

# Language Diversity in the Danube Region: A unique cultural heritage and future potential at risk?

eTwinning-Seminar  
Krems, 1 June 2023

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## IDM - Target Countries



IDM



# 1953

Foundation of the Research Institute  
for Issues of the Danube Region in Salzburg

# 1993

New structure and new name: Institute for the  
Danube Region and Central Europe

# 1995

Dr. Erhard Busek becomes chairman of the  
institute

# 2003

Anniversary 50 years IDM; New office at  
Hahngasse

# 2019

New Slogan: European perspectives  
Regional actions  
Cooperation and expertise since 1953

# 2022

Death of Dr. Erhard Busek, Rector Friedrich Faulhammer  
becomes chairman



## 70 years IDM Locating the Future

- Regional events in all target countries on current topics
- 5 December 2023 – Anniversary celebration in the Palais Niederösterreich in Vienna

**70 years** | **#LocatingTheFuture**  
**Serbia**

**"Locating the Future"**  
A keynote lecture in the framework of the **10th International Danube Conference on Culture**



Melanie Jaendl



**24 April 2023, 14:50**  
Novi Sad, Serbia

[www.idm.at](http://www.idm.at) @IDMVienna

**70 years** | **#LocatingTheFuture**  
**Ukraine**

**Dilemma of Simultaneity  
- European Security and Integration**






Andrii Nadzhos | Nadija Afanasieva | Sebastian Schäffer

 UKRAINIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS | 28 April 2023, 10:00 CEST/11:00 EEST  
Kyiv


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**70 years** | **#LocatingTheFuture**  
**Belarus**



Guest:  
Katsiaryna Shamtsina

**Déjà-vu  
or a breakthrough?**  
The Status Quo and the Future Prospects of Belarus



Host:  
Malwina Talik

**4 May 2023, 17:00 CEST**  
IDMonSite/Zoom Webinar

[www.idm.at](http://www.idm.at) @IDMVienna

## DRC Summer School

- Initiated by IDM
- Promotion of regional co-operation among young social scientists

18th DRC Summer School  
on Regional Cooperation

16–22 July 2023,  
Cluj-Napoca, Romania



**18TH DRC SUMMER SCHOOL ON REGIONAL COOPERATION**

**TRANSFORMATION OF POST-WAR EUROPE:  
CHALLENGING UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH  
IN THE DANUBE REGION**

16 - 22 JULY 2023  
CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA

**APPLY NOW!**

Logos: DRC, IDM (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe), Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, Universitatea Tehnică din Cluj-Napoca, Donau-Universität Wien, Stadt Wien Kultur, WISSENSCHAFT - FORSCHUNG NIEDERÖSTERREICH



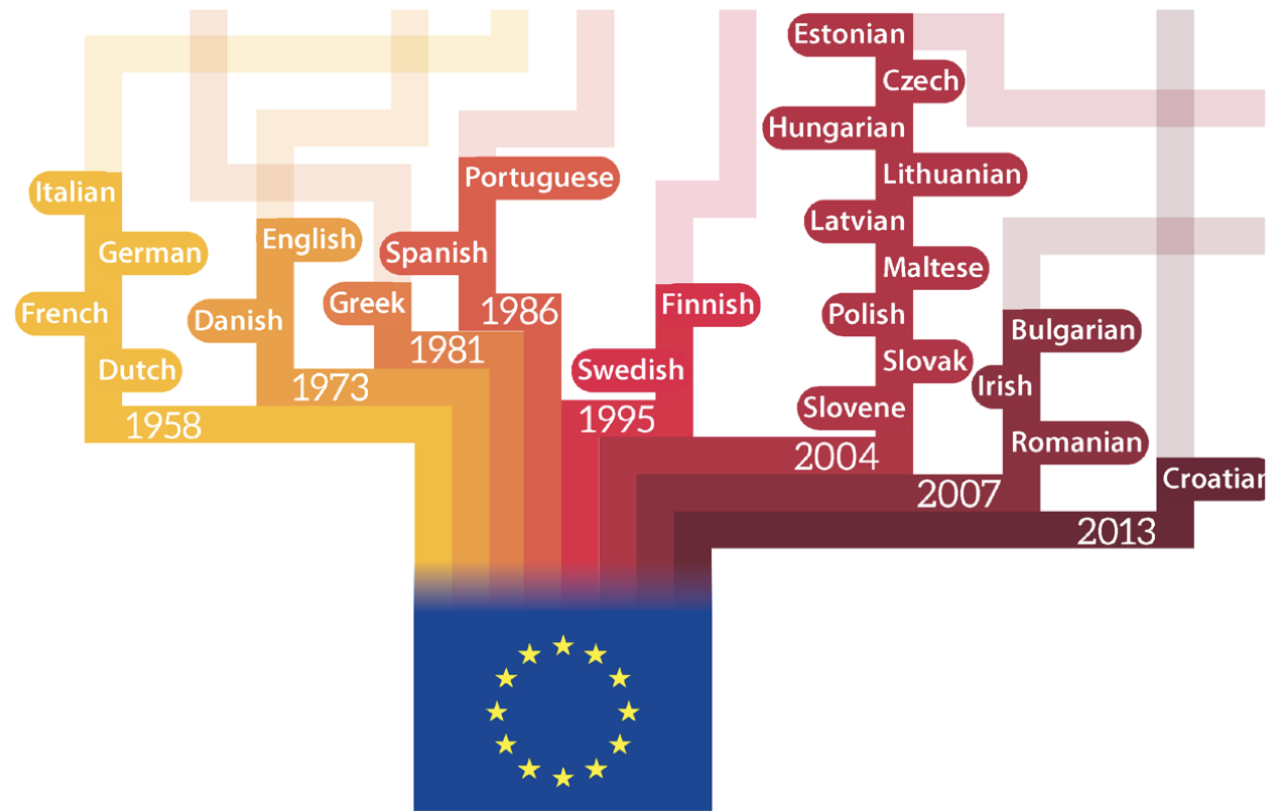
**Language Diversity in the Danube Region:  
A unique cultural heritage and future potential at risk?**

**One River,  
many languages**

**Donau  
• Duna • Dunav • Дунав • Dunaj • Дунай • Dunăre •  
Danub • Tuna**

## Languages in the EU

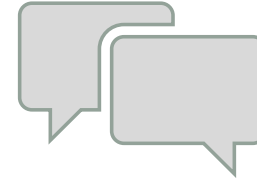
- 27 EU countries
- 24 official EU languages



Data source: [Article 55, Treaty on European Union](#).



## Multilingualism in the EU



Briefing of the European Parliament **"Multilingualism: The language of the EU"** (2022):

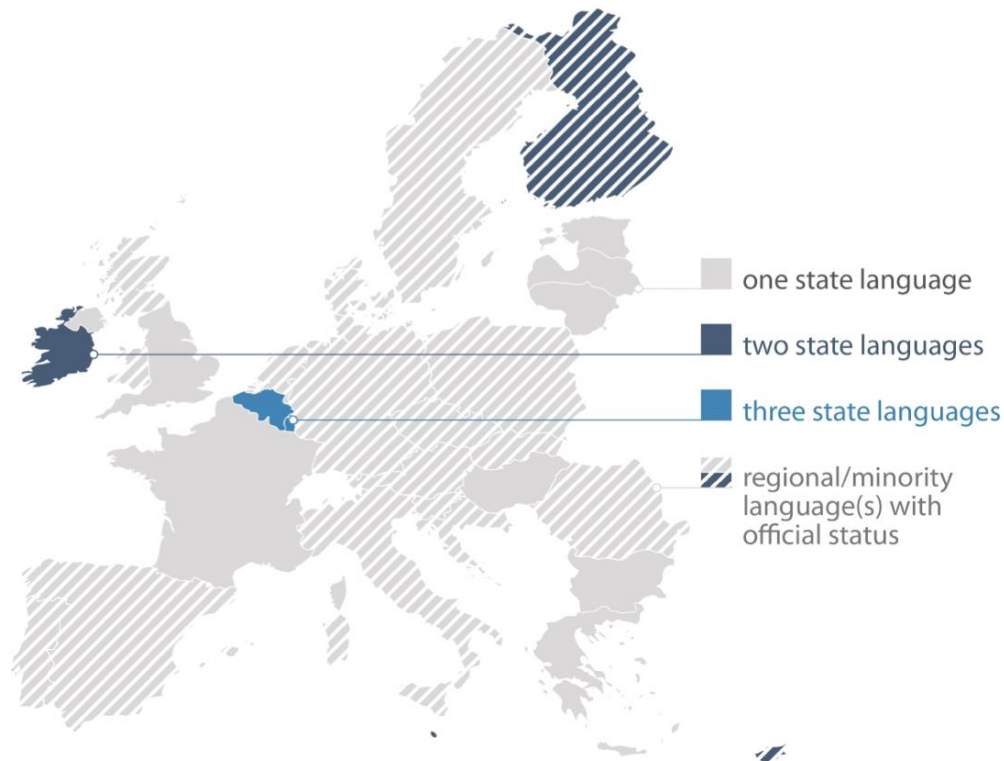
*"The harmonious co-existence of **24 official languages** is one of the most distinctive features of the European project."*

- Goals:
  - *"give citizens access to EU legislation and information in their own languages"*
  - *"encourage language learning and promote linguistic diversity"*

-> educational and language policies are responsibility of individual EU countries
- EU initiatives
  - Erasmus+
  - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)(6 levels: A1 to C2)
  - ...

## Regional and Minority Languages in the EU

Figure 2 – Status of languages in the EU



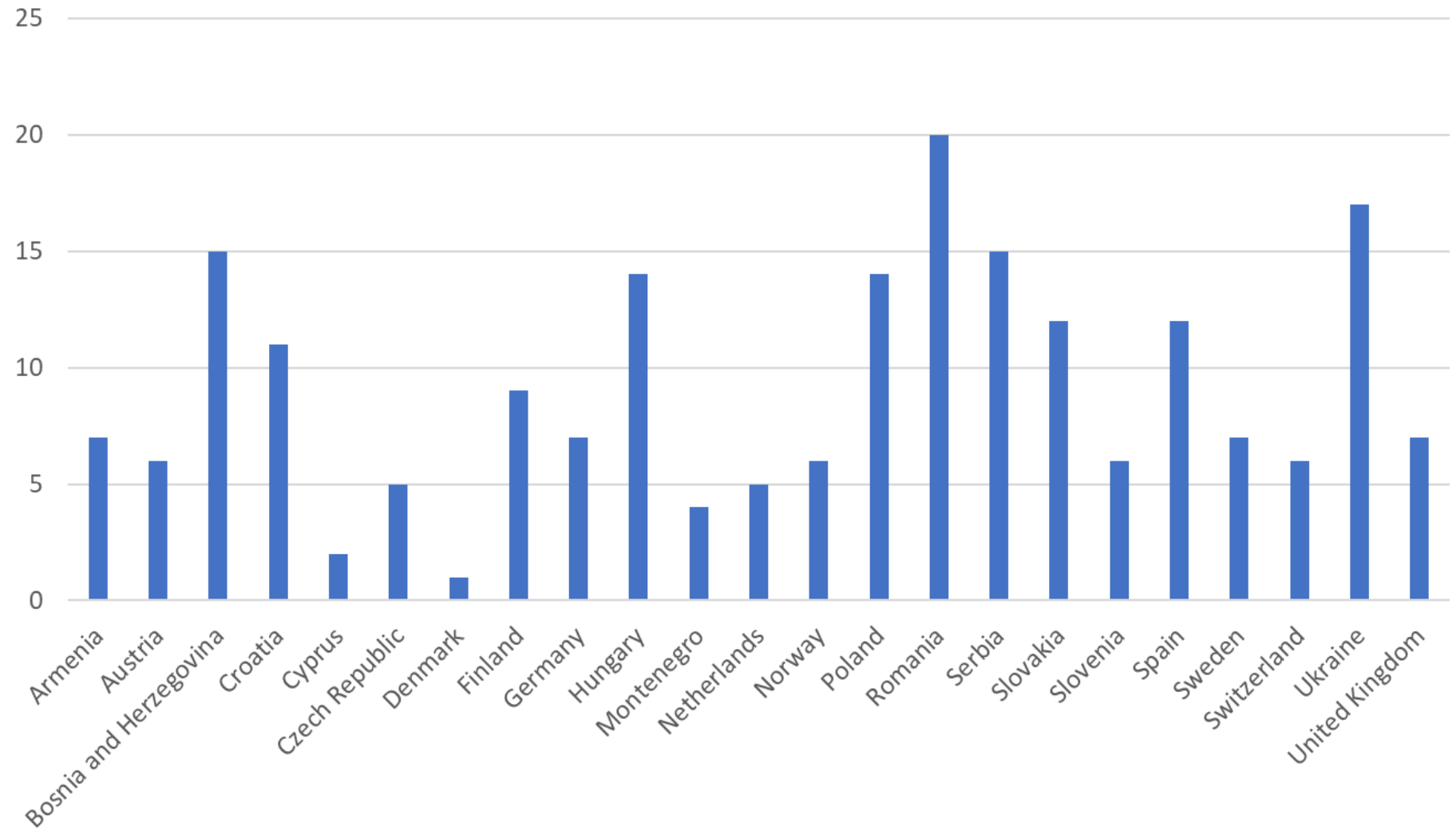
Data source: [Eurydice](#), 2008, p.18.

### European Charter for Regional or Minority languages (ECRML)

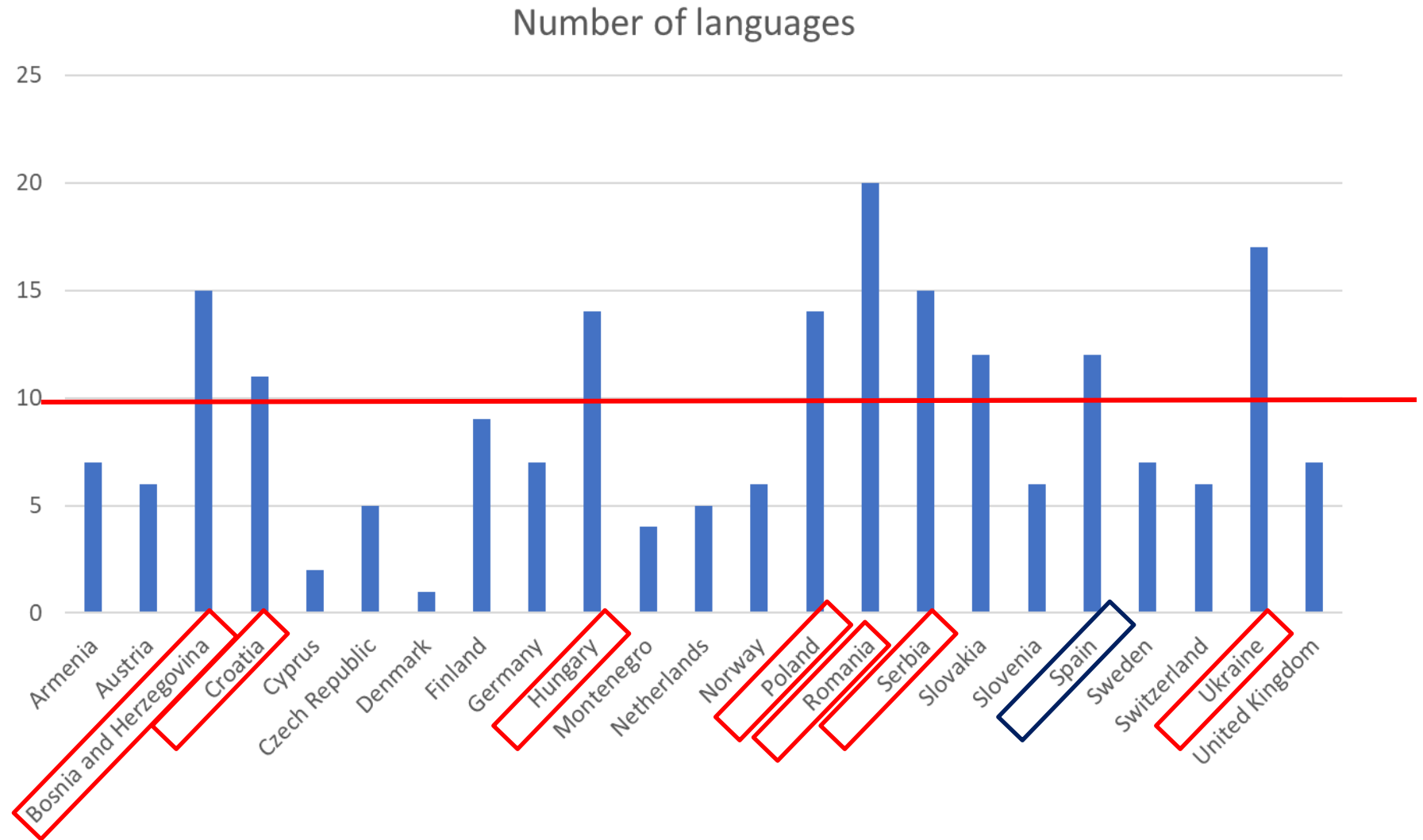
- Protection and promotion of languages used by traditional minorities
- 25 countries, 81 languages
- No criteria or definition for an idiom to be a minority language
- Rights associated with the status of a minority language (differ):
  - Official language, can be used in authorities
  - Access to education
  - Promotion of culture and media
  - Bilingual place name signs

## The Danube Region is especially rich in regional and minority languages

Number of languages

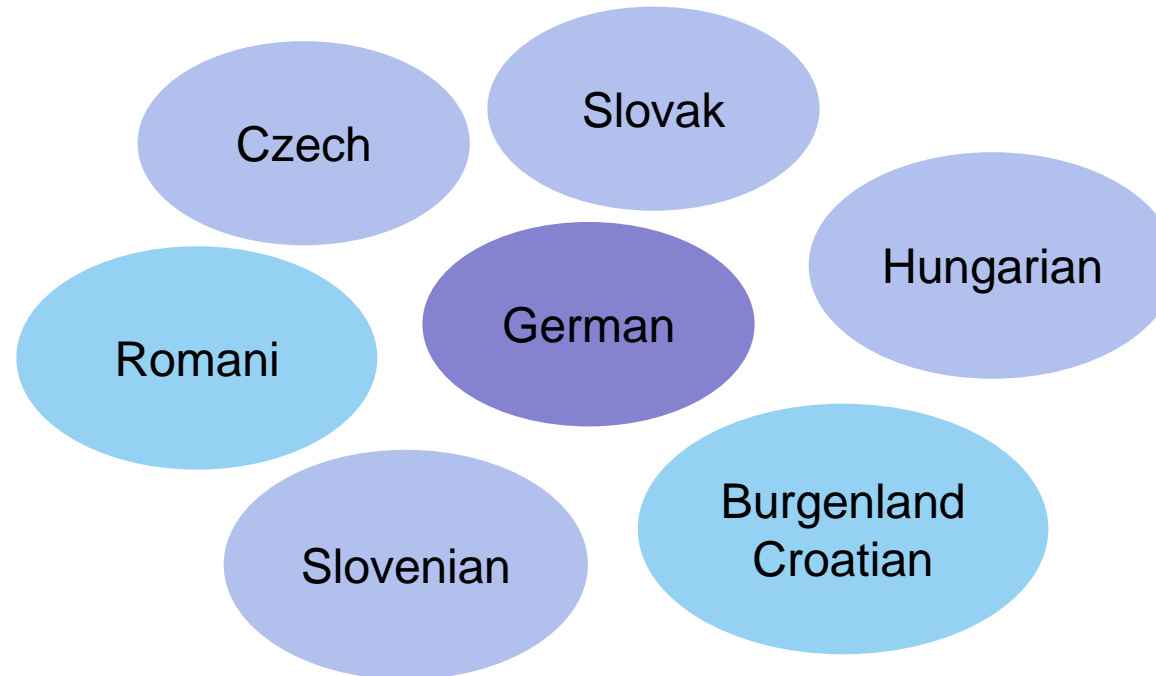


# The Danube Region is especially rich in regional and minority languages



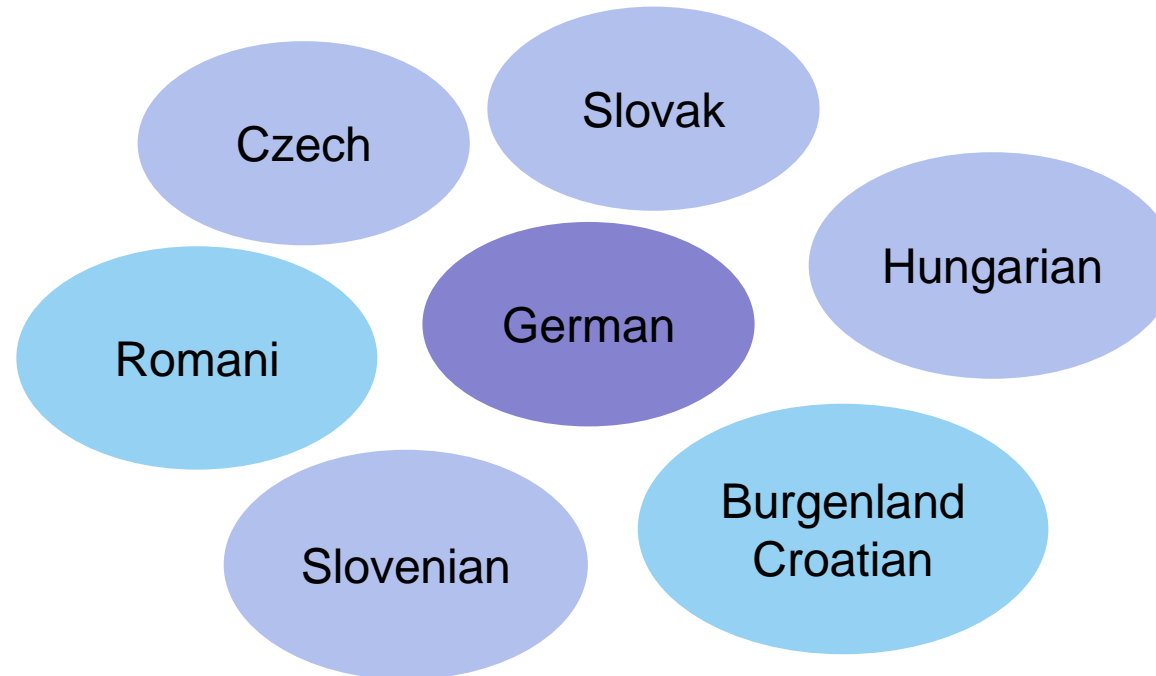
**Romania:** 20 recognised minority languages: Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Romani, Russian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovakian, Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian, Yiddish

## Languages in Austria



- Bilingual place name signs in Burgenland (German-Hungarian, German-Croatian) and Carinthia (German-Slovenian)
- Can be used in authorities in some regions of Austria
- Access to education

## Languages in Austria

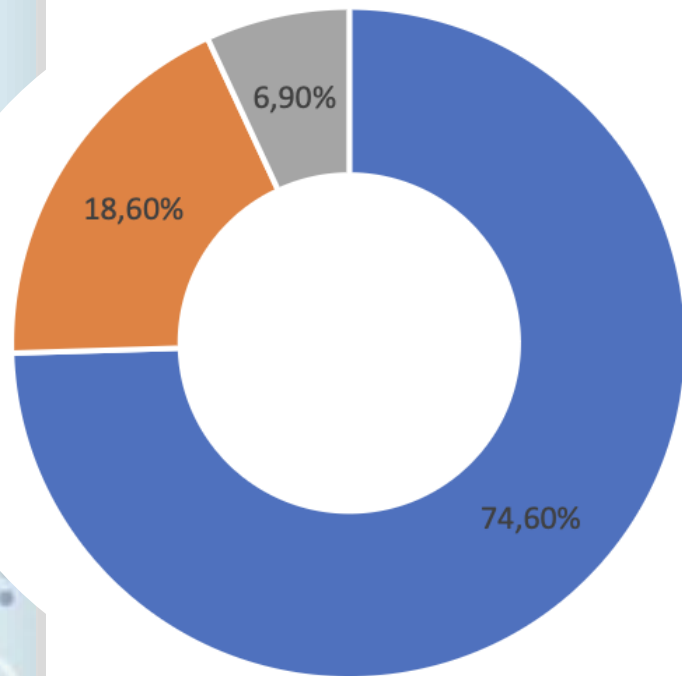


*"...only the languages traditionally used within a state's territory, not those connected with **recent migratory movements** or dialects of the official language"*

(European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages)

## Migrants & Refugees in Austria

25,4% residents in Austria have a background of migration (2021, Statistik Austria)



- 1st Generation
- 2nd Generation

Top 10 foreign nationals in Austria (2022):

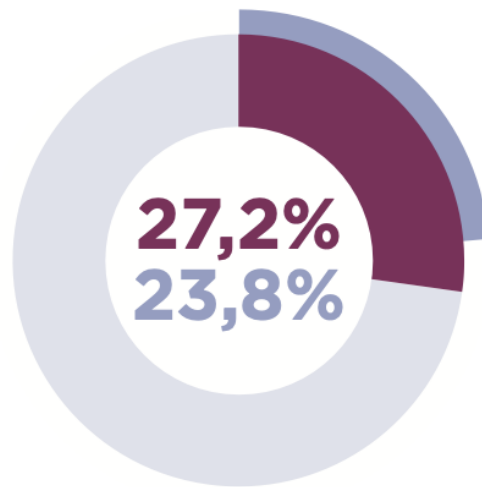
- 1. Germany** (218 347)
- 2. Romania** (140 454)
- 3. Serbia** (121 643 )
4. Turkey (117 944 )
- 5. Bosnia** (97 676 )
- 6. Croatia** (96 759 )
- 7. Hungary** (94 595 )
8. Syria (70 901 )
- 9. Poland** (66 155 )
- 10. Ukraine** (52 803 )

Comparison to number  
of Burgenlandcroats:  
Around 20 000

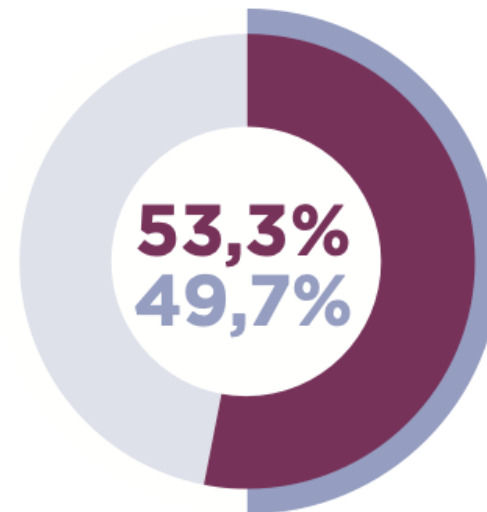
## Language diversity in schools in Austria

Pupils with a different everyday language than German (Integrationsfond Austria)

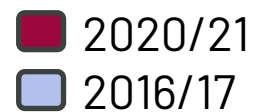
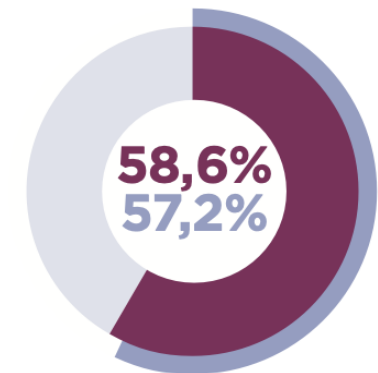
Austria



Vienna

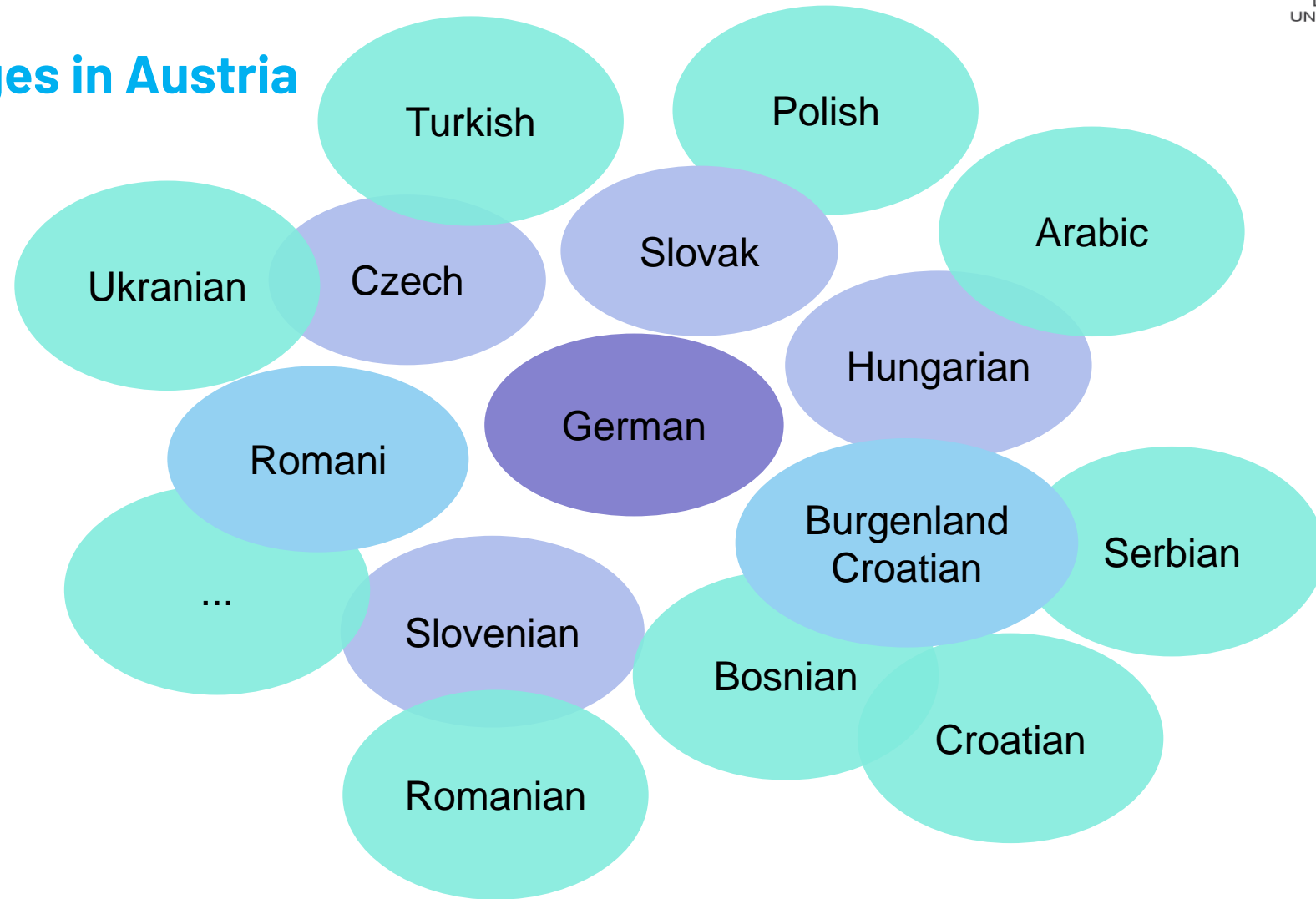


Primary schools in Vienna





## Languages in Austria



## Language contacts in the Danube Region

### Slavic Loanwords in the Austrian variety of German



**GOLATSCHE / KOLATSCHE**  
'type of sweet pastry'  
**kolač** (Czech)

**MARILLE** 'apricot':  
**marelica** (Croatian)



**KUKURUZ** 'corn'  
**kukurica** (Slovak)



- Danube region is linguistically rich and diverse
- People with multilingual backgrounds
- Long history of language contacts
- This language diversity aligns with the goals of EU

HOWEVER

In some nation states an increasingly different picture is emerging

-> New rise to **linguistic purism**:

Right wing parties use linguistic purism as an instrument of nationalism

## Language diversity at risk? – Austria

- Housing subsidies linked to knowledge of a certain level of the German language
- Dispute over bilingual Slovenian-German place-name signs in Carinthia
- Obligation for pupils to speak only German during school breaks

WIENER ZEITUNG

SPRACHLICHE MINDERHEITEN

Wohin sind sie verschwunden?

In Österreich leben immer weniger slowenischsprachige Menschen. Warum?

von 24.02.2023, 18:00 Uhr | Update: 24.02.2023, 20:17 Uhr



Ein Symbol für sprachliche Minderheiten: die Ortstafel (hier in Kärnten).  
© picturedesk.com / APA / Gert Egg

M Max Haller

Im Jahre 1910 hatte das h  
betrug ihre Anzahl 310.000  
Österreich noch 24.855 (in  
ist diese unterschiedliche

BLOG: A HAČEK TUAT NIT WEH

**Zweisprachige Ortstafeln beschmiert:  
Kein Respekt vor einer Minderheit**

Der Versuch, die slowenische Sprache aus der Öffentlichkeit zu drängen bedeutet gleichzeitig auch, eine Gemeinschaft unsichtbar machen zu wollen



## Obligation to speak only German during school breaks

- Demand of Freedom Party (FPÖ, right wing party in Austria)
- Only recommendation, not in the School Education Act
- Corresponding rule in the "school rules" of individual schools
  
- Stated reasons for the introduction of this obligation:
  - Mutual understanding, politeness, and reduced exclusion
  - Prohibition of other languages helps children learn German faster



*"The division of society is an acute danger. [...] The formation of ethnic parallel structures, in particular, is a significant problem for our community."*

- Reinhard Koller, Chairman of the Freedom Party's Lower Austrian Teachers' Association

## Obligation to speak only German during school breaks

- Proficiency in German is important, but multiple reasons speak against an obligation to speak German during school breaks:
  - Discriminating
  - Not useful from an educational and linguistic perspective (pupils do not learn German faster by prohibiting other languages)
  - Not realistic (teacher as "language police")



*"It unsettles and shames children who are taught that their respective first languages are worthless. [...] It expresses the desire for permanent (linguistic) control."*

– Verena Blaschitz, linguist

## Multilingualism as potential - Education in native language in Vienna

- 30 years of education in native language in Viennese schools
- 20 different languages
- Children learn to read and write in their first language alongside German
- The better they know their mother tongue, the easier it is for them to learn additional languages
- Native language teachers as a link between the school and the parents
- Multilingualism as potential for the job market



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