minority Council of the Czech central government***

In Czechia, the rights of national minorities are safeguarded by the Government Minority Council.<sup>7</sup> The Minority Act refers to a governmental decree for further regulation. At present, the responsibilities, composition, and the sessions of the Minority Council are regulated by the Statute of the Government Minority Council (2001).<sup>8</sup>

The Minority Council expresses opinions on measures and laws to be submitted for adoption by government and that have impact on national minorities (Statute of the Government Minority Council, 2001: Article 2). Additionally, the Council makes decisions regarding the allocation of government grants for cultural practices of national minorities (ibid.). For this reason, the Minority Council is the crucial institution for the development of minority cultures and languages in Czechia.

Until July 2013, the Minority Council Statute stated that national minorities in Czechia are represented on the Minority Council by one or two representatives, depending on their importance in the Czech culture and according to the length of time they have been residing in Czechia (former Article 3).<sup>9</sup>

The Vietnamese community did not have an official representative in the Council until July 2013. However, since 2007, the community has regularly delegated a “permanent guest”, who has been present at all the meetings of the Council (Úřad vlády ČR, 2009-2013). The Statute was amended in July 2013,<sup>10</sup> and the Vietnamese community (as well as the Belarusians) gained one seat in the Council. Simultaneously, the wording of Article 3 of the Statute was amended and presently it states that national minorities are represented based on the number of the speakers of minority languages.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of the Vietnamese community in 2013 followed the results of the Census of 2011. The number of residents of Czechia who claim to be of Vietnamese ethnicity raised from 17,000 in 2001 to 30,000 in 2011 (Czech Statistical Office, 2011). Additionally, Czech citizens within the Vietnamese community raised from 660 to 800 (ibid.). These results made it evident that many people of Vietnamese origin intend to settle in Czechia permanently. Furthermore, Czech citizenship law was amended in 2014 to allow multiple citizenship. Therefore, it can be expected that the number of Czech citizens of Vietnamese origin will rise significantly (Vláda ČR, 2013).

It was mentioned earlier that the Minority Act does not include any enumeration of the minorities that should be regarded as complying with the official Czech definition therein. As a consequence, public officials in Czechia mainly consider those national groups that are represented in the Minority Council as official minority groups with the minority status.

Additionally, this list of represented minorities is identical to the list of those national groups who receive state funding for their cultural practices. According to the Czech Minority Act, state funding should be granted to traditional minorities. The practice thus shows that the Government also implicitly acknowledges the listed communities as traditional minorities.

Subsequently, the groups that have long been considered to hold the special status of traditional minorities and that are entitled to state support for promoting their culture are: Russians, Ukrainians and Greeks which have been represented since the adoption of the Minority Act in 2001, Serbians since 2004, and Croatians - with a break between 2005 and 2007 (Vláda ČR, 2014). On the other hand, the Vietnamese who have been present in Czechia since 1950s have only recently gained recognition and representation in the Minority Council. Thus, for a long time, the Vietnamese community were not considered equal to other traditional minorities in the country, lacking an official minority status and as such not qualifying for state funding for their cultural practices.

#### *2.4 Comparison of the position of the Vietnamese and the Ukrainian communities in Czechia*

The Vietnamese community has been present in Czechia since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and Vietnam in 1950 (Kocourek, 2005). The first Vietnamese residents arrived in Czechia in 1956. This constituted a hundred children who stayed in an orphanage for four years, with only fifteen of them remaining in Czechoslovakia after this period (Martínková, 2006). Further waves of Vietnamese (university students and workers) arrived for time periods of four to seven years following the intergovernmental agreements of 1967, 1974, 1979 and 1980 (Brouček 2005). After 1989, the Vietnamese community in Czechia started forming itself because of the fact that many Vietnamese people had the positive experience of residing in Czechoslovakia and also knew the language (Vláda České republiky, 2013).

The first Ukrainians appeared in the Czech territory in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Leontyeva, 2005), whilst Czechoslovakia was also an asylum for political migrants from Eastern Ukraine in the 1920s (Ukrajinská iniciativa, 1998). The Ukrainian community in Czechoslovakia was culturally very active until 1948 (Leontyeva, 2005), but after the change of the political situation in 1948, the activities of Ukrainian cultural organizations were prohibited. Many Czechoslovak citizens of Ukrainian origin decided to emigrate from

Czechoslovakia, especially after the Soviet occupation in 1968 (Ukrajinská iniciativa, 1998). After 1989, Czechoslovakia became an attractive country for immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ukrainians became the largest group of economic migrants. Reasons for this include the geographical proximity, linguistic affinity and cultural similarities (Leontyeva, 2005). As a consequence, the Ukrainian national associations became active again in Czechoslovakia after 1989. However, at that time, the traditional Ukrainian community had already been dispersed across the entire territory of Czechoslovakia and was irretrievably assimilated into the Czechoslovak population (*ibid.*).

The Ukrainian group is composed of both settled members who have Czech citizenship and newcomers who arrived after 1990. It is usually the case that even the new immigrants (citizens of Ukraine) and guest-workers (who are only residing temporarily in Czechia) benefit from the state support aimed at the settled and established Ukrainian minority. Unlike Ukrainians, Vietnamese immigrants do not receive comparable benefits (Ljubačivská, 2011).

There is no obvious legal reason for the different treatment of the Vietnamese and the Ukrainian communities. The Vietnamese immigrants often settle with their families and establish new families in Czechia (Nešporová 2007: 41) whereas Ukrainian “guest workers” most typically do not reside in the Czech territory with their families (Dům národnostních menšin 2011). Therefore, it would be more logical to support the culture of the more settled group (the Vietnamese) than the culture of (Ukrainian) guest-workers who have no intention to settle permanently in the country.

One possible explanation is the lack of interest within the Vietnamese community to become involved in the state’s cultural affairs. The Vietnamese community in Czechia appears to be closed and does not communicate with the mainstream society. It is possible that the Vietnamese did not seek a representation in the Minority Council as actively and systematically as the other minority groups did, such as Ukrainians.

Another possible explanation of the differing state policies towards the Vietnamese and Ukrainians is the fact that Ukrainian culture is European and thus more similar to Czech culture. It needs to be emphasized that the Czech and Ukrainian nations do not have any historical connection, unlike Czechs and Ruthenians, who are represented in the Minority Council as a group separate from Ukrainians. However, in spite of all the differences, Ukrainians are physically (by appearance) and linguistically closer to Czechs than the Vietnamese are. Hence, the question remains, whether groups of European descent are more readily accepted in the Czech society and by the Czech government.

Another question arises in the case of groups from former communist and post-Soviet republics: is the above situation, favouring Ukrainians over the Vietnamese, a residue of the former communist regime and the formerly closer ties with Eastern European nations? In this respect, it needs to be explained that Vietnamese immigrants originally arrived to the Czech territory via agreements between the communist governments of Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, and that their contemporary presence in the territory is therefore also a residue of communism. However, such cooperation of Czechoslovakia and Vietnam was not on equal terms. Vietnamese residents in the former Czechoslovakia had limited civil rights and faced various restrictions under the threat of relocation to Vietnam. In this sense, the unfavourable position of the Vietnamese and the more favoured position of Ukrainians is a continuation of the relationships dating back prior to 1989.

### ***2.5 Remnants of communism in Czechia?***

Apart from the constitution in Czechia, the Minority Act and other legal documents relevant to linguistic minority protection bear the legacy of communism. It has been pointed out that the lack of detail in the Czech Minority Act results in the list of minority groups benefitting from its protection, differing on each occasion. Ukrainians are generally treated better than the Vietnamese, which can be apprehended as a remnant of communism, because the Ukrainians also had a better position during the communist-rule era.

The lack of clarity among the definitions in Czech law, coupled with the non-existence of literal enumeration of the groups to be considered national minorities or autochthonous minorities, has installed a situation in which the same minority groups and their minority organizations prominent during communism, are now still supported by the state. The same observation can be made about the possibilities of representation in the Minority Council. As stated above, the Vietnamese community became only recently represented in the Minority Council in Czechia.

The reasons for the residues of communism and its continued presence in today's Czech society and the country's legal environment can be several. Czarnota (2005: 128) claims that the cause of such post-communist heritage in Central Europe is 'the character of the communist society', which was defined by 'moral compromise' and 'changes of roles from perpetrators to victims' (ibid.). These features of communism are enhanced by the contemporary unwillingness to 'stimulate an open public debate about the involvement of citizens in the

operation of communist regimes' (Czarnota 2005: 127). Skach (2005: 61) notes that democratization leads to 'accommodating difference' in post-communist Central and Eastern European countries, but this is still an on-going process of creating 'toleration of difference in the modern world' (Skach, 2005: 68).

According to Czarnota (2005: 123), the problem of legislatively dealing with the communist past cannot be 'reduced to dealing with the remnants or legacies of former communist regimes' and a more active approach must be adopted by the legislators. Příbáň (2009: 338) emphasizes the 'proliferation of the rule of law concept' and the importance of adopting 'lustration law' (Příbáň, 2009: 344) for the post-communist societies to eradicate the power relations that have continued from the communist era. It needs to be emphasized that Czechia has indeed adopted active approaches in abolishing many of the communist legacies and legal arrangements.

## **Conclusion**

In spite of all criticism and doubts expressed above about the effectiveness and fairness of the current minority legislation and democratizing processes in Czechia, it should not be overlooked that a range of positive developments concerning legal arrangements for national minorities have been initiated.

The adoption of the Minority Act and practising the rights embodied thereof, are the evidence of increased attention paid to human rights and minority rights. Similarly, the inclusion of the Vietnamese group in the Minority Council in 2013 reflects the fact that the situation of minorities in Czechia is currently changing, with the domestic legislature still developing and new acts that are envisaged in the constitution still being adopted.

According to Příbáň (2007: 41), the process of transformation towards 'democratic politics' is inextricably connected to 'cultural heterogeneity'. As the second generation of immigrants who mostly came to Czechia after 1989 are now reaching adulthood, the attitudes of the immigrant communities towards the mainstream society are evolving, and the immigrants are more interested in communication with the mainstream.

Finally, it needs to be restated that in the globalizing world, the role of immigrant communities is becoming questionable from the strictly legal standpoint. Just like the autochthonous minorities, who became part of the territories of their state due to historical reasons, immigrants are now also entering the territories of their host states; making it highly difficult to determine when exactly they turn into a national minority.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> The legal documents of Czechia have been accessed in Czech language and the relevant passages were translated into English by me.
- <sup>2</sup> Charter of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, constitutional Act No. 2/1993, Collection of Acts of the Czech Republic. “Czech Charter” hereinafter.
- <sup>3</sup> Act on the Rights of the Members of National Minorities, No. 273/2001, Collection of Acts of the Czech Republic.
- <sup>4</sup> Act on the Rights of the Members of National Minorities, No. 273/2001, Collection of Acts of the Czech Republic.
- <sup>5</sup> The original text in Czech: ‘Příslušníkem národnostní menšiny je občan České republiky, který se hlásí k jiné než české národnosti a projevuje přání být považován za příslušníka národnostní menšiny spolu s dalšími, kteří se hlásí ke stejné národnosti.’
- <sup>6</sup> Act on Municipalities, No. 128/2000, Collection of Acts of the Czech Republic.
- <sup>7</sup> The Minority Council is a permanent institution of 18 representatives of minorities and 11 representatives of public officials. It convenes about 4 times every year. On the first meeting in each year, the Minority Council agrees on the dates of other meetings that should take place in that year.
- <sup>8</sup> Statute of the Government Minority Council, approved by the Government Resolution No. 1034, of 10 October, 2001. Additionally to the Minority Council Statute the exact rules of the sessions are set by the Rules of Procedure of the Minority Council of 2007.
- <sup>9</sup> Minorities currently represented on the Minority Council and the number of representatives: Bulgarian (1), Croatian (1), Hungarian (1), German (2), Polish (2), Roma (2), Ruthenian (1), Russian (1), Greek (1), Slovak (2), Serbian (1), Ukrainian (1), Byelorussian (1), and Vietnamese (1).
- <sup>10</sup> Government Resolution No. 530/2013, of July 3, 2013.
- <sup>11</sup> Annex No. 1 to the Government Resolution No. 530/2013, of July 3, 2013.

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