

1. Introduction

1.1 Bulgaria (BG) is situated in South-eastern Europe bordering Romania to the north (with the Danube forming all the boundary as far as the river port of Silistra), Serbia and Montenegro and the Republic of Macedonia to the west, Greece and Turkey to the south, and the Black Sea to the east. Its territory, with a surface of 110,993.6 sq. km., comprises the historical regions of Moesia [Мизия], Thrace [Тракия] and Macedonia [Македония]. It has a population of almost 8 million, with a density of approx. 70 inhabitants/sq. km. Bulgaria's main cities are Sofia (the capital), Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas. The country is currently divided into 28 districts [области], all named after their respective capital cities, and districts are subdivided into 264 municipalities [общини].



Source: http://europa.eu/abc/maps/members/bulgaria_en.htm

1.2 The Republic of Bulgaria [Република България], by virtue of Bulgaria's Constitution (the fourth charter adopted since the restoration of the Bulgarian state, passed in July 1991), is a unitary state and a parliamentary republic. The National Assembly [Народното събрание], vested with legislative powers, is a one-chamber Parliament comprising 240 representatives directly elected for a period of 4 years. The President [Президент] is the Head of state, directly elected with a 5-year mandate. The Council of Ministers [Министерски съвет] is the main central body of the executive authority and the Mayors of municipalities, neighborhoods and mayoralties as well as the Mayor's deputies [Кметове на общини, на райони, на кметства и Кметски заместници] are local representatives of the executive authority. The law on territorial administration of the executive authority [Закон за териториалната администрация на изпълнителната власт] regulates local government. Each district

is governed by District Governors [Областни управители], appointed by the Council of Ministers to ensure the implementation of the state policy, the protection of national interests and the rule of law.

- 1.3 Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007 and has been classified by the World Bank as an upper-middle-income economy, with fast-paced economic growth in recent years. Latest figures show a declining unemployment rate (in 2008 it was less than 6%, as against more than 17% in the 1990s). With the dissolution of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, Bulgaria's economy shrank dramatically after 1987, but has been recovering since 1997, with a GDP of 6.8% in the third quarter of 2008. Bulgaria's former agriculture-based economy, in which many Turkish are employed (Iglu 1997) has gradually been replaced by the industrial and service sector, although it still plays a key role in the Bulgarian economy, with arable farming predominating over stock-breeding.

2. General aspects

2.1 The first Bulgarian Kingdom dates back to the 7th century, its population consisting of the Slavs who had been driven southwards by the Avars across the Carpathian mountains, and of Bulgars (a Turkic people who, by the 9th century, were completely assimilated by the Slavs). Christianity was adopted as an official religion in 864, with Eastern Orthodoxy bound to become a major factor in shaping and preserving Bulgarian national identity over the centuries. In the early middle ages Bulgaria exerted considerable cultural influence, especially through the Preslav and Ohrid Literary Schools, and acted as a mediator between Byzantium and other Slavic peoples – notably the Russians (→ Russian in Bulgaria), who adopted Orthodox Christianity only later (988). In 1396, with the decline of the second Bulgarian Kingdom, Bulgarians came under Ottoman rule, which was to last for nearly five centuries (1878). As was typical under Ottoman domination (→ *Cyprus*, 2.1), administration was organised on the basis of confessional groups [*millet*]: Orthodox, Muslim, Georgian Armenian, Catholic and Jewish. A Vlach *millet* was also established in 1905 (→ Aromanian in Bulgaria; *Romania*, 4.2).

2.2 The majority of the Bulgarian population was able to retain Eastern Orthodoxy, while some converted to Islam – the so-called Muslim Bulgarians, or Pomaks [помаци] (→ *le valaque en Grèce*), also referred to as “Bulgarian Mohammedans”, or “Bulgarian Muslims” – all names which nevertheless seem to be perceived by the majority of the group as imposed from the outside (Boneva 1998; Lozanova et al., 2006). A chief thesis is that Pomaks were Bulgarian Christians forcibly subjected to Islamisation, but there is also a “voluntary Islamisation” thesis claiming that factors like a desire for higher social status prompted the adoption of Islam. Controversially, alternative hypotheses come from Turkey (Pomaks as the descendants of the “Cumano-Cupchag Turks” who were already present in the Rhodopes when the Ottoman Turks invaded the Balkans) and Greece (Pomaks as the descendants of the Thracians and Ancient Greeks). In 1767 the Christian *millet* came under the jurisdiction of Constantinople, resulting in the dominance of the Greek language in education and church (→ Greek in Bulgaria). In the 18th and 19th centuries Bulgaria experienced a cultural revival and a renewed sense of national identity, whereby a standard Bulgarian language emerged on the basis of northeastern dialects (→ 4.2). In 1878, as a result of the Russian-Turkish War, the Bulgarian state was restored as a constitutional monarchy and declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire

in 1908. Between 1878 and 1912 about 350,000 Muslims (Turks, Pomaks, Circassians, Tatars) emigrated to Turkey, a movement which continued throughout the 20th century. After World War I, as a result of the exchange of population with Greece, most of the Greeks moved out of Bulgaria. The country also received a significant group of Armenian refugees, especially after the end of the Russian-Turkish War in 1878 and the Armenian genocide in 1915. With the end of World War II Bulgaria came under the influence of the Soviet Union, was proclaimed a Republic (1946) and dominated by the Communist party for more than 40 years. The Tito-Stalin split (1948), however, strained Bulgaria's relations with Yugoslavia. The political changes after 1989 marked the beginning of a new period, with the transition to a democratic party system, a market economy and a civil society committed to the protection of human rights. In 1989 the Republic of Turkey opened its borders to accept Turks from Bulgaria, and the external migration of the Turkish-speaking population became large-scale. In approx. three months about 450,000 Turks, as well as Tatars and Roma Muslims, left Bulgaria. With the subsequent political and socio-economic changes migration continued, affecting also other citizens of non-Bulgarian mother tongue.

3. Demographic data

3.1 In the 2001 census (based on self-identification) Bulgaria counted 7,928,901 inhabitants (see below) – approx. 500,000 less than in 1992 (8,487,317) and more than 1 million with respect to 1985 (8,948,649). In 2001, more than 15% of the population reported an ethnicity [етнос] different from Bulgarian, but two groups largely predominate: the Turkish (9.4% of the population) and the Roma (4.6%), while none of the others (Russian, Armenian, Wallach, Macedonian, Greek, Ukrainian, Jewish, Romanian) exceeds 0.2%. Since ethnic monitoring was introduced in Bulgarian censuses in 1900, it is possible to compare statistics over a comparatively long period. Apart from decreases in the Turkish population (-53,388 between 1992 and 2001, mainly due to migration waves), it is the Roma and the Macedonians who show striking variations: the former were 1.8% of the state's population in 1965, 0.2% in 1975, 3.7% in 1992 and 4.6% in 2001; the latter dropped from 187,789 to 9,632 between 1956 and 1965.

(MAIN) ETHNIC GROUPS BY SELF-AWARENESS (2001)	
Bulgarian	6,655,210
Turkish	746,664
Roma (Gypsy)	370,908
Russian	15,595
Armenian	10,832
Wallachian	10,566
Macedonian	5,071
Greek	3,408
Ukrainian	2,489
Jewish	1,363
Romanian	1,088
Other	18,792
Do not know	62,108
Not answered	24,807

Total	7,928,901
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The term "Wallachian" in the census refers to Aromanians/Vlachs (→ Aromanian/Wallachian). For Macedonians, we are confronted with an issue strongly affected by political factors. In the census of 1956, for example, 188,000 declared themselves as Macedonians in the Pirin region – a figure which dropped after the Tito-Stalin split to less than 10,000 in the 1965 census (→ Other language groups).

3.2 There are five districts where the greater part of the population of non-Bulgarian mother tongue is concentrated, and where the share of this population is significant (Kardzhali, Razgrad, Silistra, Shumen and Targovishte). According to the 2001 census, in only two districts the majority of the population is made up by a minority ethnic group, i.e. the Turkish: Kardzhali in the southern part of the country and Razgrad in the north-east. The majority of the population is Turkish also at the level of a number of municipalities in various districts, such as Silistra, Ruse, Dobrich, Burgas, Targovishte. The Pomaks (→ 2.2) are mainly concentrated in the Rhodope mountains, in the southern district of Smolyan where 92.2% declared Bulgarian as their mother tongue, 87.6% Bulgarian ethnicity and 49.9% Muslim faith. Roma are dispersed in all districts. Also the other ethnic groups are somewhat scattered, although they are more concentrated in districts such as Sofia City, Varna and Plovdiv. Another group, the Gagauz (Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians) live mainly around Varna on the Black Sea. The concentration of the Turkish minority is strongly linked to economic factors (→ Turkish in Bulgaria, 1.2.4). Catholic Bulgarians speaking Paulician dialects [Павликянски диалект] (which belong to the Rhodopes group of the Rhup dialects → 4.2) live in Southern Bulgaria around Plovdiv, and in Northern Bulgaria around Pleven and Veliko Turnovo.

POPULATION BY DISTRICTS AND MOTHER TONGUE (as of 1.03.2001)					
Districts	Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roman i	Other
TOTAL	7 928 901	6 697 158	762 516	327 882	71 084
Blagoevgrad	341 173	306 118	19 819	9 232	2 921
Burgas	423 547	337 150	63 025	16 483	4 004
Varna	462 013	392 053	41 229	13 079	10 956
Veliko Tarnovo	293 172	258 445	23 738	5 816	2 489
Vidin	130	118 412	138	9 363	1

Bulgaria

	074				114
Vratsa	243 036	230 261	553	9 981	680
Gabrovo	144 125	131 399	9 156	1 572	1 058
Dobrich	215 217	163 433	33 642	13 860	1 846
Kardzhali	164 019	57 046	101 548	1 171	402
Kyustendil	162 534	153 242	117	7 929	403
Lovech	169 951	154 157	6 994	6 033	1 123
Montana	182 258	160 494	220	19 849	645
Pazardzhik	310 723	260 817	21 902	24 204	1 478
Pernik	149 832	147 117	106	1 542	443
Pleven	311 985	283 626	14 947	8 861	1 686
Plovdiv	715 816	620 014	56 696	27 737	7 274
Razgrad	152 417	67 078	75 585	5 277	1 770
Ruse	266 157	213 869	37 206	9 591	3 089
Silistra	142 000	84 134	51 616	3 810	1 498
Sliven	218 474	164 776	23 606	24 453	3 416
Smolyan	140 066	129 181	5 782	532	266
Sofia-cap.	1	1 124	6 263	16 931	14

Bulgaria

	170 842	932			419
Sofia	273 240	255 214	587	15 144	858
Stara Zagora	370 615	319 846	18 924	26 178	2 433
Targovishte	137 689	76 652	50 753	8 428	327
Haskovo	277 478	224 741	31 560	17 133	1 238
Shumen	204 378	123 063	62 420	13 778	2 525
Yambol	156 070	139 888	4 384	9 915	723

3.3 The 2001 census shows a comparatively high match between ethnicity and language for the three major groups (Bulgarians, Turkish and Roma), although the Roma show a significant discrepancy (→ Romani, 1.2.2). A total of 1,231,743 people (15.5% of the population) have reported a mother tongue other than Bulgarian, i.e. approximately the same number of those declaring an ethnicity different from Bulgarian. The definition of “mother tongue” [майчин език] in the 2001 census was “the language that a person speaks best and habitually uses for communication within his/her family or household” (the question pertaining to mother tongue was reintroduced as from the 1992 census). There are no data available on the number of people who speak a regional or minority language on an everyday basis. The Macedonian language is officially considered as a regional version of the Bulgarian language (→ Other language groups).

3.4 There is no state religion in Bulgaria. The Orthodox Church (constitutionally defined as the “traditional religion” [традиционна религия]) is nevertheless the dominant affiliation. Christians are nearly 84% of the population, Muslims 12.1%, the latter comprising not only the majority of the Turkish population but also other communities, notably many Roma (50-75%) (Fielder 1997) and the Pomaks.

POPULATION BY DISTRICTS AND RELIGION GROUP						
Districts	Total	Christian	Muslim	Other	Not stated	Unknown

Bulgaria

Total	7 92 8 90 1	6 63 8 87 0	96 6 97 8	14 93 7	28 3 30 9	24 807
Blagoevgrad	34 1 17 3	27 0 79 1	62 43 1	27 4	7 01 8	659
Burgas	42 3 54 7	34 2 44 4	64 56 8	73 7	14 59 8	1 200
Varna	46 2 01 3	39 6 50 1	45 67 2	1 82 7	16 54 4	1 469
Veliko Tarnovo	29 3 17 2	25 8 44 2	26 08 5	20 3	7 50 4	938
Vidin	13 0 07 4	12 5 60 3	13 9	77	3 73 0	525
Vratsa	24 3 03 6	23 0 96 2	4 22 3	14 2	6 85 6	853
Gabrovo	14 4 12 5	13 2 02 7	8 86 0	17 7	2 70 4	357
Dobrich	21 5 21 7	16 3 65 4	44 27 7	14 4	6 45 1	691
Kardzhali	16 4 01	35 55 1	11 4 21	71	13 43 0	750

Bulgaria

	9		7			
Kyustendil	16 2 53 4	15 5 64 1	23 1	48 7	5 64 9	526
Lovech	16 9 95 1	14 8 02 3	10 50 1	13 6	10 73 9	552
Montana	18 2 25 8	17 1 97 2	28 3	10 3	9 13 9	761
Pazardzhik	31 0 72 3	25 3 72 9	46 33 8	53 6	9 51 4	606
Pernik	14 9 83 2	14 6 58 9	17 8	94	2 56 9	402
Pleven	31 1 98 5	28 2 72 5	15 68 1	33 6	12 27 8	965
Plovdiv	71 5 81 6	63 5 26 1	62 59 5	2 77 2	13 54 8	1 640
Razgrad	15 2 41 7	65 91 5	81 83 5	97	4 10 1	469
Ruse	26 6 15 7	21 6 48 3	41 99 7	74 7	6 08 1	849
Silistra	14 2 00	84 46 8	54 17 4	87	2 80 5	466

Bulgaria

	0					
Sliven	21 8 47 4	18 4 04 3	21 66 8	30 9	11 70 6	748
Smolyan	14 0 06 6	41 79 2	58 75 8	97	39 00 3	416
Sofia-cap.	1 17 0 84 2	1 12 8 78 7	8 61 4	3 38 3	25 67 4	4 384
Sofia	27 3 24 0	26 4 50 2	3 36 8	20 7	4 34 3	820
Stara Zagora	37 0 61 5	33 4 24 4	21 42 3	36 3	13 39 0	1 195
Targovishte	13 7 68 9	75 59 1	58 83 8	78	2 73 3	449
Haskovo	27 7 47 8	22 9 86 5	33 78 0	91 2	12 00 0	921
Shumen	20 4 37 8	12 2 64 5	72 54 4	22 9	8 36 8	592
Yambol	15 6 07 0	14 0 62 0	3 70 0	31 2	10 83 4	604

The relationship between *ethnos*, language and religious affiliation is not clear-cut. While confessional and linguistic distinctions basically match the major ethnical division between Bulgarians and Turks – both representing the vast majority of

Bulgaria's population (almost 95%), the presence of Bulgarian Muslims (the Pomaks) and Turkish-speaking Christians (the Gagauz), as well as the variety of self-identification and language patterns for the Roma (→ Romani in Bulgaria), complicates the situation. For the Pomaks (→ 2.2), who inhabit a region (Rhodope mountains) located between a Bulgarian majority area and the Turkish majority area, influences have been varied – to the point that declaration of mother tongue has not always been considered to correspond to the real ethnographic situation (Bacharov, 1996; Boneva 1998), and linguistic designations seem to be heavily dependent on the social status of the speakers (Srebranov 2006). Here, trends in other countries to consider the Pomaks as a separate *ethnos* (and Pomak as a variety of Bulgarian, cf. also 4.2) may have contributed to changing patterns in identity declarations (Boneva 1998). As to the “Gypsies” (Roma), part of the Muslim Roma reportedly declared themselves as Turks in past censuses, and Turkish as their mother tongue, while a number of Christian Roma declared Bulgarian ethnicity as well as Bulgarian as their first language.

3.5 In the five districts where non-Bulgarian speakers are concentrated (Kardzhali, Razgrad, Silistra, Shumen and Targovishte), the socio-economic development during the past 30 years has followed the development rate of the other regions in the country, except for the more dynamic trend of the Capital municipalities (which are also differentiated as districts) and the areas along the Black Sea coast. The district of Kardzhali, due to its mountain and semi-mountain morphology and lower level of industrialization, still lags behind when compared to the average level of regional economic development. However, the situation is similar to other mountain and semi-mountain areas. Poverty rates seem to affect Turkish and Roma groups more significantly than Bulgarians.

4. Language policy

4.1 In the first half of the 20th century, the political, religious and cultural rights of the minorities were generally respected, in keeping with a number of international treaties and of the 1879 Constitution. The 1947 Constitution mentioned “national minorities”, but the totalitarian system adopted by the Communist party aimed at controlling social groups, including ethnic minorities. With the separation of church from state, all schools (including the minorities’) fell under state control. Although the use of Turkish was officially permitted, the merger of schools drastically reduced its use. The media of the minorities were concentrated in the capital. Between 1980 and 1989, the study and use of Turkish was prohibited in all educational institutions (including universities), and Turkish periodicals and newspapers were to be published only in Bulgarian. The climax was the “regeneration process” [Възродителен процес] in 1984 and 1985, when the names of 850,000 Muslims were forcibly changed and substituted with Bulgarian ones (Stefanova, 2006). After 1989, attempts were made to restore cultural rights. In 1990 a law was passed giving people affected by the name-changing campaign the possibility to restore their original names and those of the children born after the name change: the Slavic endings -ov, -ova, -ev, or -eva were allowed to be removed, reversing the effect of a 1950s campaign to add Slavic endings to all non-Slavic names. This provision affected not only the Turkish population, but also the Roma (Gypsies) and Pomaks who had been forced to change their names in 1965 and 1972 respectively, and some 600,000 people reverted to their original names in 1991. Other measures were introduced to allow

minorities to learn their mother tongue and freely practice their religion. The new Constitution (1991), which enshrines the protection of fundamental human rights, recognises the rights of individual citizens rather than collective rights. It does not use the term “minority” but guarantees to citizens belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic communities the right to preserve their culture, to practice their religion and to speak their language.

4.2 Bulgarian [български език] [*balgarski ezik*] has been the official language of Bulgaria since 1878. The status of Bulgarian as an official language is now enshrined in Art. 3 of the Constitution (1991). The language belongs to the Eastern group of the South Slavonic languages and forms with them a “continuum” rather than a strict division. The result is mutual intelligibility among speakers, more or less proportional to their geographic proximity. Bulgarian shares a number of grammatical features also with non-Slavonic languages such as Romanian, Greek and Albanian – the so-called Balkan *Sprachbund* (Fielder 1998). The first Bulgarian literary language, and the official church and state language of the first kingdom of Bulgaria was Church Slavonic, based on a spoken Bulgarian dialect from southern Macedonia. To represent its phonemes for ecclesiastical purposes, the Cyrillic alphabet was devised in the late 9th century and its use spread to other Slavic countries (Cyrillic is used in Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, Macedonia and Belarus, and is also the alphabet of non-Slavonic languages such as Tatar). During Ottoman rule (1396 – 1878), the language of the administration was Turkish, while Greek was the language used in education, as well as for church services – until the Bulgarian Church proclaimed its independence from the Patriarch of Constantinople (1870). Standard literary Bulgarian, largely based on the north-eastern dialects, was codified only in 1899. The dialects of Bulgarian-speaking communities abroad mostly derive from eastern dialects, and have preserved archaic features. The varieties used by the Catholic Bulgarians are Paulician dialects (basically distinguished between northern and southern varieties), and are used also in Romania (→ Bulgarian in Romania). Whether Pomak (→ 2.2, 3.5) is a distinct variety or a dialect of Bulgarian is a debatable issue, further related to the social status of the speakers themselves (Srebranov 2006).

4.3 The Bulgarian Constitution (ethnically relevant provisions are listed in <http://www.ethnos.bg/index.php?TPL=2&MID=47&SID=47>) does not enshrine the concept of “regional” or “minority language”, but acknowledges the right (art. 36 para 2) of the citizens whose “mother tongue” is not the official language (Bulgarian) to study their mother tongue along with Bulgarian and to use their language. The constitutional focus is towards the protection of individual rights, rather than collective rights. Art. 54, para 1 lays down the right of each citizen “to make use of the national and universal cultural values as well as to develop his/her culture in accordance with his/her ethnic identity, which is recognized and guaranteed by the law”. At the same time, art. 6 para 2 states that all citizens are equal before the law and that there are no limitations of the rights or the

privileges, based on race, nationality, ethnic identity. Art. 36, para 3 of the Constitution states that "the cases when only the official language can be used are determined by law". The Constitution forbids the formation of political parties along ethnic, racial or religious lines.

4.4 Art. 10 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities envisages the opportunity for citizens belonging to national minorities to use their minority language when dealing with the public administration, but only "in case this desire corresponds to the real need". Such a provision is not applied in Bulgaria, and there are no specific provisions on the use of the citizens' mother tongue the administrative when dealing with the authorities. The state considers minority groups as normally proficient in the official language, and could hardly afford a multilingual administrative public service. In the administrative structures in regions where ethnic minorities are highly concentrated, it is possible to use other languages (in particular Turkish) in face-to-face communication if both sides are fluent in the respective language, but such use is not allowed for any formal arrangement nor in written communication. The language policy carried out by central/federal, regional and local government offices in this respect is therefore limited to a policy of non-discrimination and tolerance. As regards the use of place names in regional or minority languages, on road signs etc., there are no specific provisions regulating the use of languages other than Bulgarian. A great deal of toponyms in Bulgaria is of Turkish origin but signs are as a rule written both in the Cyrillic alphabet (in Bulgarian) and in the Latin alphabet (in English). The most important national statutory texts (written legislation) are not available in regional or minority languages. In the economic and social sectors directly under the central/federal government's control (public sector), there are no activities to promote the use of regional or minority languages. In health and social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels, regional or minority language speakers do not receive treatment or services in their own language.

4.5 The Law on Judicial Authority (2007) states that the proceedings before the judicial authorities should be carried out in the Bulgarian language, and that the minutes should also be written in Bulgarian. The Civil Code of Procedure (2007) reiterates that Bulgarian is the judicial language, and that claim statements must be written in Bulgarian. The Criminal Code of Procedure (2005) ensures the use of an interpreter to defendants or witnesses who do not speak Bulgarian. The Administrative Code of Procedure (2006) allows citizens who do not speak Bulgarian to use their mother tongue or another language (in this case interpreters are provided). Official documents written in a foreign language must be accompanied by an accurate translation in Bulgarian. There are no measures to ensure (or encourage) that judges, magistrates and/or other court officials serving in areas where regional or minority languages are spoken are fluent in those languages.

4.6 The National Education Act (1991) states that the pupils who do not have Bulgarian as their mother tongue, along with the obligatory study of Bulgarian language, have the right to study their mother tongue in the municipal schools. The National Education Act (amended in 1996, and amended and supplemented in 1998) guaranteed to "students, whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian", the right to study their mother tongue from grades 1st to 8th of primary and secondary school, "under the protection and supervision of the state" (Art. 8.2). The enforcement regulation says that "the mother tongue is the language, in which the child communicates in the family before entering school". With the adoption of the Law on Educational Degree, Educational Minimum, and Educational Plan in July 1999, as amended in 2002, the teaching of mother tongue and religion in municipal schools was made "obligatory selectable", i.e. part of the ordinary school curriculum, and included in the students' records (Art. 15 §3). This positive legal development was a direct result from Bulgaria's ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1998). Through this law, for the first time the study of mother tongue was extended from primary and secondary school level to high school as well. The Ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Science N 8 of 6 December 1999 envisages the formation of preparatory groups of at least 11 pupils. Mixed groups are formed, each consisting of at least 12 to maximum 20 pupils. With the aim of ensuring the necessary conditions for the study of mother tongue, experts in Turkish, Roma, Armenian and Hebrew languages are hired by the Ministry of Education and Science. During the 2006-2007 school year, 26,785 pupils studied Turkish, 1,150 pupils studied Hebrew, 95 pupils studied Roma and 410 pupils studied Armenian. The possibility to study one's own mother tongue is also envisaged by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (→ 5.1). An obligatory pre-school one-year period in preparatory groups at kindergartens or schools has been introduced for all 6-year-old children. In the preparatory groups the children with a different mother tongue study Bulgarian, so that they can be on an equal footing with the other children when they enter school. In recent years the University of Veliko Tarnovo introduced a specialisation in "Primary school pedagogy in Romani" at the faculty of "Primary school and pre-school pedagogy".

Educational structure of the large ethnic communities (individuals > age of 20)			
Education	Bulgarian s	Turkis h	Roma
Higher (incl. Specialist)	19.1	2.4	0.2
Secondary	47.7	21.9	6.5
Primary	24.9	46.9	41.8
Basic	7.0	18.6	28.3
Illiterate	1.3	10.1	23.2

4.7As to religious services, in Orthodox churches these are carried out in Old Bulgarian (Church Slavonic) language. In the Romanian Orthodox church in Sofia the service is performed in Romanian. In the synagogues Aramaic is used; there are also sermons in Hebrew. In the Armenogregorian churches the service is carried out in Armenian, while Muslim services are in Arabic and Turkish. In some Evangelic churches the sermons are read in Turkish and Romani .

4.8From 1997 to 2004, the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues at the Council of Ministers [Национален съвет по етническите и демографските въпроси към Министерския съвет] was the government body dealing with minority issues. At the end of 2004 it was replaced by the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCCEDI) [Национален съвет за сътрудничество по етническите и демографските въпроси] (<http://www.nccedi.government.bg/>), a consultative and coordinating body assisting the Bulgarian government in the formulation and implementation of the state policy on ethnic and demographic issues. NCCEDI facilitates the cooperation and coordination among state institutions, the associations of Bulgarian citizens belonging to ethnic minorities and other associations active in the fields of interethnic relations and demographic development. In the Council of Ministers, NCCEDI consists of a Chairperson (Deputy Prime Minister), two Deputy Chairpersons (one of them elected by the NGOs – members of the Council), a Secretary and the members. It comprises representatives of ministries at the level of Deputy Ministers, other state institutions and academic establishments, as well as non-governmental organizations. A special Roma Integration Commission [Комисия за интеграция на ромите] has been established within the Council. In December 2004 a Directorate on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (DEDI) [Дирекция по етническите и демографските въпроси] was set up within the Administration of the Council of Ministers to assist the Council of Ministers in the formulation and implementation of the state policy for ethnic minority integration (the Director of DEDI is the Secretary of NCCEDI). District and Municipal Councils on Ethnic and Demographic Issues have been set up in all District administrations and most Municipal administrations. Other structures specifically dealing with minorities have been established in some ministries (such as the Centre for the Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities [Център за образователна интеграция на децата и учениците от етническите малцинства] at the Ministry of Education and Science. In 2000 a Roma Public Council on the Issues of Culture [Ромски обществен съвет по въпросите на културата] was established at the Ministry of Culture, and in 2002 a Public Council on Cultural Diversity [Обществен съвет по културното многообразие] was set up within the same Ministry.

4.9Many of the non-governmental organizations of the ethnic communities in Bulgaria have as a statutory objective the protection of their respective

languages and cultural expressions. These NGOs include the Centre for Aromanian language and culture, the Association of the Wallachians in Bulgaria, the Armenian School Association "St. Hovagimyan", the Armenian Union for Education and Culture "Hamazkain", the Union of the Armenian Cultural and Educational Organizations "Erevan" in Bulgaria, the Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom", the Society for the Turkish Language and Culture in Shumen, the Cultural centre "Yumer Lyutfi" in Kardzhali, the "Filiz" Foundation, the Federation of the Cultural and Educational Organizations of the Karakachans in Bulgaria, the "Andral" Foundation, etc. Projects have been supported by the state through competitions launched by the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues. Some of these organizations publish bilingual newspapers and magazines, organize courses for weekend schools etc. The Law on Radio and Television (1998) gives the opportunity to broadcast programmes in languages different from Bulgarian targeted at "Bulgarian citizens for whom Bulgarian is not the mother tongue". In the procedures for licensing electronic media the Council for Electronic Media included the requirement to produce programmes aimed at the minorities and connected with the minorities' lifestyle, culture, and social integration.

4.10 Book production focuses primarily on publishing bilingual (there are also trilingual) dictionaries of non-Bulgarian languages. NCCEDI financially supports the publishing activities of the ethnic communities in Bulgaria. Popular festivals and commemorative ceremonies of the minority communities in Bulgaria include fairs of the Turkish-speaking population in the district of Razgrad and Targovishte; Turkish cultural festivals in Shumen; folk festivals of the Roma in Stara Zagora and Veliko Tarnovo; festivals of culture of the Armenian community in Bulgaria and of the Wallachian and Romanian songs and dances; annual ceremonies for bestowing the *Shofar* of the Jewish community; the festivals of the Tatars *Tepresh*; mixed national and regional festivals and concerts of the ethnic groups in Vidin, Bourgas, Varna; annual concerts of the various ethnic groups, organized by NCCEDI at the Ministry of Culture and by the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. NCCEDI financially supports artistic performances and folklore festivals, traditional fairs, the celebration of historical dates and events from the calendar of the ethnic communities in Bulgaria. Mixed national and regional festivals and concerts of the ethnic groups are held in different regions of the country. *Etnodialog* (Ethnic Dialogue), a quarterly magazine, has been published by the Public Council of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria (which unites organisations of the Armenians, Aromanians, Wallachians, Jews, Roma, Russians, Turks) since 2001. *Klub Zaedno* [Together Club], an intercultural, bi-monthly magazine for teenagers of various ethnic and religious origins, has been published by the Council for Ethnic and Religious Tolerance Foundation since 2001.

5. The European dimension

Bulgaria signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1997 (it came into force on 1.9.1999). So far Bulgaria has submitted two state reports (2003 and 2007), while the third is due in 2010. The European Outline Convention on Trans-Frontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities was ratified and entered into force in 1999.

1. General information

1.1. The language

1.1.1 Romani [*romaŋi čhib*] or Romany, is an Indic (or Indo-Aryan) language — like Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali — which belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. The language retains much of the Indic morphology, phonology and lexicon, while its syntax has been heavily influenced by contact with other languages. The dispersal and differentiation of the Roma since their arrival in Europe brought about a fragmentation of the language into distinct groups (each with different varieties) depending on the contact with local languages: Northern Romani (best represented by the *chaladytka roma*, the Russian Roma), Central Romani (best represented by the group of the Hungarian and Slovakian Roma, the *ungrike roma*), Vlax (best represented by the Romanian Roma) and Balkan Romani (best represented by the dialects in Macedonia). Although the Roma communities are highly differentiated, they often use the same term *Romanes* to refer to the language. Until the 20th century Romani was essentially an oral language; it is now written using various orthographies depending on the host country.

1.1.2 The Roma (the name is the plural form of the word “Rom”) moved from India at the beginning of the 12th century, reached Europe in the 14th century and Central Europe in the 15th century. Successive migration waves produced a number of different subethnic layers cohabiting within the same country, and a diastratic dialect structure as a consequence; the various Roma groups show also a considerable degree of particularism. Because they arrived from the East, they were also called Egyptians or “Gyptians”, which is at the origin of the “Gypsy”, “Gitanos”, “Gitanes” and other words that are often considered derogatory by the Roma. The term “Roma” is widely used, although the International Romani Union (following the recommendations of its Language Commission) has officially adopted *Rroma* to refer to all people of Roma descent.

1.2. History, geography and demography

1.2.1 When the Balkans became part of the Ottoman Empire, the Roma population on the Peninsula increased as a result of their fleeing from slavery mainly from Moldavia and Wallachia (→ Romani in Romania, 1.2.1) and persecution in different parts of Europe. More and more Roma settled permanently in the Ottoman Empire and primarily in the Balkans, where they were better treated. Although the largest Roma migration wave to the Bulgarian lands seems to have occurred in the 13th and 14th centuries, many Roma arrived with the Ottoman troops, accompanying army craftsmen and complementary military units. With the strengthening of the Ottoman state, and in order to exercise a more efficient tax control, the administrative authorities gradually forced the Roma to leave their nomadic life and settle down. According to the Ottoman tax register from 1522–1523, there were 10,294 Christian and 2,694 Muslim Roma households in the Empire. After the liberation, the first censuses in the Principality of Bulgaria undertaken in 1881 revealed that there were 37,600 Roma in the Principality. They were both Muslims and Christians, and normally were not slaves (slavery being virtually non-existent in the Ottoman Empire). They lived outside city boundaries and were active as blacksmiths, tinkers, goldsmiths, shoemakers and other crafts (Spirova, 2000). With the end of the Ottoman empire and Bulgaria's independence, Roma — and especially Muslim Roma — experienced several forced-assimilation campaigns. At the beginning of the communist period, there was a revival of the Roma identity, with the founding of a cultural organisation (1946), a Roma theatre and a Roma newspaper. In the early 1950s, however, all Roma organisations were dissolved and approx. 5,000 Muslim Roma were forced to emigrate to Turkey. The last census officially mentioning the Roma as a minority in Bulgaria was the 1956 one. In the late 1950s, Muslim Roma, together with other non-Turkish Muslim minorities, were forced to change their names and send their children to mixed schools, while authorities started to outlaw their nomadic way of life (Spirova, 2000). The policy of assimilation

Romani in Bulgaria

continued throughout the 1960s (cf. the “regeneration process” → Turkish in Bulgaria). The Roma living in Bulgaria show a high degree of internal diversity, first and foremost in terms of religious affiliation: between 50% and 75% of Roma are Muslims, and more than 30 Romani dialects are reportedly used in the country. Muslim Roma can be divided into several linguistic groups: for example the *Xoraxane* Roma, who speak only Romani (although they know Turkish or Bulgarian) and identify themselves as Roma; Roma whose language is a mix between Romani and Turkish; Roma who use only Turkish (rarely Bulgarian and Romani); and Roma who can only speak Turkish, identifying themselves as either Roma or Turkish (Kyuchukov, 2006). Beside religion or language, Roma communities in Bulgaria can be further distinguished on the basis of other levels of self-identification. A major differentiation is between the *Jerlii* (descendants of the first group of Roma who arrived and settled in Bulgaria during the Ottoman rule, further subdivided on the basis of their Christian and Muslim affiliation), the *Kardarashi* (Christian nomadic groups who were forced to settle in the 1950s, and can be further subdivided in *Lovari* and *Kelderari*) and the *Rudari* (also called Vlach Roma, highly endogamous). These three main groups normally avoid contact and interference, and have a hierarchical organisation which is still unclear (Spirova, 2000).

1.2.2 In the 2001 census, 370,908 people have declared to be “Gypsies” (4.6% of the population) and 327,882 to have Romani as their mother tongue. In comparison with 1992, there is an increase in terms of ethnicity (313,396) and a slight decrease in terms of Romani speakers (310,425 respectively). Unofficial figures for both ethnicity and language are much higher (700-800,000). Just as in other countries with a large Roma population, statistics should be handled with great care, and interpreted in the light of shifting and even multiple identities in order to account for discrepancies between official and unofficial figures, as well as within official figures: for example, the fact that many Roma (50-75%) (Fielder 1997) are Muslim leads to their identification with the Turkish community, and explains why in the 2001 census as many as 24,214 Roma declared Turkish as their mother tongue. The fairly high correspondence between Roma the ethnic group and the Romani language, however, corroborates the assumption that Bulgarian Roma have preserved their language and culture more than in other parts of Europe (Spirova, 2000); indeed, the percentage of Romani speakers who also declare Roma ethnicity is probably the highest in Europe. Most of the Roma nevertheless appear to speak more than one language at home – which is Romani in most of the cases, followed by Bulgarian and Turkish.

1.2.3 Unlike the Turkish speakers, Roma are not concentrated in specific areas and are present in all districts, but especially Montana, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Sliven and Stara Zagora, where they exceed 20,000. The Roma population is more or less evenly distributed all over the country, in both urban and rural areas. The great majority are now sedentary as a result of successive Bulgarian governments’ policies to ban travelling in the 1950s. As elsewhere in Europe, the Roma have a negative socio-economic situation. Child mortality rates appear to be considerably higher than among Bulgarians, their level of education is poor and unemployment rate is high. The main document that defines Government policies aimed at Roma is the *Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society*, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 1999. As regards education, the *Framework Programme* outlines four major problems with Roma education: the territorial segregation of Roma schools; the arbitrary placement of Roma students in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities; lack of mother-tongue education; low educational status of the adult Roma population. The six strategic objectives have been desegregation of Roma education, termination of the practice of arbitrary placement of Roma children in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities, combating racism in the classroom, introduction of mother-tongue education, support of Roma higher education, and adult education.

2. Presence and use of the language in various fields

2.1. Education

2.1.1 At the beginning of the century, the literacy rate among Bulgarian Roma was 3% as against 47% among Bulgarians. Roma literacy tripled in the period 1901-1925, but it was not until the socialist rule that the first Roma school was opened in Sofia (1948). All this came to an end in the early 1950s (→ 1.2.1). Many Roma children were educated either in mixed schools or segregated in neighbourhood schools, which were characterised by a lack of qualified teachers and low standards of education. This had negative social consequences in terms of negative attitudes, absenteeism and petty criminality. . Geographical segregation is still widespread in Bulgaria, both in urban and rural areas, with “Roma schools” in predominantly Roma neighbourhoods. Although parents can choose to send their children to schools outside their area, few Roma parents do so outside an organised desegregation programme. The Ministry of Education and Science has given

instructions aimed at improving assessment procedures, but research at the local level indicates that these directives have not successfully counteracted incentives to place children in special schools.

- 2.1.2 As a mother tongue different from Bulgarian, Romani can be studied up to four hours per week as an elective course (as from the 1990s). There have been many efforts to provide Roma children and their teachers with textbooks and teaching materials in order to help the Roma children to overcome their major education obstacles. The materials include pre-school books for bilingual children, special primers for bilingual children, teachers' manuals on the language education of Roma children and the education of minority children on the customs and festivities of the Bulgarian larger society. Nevertheless, many of the Roma children do not attend pre-school institutions and kindergartens and consequently their knowledge of Bulgarian is poor. They often speak another language at home, making access to pre-school even more important as a means to improve their Bulgarian language skills before entering school. However, the number of teachers proficient in Romani is very small, placing Roma children at a disadvantage. The teaching of the Roma language and culture has been allowed since 1992, and in 1994 a special decree extended this right to children from the 1st through the 8th grade. However, the state only provided municipal funding for minority education while it left the local authorities to implement the decree. Textbooks were published in three different Roma dialects, and the teachers were given appropriate materials for instruction. Since the beginning of the 1998/99 school year there has been no Romani language education available in Bulgarian schools and, most importantly, the most serious problem of Roma education remains - the high illiteracy and drop-out rates.

2.2. Judicial authorities

Bulgarian is the language of judicial proceedings and legal documents are valid only in Bulgarian (or with a Bulgarian translation). Citizens who do not speak Bulgarian are granted the use of interpreters in courts.

2.3. Public authorities and services

There are no specific provisions on the use of the citizens' mother tongue the administrative when dealing with the authorities. In the administrative structures in regions where ethnic minorities are highly concentrated, it is possible to use other languages (in particular Turkish) in face-to-face communication if both sides are fluent in the respective language, but such use is not allowed for any formal arrangement nor in written communication.

2.4. Mass media and information technology

Post-1989 legislation allows for a relatively broad freedom of the press in Bulgaria. Newspapers totally or only partially in Romani are published freely. In 1998 the Bulgarian Parliament added a provision allowing the broadcasting of programmes in foreign languages aired for "Bulgarian citizens whose mother tongue is not

Bulgarian". However, the unfavourable economic situation of the Roma, and the lack of support from a "kin" state – in contrast to the case of the Turkish minority – is not likely to allow the creation of exclusively Romani channels in the near future. Romani newspapers have always been quite popular in Bulgaria. During the socialist period, the Roma minority had several newspapers: *Romano Sesi* [Gypsy Voice] (1946-1949), *Nevo Drom* [New Road] (1949-1950), *Neve Roma* [New Roma] (1957) and *Nov Put* [New Road] (original title in Bulgarian, 1959-1987). They all followed the official Communist party and state line. The first Romani newspaper, *Education* [Terbie], appeared in 1933 and had a circulation of 1,500 copies. It was published by the Muslim Roma in Bulgaria twice a week. Its publication was discontinued at the end of 1933 due to the political developments in the country. In the years after 1989, Roma newspapers and publications mushroomed. *Roma*, published by the Democratic Union Roma (1990-1991), introduced the denomination "Roma" in Bulgarian society and put an end to the expression "Bulgarians of Gypsy origin" introduced during the socialist period. Further publications have included: *Develekanio Sesi Romalen/God's Voice* of the Christian (Protestant) Roma, the independent biweekly *Tsiganite* [The Gypsies], the Sliven regional *O'Roma* [The Roma], *Amar Romane* [Friend of the Roma], an addition to the weekly published by the Sofia municipality *Stolitsa* [The Capital], *Romano Ilo* [Gypsy Heart], *Drom Dromendar* [From Road to Road], and *Obshtestvo i Rodina* [Society and Motherland]. However, due to economic and political reasons, most of these have discontinued publication. At present, only one newspaper, *Drom Dromendar*, is being published as well as three magazines – *Dzipsi Ray/Gypsy Paradise*, *Gitan* and *Andral/Outside*. Most of these publications are run and written by the minority itself, but their readership is small. There are no exclusively Romani radio stations in Bulgaria but three local radio stations (Sliven, Stara Zagora and Sofia 2) broadcast programmes for the Roma. Kremena Budinova and Svetla Vasilyeva have a weekly three-hour radio programme on "RT 7 DNI". There are no TV programs in Romani, nor Internet sites of Bulgarian Roma.

2.5. Arts and culture

The first Roma organisation in Bulgaria was founded in 1901. As to the press, "Drom Dromendar", an independent monthly periodical since September 1995, is published in Bulgarian, and occasionally in Romani; *Romano obektivno* - in Romani, published by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee from 1996 to 1998, when it changed its name to *Obektiv*. There is also an annual publication in Romani with synopsis in Bulgarian. *Gitan*, in Bulgarian, is an independent monthly magazine published since 1998; *Andral-Otvatre* [from Inside], an independent monthly magazine published in both Bulgarian and Roma since 1999.

2.6. The business world

There are no reliable data available as to the presence of Romani in the business world.

2.7. Family and the social use of language

There is no precise information on how many children using Romani (including its different dialects) and/or Turkish are also proficient in Bulgarian. There is, however, no doubt that a significant portion of them cannot speak Bulgarian when they get older. According to a recent (2003) survey, around 74% of Christian Roma children and around 90% of Muslim Roma children in Bulgaria speak Romani or Turkish at home. Also, around 70% of Christian Roma children and 87% of Muslim Roma children speak Romani or Turkish with friends. Another study reports that more than two thirds of the children in the Roma and Turkish communities start their schooling with no knowledge of the Bulgarian language. However, in daily communication many Roma seem to have no problem in switching to Bulgarian Turkish and Romani (Boneva 1998).

3. Conclusion

Although Bulgarian Roma are often seen as a unified group from the outside, they are very heterogeneous in their identity, and are part of different communities in terms of their religion, profession, language and family lines. This lack of unity, together with social prejudice and various attempts of assimilation, may have negatively affected their ability to preserve their language and culture in a situation where – even today – Roma are more subjected to discrimination and have higher illiteracy and school drop-out rates (among other problems) than other minorities.

1. General information

1.1. The language

Turkish [*Türkçe*] belongs to the Turkic group of the Altaic family of languages. Standard Turkish is based on the Istanbul variety. The language was essentially written using the Arabic script (although there is a body of documents in the Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, Cyrillic and other alphabets) until 1928, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ordered the introduction of the Roman alphabet. The script reform – also motivated by the need to bridge the gap between the literary language and the vernacular variety, as well as by the inability of the Arabic script to reflect the Turkish vowel system – was followed by a language reform that sought to purify the language from all Arabic and Persian elements, which were replaced either by Turkic words found in archaic texts, or were artificially created based on some Turkic roots. Due to the changes in its script and the invention of many new words, the new Turkish differed drastically from the language used in the 1920s and the 1930s, so much so that the older generations did not understand the new language. In some families, the different generations spoke different versions of the language among themselves (Mutafchieva, 1998). The rise of Bulgarian nationalism, the closure of Turkish schools between 1959 and 1970, the banning of the Turkish media and the usage of the Turkish language in private and public in 1984-1989 were at the basis of the changes undergone by the locally spoken Turkish language. The Turkish spoken by Muslim Roma (→ Romani in Bulgaria) differs from standard Turkish in several features, especially at the phonological level.

1.2. History, geography and demography

- 1.2.1 The Turkish communities in Bulgaria are descendants of the early Turkic settlers who came from Anatolia across the narrows of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus following the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans in the late 14th and early 15th centuries (→ *Bulgaria*, 2.1). The colonizers' origin was diverse: soldiers, nomads, farmers, artisans and merchants, dervishes, preachers and other religious officials, as well as administrative personnel. Among the earliest arrivals was a large number of herder populations such as the Yürüks, Turcomans (Oghuz Turks), Tatars from Anatolia and Crimean Tatars (Qaraei or Kara Tatar). The greatest impact of Ottoman colonization in the Balkans was felt in urban centres. Many towns became major centres for the Turkish administration, with most Christians gradually withdrawing to the mountains. Historical evidence shows that the Ottomans' policy was to systematically create new towns and repopulate older towns that had suffered significant population decline and economic dislocation during previous wars. The Ottomans undertook active colonisation of the conquered territories, and the numbers of the Muslim population in the Balkans grew steadily. Within the multiethnic Ottoman state, Muslims and non-Muslims did not have equal status. The so-called *millet* system allowed the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire to establish and manage their religious community affairs, but they were obliged to pay taxes in exchange of military protection, could not serve in the army and were also denied access to any significant post in the public administration. In general, they did not have many chances of political and social

advancement. In 1878 Turks outnumbered Bulgarians in Bulgaria, but they began emigrating to Turkey after independence was proclaimed. Between 1878 and 1912 approx. 350,000 Muslims left for Turkey, and during the 1950s more than 150,000 emigrated as a reaction to the land collectivisation imposed by the communist regime. Turkish outmigration reached its peak in the 1980s, when up to 370,000 left Bulgaria as a consequence of a “regeneration process” [Възродителен процес] which forced all Turks and other Muslims to adopt Bulgarian names and renounce their customs. Bulgaria no longer recognized the Turkish as a national minority. After 1989, cultural rights were restored. The fall of communism in Bulgaria led to a reversal of the state's policy and the National Assembly of Bulgaria attempted to restore cultural rights to the Turkish population. In particular, the restoration of the Muslim/Arabic names was an important act for the revival of the Muslim identity of the ethnic Turks.

- 1.2.2 Most of the people in the Turkish minority areas identify themselves as Turks. However, the Turkic-speaking population in North-eastern Bulgaria also comprises the Gagauz (who are usually regarded as settlers from the Seljuk part of Iran of the temporarily re-Christianized Anatolia, while some scholars claim that they were Turkic Proto-Bulgarians who were Islamicized after the Ottoman conquest). Bulgarian Turks have in common a Turkish national identity as well as the Muslim religion. Many of them emigrated to Turkey because they felt culturally affiliated to Turkey, although – even nowadays – Turks in Turkey think of their ethnic “brothers” in Bulgaria as different because of the Bulgarian influence in their Turkish dialect, and other cultural features they share with Bulgarians. The main political party representing the interests of the Bulgarian Turks is the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) [Движение за права и свободи, in Turkish *Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi*], which has frequently stressed its opposition to any secession or autonomy claims (Lenkova 1999).
- 1.2.3 In the 2001 census 746,664 people declared a Turkish ethnicity (9.4% of the population), which makes it the most numerous minority group in Bulgaria. Turks form the majority of the population in two districts, Kardzhali in the southern part of the country (all municipalities) and Razgrad in the north-east (with cultural differences existing between the two groups). They are the majority also in a number of municipalities in various districts including Silistra, Ruse, Dobrich, Burgas and Targovishte. Another Turkish-speaking group, the Gagauz (who are Christian) live mainly around Varna on the Black Sea. According to the census, Turkish is spoken by 762, 516 people, of whom 720,136 declared a Turkish ethnicity and 24,214 a Roma ethnicity. The number of Turkish speakers who declared to be Bulgarian is 15,233. Between 1983 and 1993 a survey indicated that the number of Turkish speakers had risen of 13% – a phenomenon which has been explained as a reaction to the assimilation campaign conducted in the 1980s, with the language becoming a key symbol of identity (Boneva, 1998).
- 1.2.4 Unlike Bulgarians, the Turkish minority is a mostly rural population (Igla 1997). In the Rhodope mountains in particular, the traditional economy has been nomadic sheep-breeding. The exodus of Turks from Bulgaria after 1878 severely affected agriculture, and subsequent efforts to introduce a market economy caused massive migration from rural to urban areas. After the 1920s many Kardzhali Turks were employed in the tobacco and mining industries, but the drastic fall in tobacco output since 1991 has negatively impacted on the Turkish and other Muslim groups. Under the communist regime, as a reaction to land collectivisation, many Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks emigrated to Turkey (in 1956 approx. 50% of them were still private owners). In the Kardzhali district all municipalities have recently

been classified as “underdeveloped mountain areas”. The occupational pattern of Turks from north-eastern Bulgaria is more varied and the population enjoy a higher standard of living.

1.3. Legal status and official policies

Because of their status as former occupiers for nearly five centuries (from 1396 until 1878), the Turkish community has had a difficult relationship with Bulgaria since the proclamation of its independence. After Bulgaria’s liberation in 1878, there was an initial period of either forced or voluntary migration of the Turkish/Muslim population from Bulgaria to Turkey, which appeared as the natural successor of the Ottoman Empire. According to the first official census conducted in 1881 in the Principality of Bulgaria ethnic Turks – the dominant group until 1878 – made up only 26,96% (or 2,007,919 people) of the Principality’s total population, and the Turkish population in Eastern Rumelia was 240,053 people, or 34,5 % of the entire population of the province. In the first half of the 20th century, Turkish political, religious and cultural rights were generally respected, in keeping with a number of international treaties and of the 1879 Constitution. Minorities, however, did not have any political representation, while occasional assimilation measures were implemented and emigration of both Turks and Pomaks to Turkey encouraged. Between 1944 and 1989 the government policy was incoherent. Turks initially enjoyed considerable autonomy in cultural matters, with the legalisation of private Turkish schools and freedom of the press. The Turkish were mentioned as a “national minority” and included in the 1947 Constitution, which had many provisions regarding minority protection and in particular guaranteed the right to mother tongue education and free development of culture for all national minorities. The separation between church and state, however, brought all schools (as well as the Muffi Office) under state control. Further legislation required new Turkish minority textbooks to be issued and allocation of air time for radio broadcasts in Turkish. In 1945, for the first time since the ban by the previous regime, Turkish-language newspapers and magazines and Turkish-language editions of the Bulgarian press were launched, including *Vatan* [Fatherland], *Isik* [Light], *Halk Gencligi*, *Yeni Isik* and *Yeni Hayat* [New Life]. In 1947, even an "affirmative action"-like policy was implemented, as Turkish minority members were admitted into higher education institutions without an entrance examination; such practices would continue in later years. After the assimilation campaign of the mid-1980s (when schools were closed and changing of names imposed), at the beginning of the 1990s a new law gave anyone affected by the name-changing campaign the possibility to officially restore their original names and the names of any children born after the name change. In January 1991, Turkish-language classes were reintroduced at school for four hours per week in parts of the country with a significant Turkish population.

2. Presence and use of the language in various fields

2.1. Education

- 2.1.1 In the 1940s, the Turkish schools financed by both the Muslim community and the state were gradually reduced in number and the quality of education became lower. The outcome was mass illiteracy among Turks and Pomaks, as well as

marginalization and alienation from the Bulgarians (which may have helped to preserve their feeling of belonging to Turkey). Since the start of democratic changes in Bulgaria, there have always been problems related to the study and use of a mother tongue different from Bulgarian, in spite of that right being constitutionally guaranteed to minority groups by virtue of Art. 36(2). The problem with the study of Turkish as a mother tongue in the initial years of democracy did not stem so much from state reluctance to provide such training, but from the practical lack of qualified teachers. In 1993, about 17,000 out of 92,166 students reportedly submitted applications to study Turkish as a mother tongue for the 1992/1993 school year, but could not be enrolled in Turkish language classes. The reasons were lack of qualified teachers, and lack of enough children to meet the required number to create a class. In the 1990s, problems in respect to minorities' study and use of mother tongue continued and even worsened. The study of Turkish as mother tongue in Bulgaria was introduced at the level of "municipal schools": Turkish minority students could study their mother tongue up to four hours per week, but only on a "freely selectable" basis, meaning that Turkish language classes would not be considered as part of the ordinary school curriculum and would not be reported in the students' records. By virtue of Instruction No. 4 of the Ministry of Education and Science of October 27, 1994, the study of Turkish as a mother tongue for grades 1st to 8th became based on model curricula. The Law on Educational Degree, Educational Minimum, and Educational Plan (1999) was enforced in the 2002/2003 school year, when the instruction of Turkish as a mother tongue in municipal schools was made "obligatory selectable". According to official statistics of the Ministry of Education, Turkish as a mother tongue was studied in 20 districts from the 2000/2001 school year onward, primarily in the districts of south-eastern and north-eastern Bulgaria (where the Turkish minority is concentrated). In 2000/2001 the instruction in Turkish was organised in 520 municipal schools in the country, with 34,860 minority students enrolled. The total number of Turkish language teachers was 703, almost all of them qualified to teach Turkish. The fact that there is no lack of qualified teachers is due to the adequate number of educational establishments where Turkish language teachers can be trained. One of these is the Department of Turkology at the Sofia University (duly reopened after the 1989 democratic changes); other cognate departments were established in 1992 in two new universities: the departments of Turkish philology and Russian/Turkish philology in the Shumen University, and the departments of Turkish philology and Turkish/Bulgarian philology in the Kardzhali pedagogical college - both universities located in areas where the Turkish population is concentrated. The graduates from these schools are awarded a Bachelor's and/or a Master's Degree, and can teach Turkish in both primary/secondary and high school level. However, there has been a shortage of (updated) textbooks and other teaching materials for Turkish as a mother tongue. Another problem is the combination of mother tongue classes with other basic courses as possible options among which a student can choose to cover the number of classes which are "obligatory selectable", which has undermined the status of the mother tongue classes since their number per week depends on the number of other classes taken.

2.1.2 At the primary and high school levels, the study of the Turkish language is an optional subject from 1st to 8th grade (four hours per week, outside the regular curriculum). Teaching programmes are subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science. Textbooks are provided to pupils free of charge, but are considered to be few and outdated by many parents. A major problem is that a minimum of 13 pupils is generally required for classes to be provided in Turkish. At high school level Turkish language is assigned a status of a "foreign language"

for minority students, and the status of “second” and not “first” foreign language in the curricula of some high schools. Turkish-language education – at both primary and secondary school level (grades 1st to 8th) - is based on curricula prepared by the Turkish language teachers themselves, subject to the approval of the Ministry. High schools where curricula include the study of Turkish as a second foreign language are of three types, namely: Muslim religious schools; private language schools; and other schools where Turkish is studied on a “freely elective” basis. Schools of the first type are located in Shumen, Russe, and Momchilgrad, all areas with a high concentration of the Turkish population. Students enrolled in religious schools study Turkish as a foreign language 2 to 3 hours per week in addition to Arabic and a first western foreign language. Two schools of the second type exist in Sofia, one of which is the so-called Balkan school of the Balkan College Foundation, where Turkish is studied 4 hours weekly as a second foreign language. In the other private language school, “Druzhiba”, run by the Bulgarian-Turkish Democratic Foundation, Turkish language is also studied 4 hours per week as a first and a second Balkan language.

2.2. Judicial authorities

Bulgarian is the language of judicial proceedings and legal documents are valid only in Bulgarian (or with a Bulgarian translation). Citizens who do not speak Bulgarian are granted the use of interpreters in courts.

2.3. Public authorities and services

There are no specific provisions on the use of the citizens’ mother tongue the administrative when dealing with the authorities. In the administrative structures in regions where ethnic minorities are highly concentrated, it is possible to use other languages (in particular Turkish) in face-to-face communication if both sides are fluent in the respective language, but such use is not allowed for any formal arrangement nor in written communication.

2.4. Mass media and information technology

Every working day news are broadcast in Turkish on the main channel of the Bulgarian National Television. There are no provisions of the government relating to information and communication technology in Turkish (machine translation, electronic dictionaries, etc.). The Turkish press in Bulgaria was established almost simultaneously to the foundation of the Bulgarian Principality in 1878. Under the new/“foreign” Bulgarian administration, Turkish intellectuals felt the need to communicate the new laws and regulations to the Turkish population by e.g. providing translations of the Bulgarian State Gazette. The number of Turkish newspapers and publications published in the Principality of Bulgaria rose to 90. Between 1895 and 1945 there were several well-known Turkish newspapers in Bulgaria (*Gayret*, *Muvazene*, *Balkan* and many others).

2.5. Arts and culture

In the 1950s, there was a number of Bulgarian Turkish artists in the fields of poetry, drama, literature and folk music. Turkish theatres were established in Shumen, Razgrad and Kardzhali (1952-1953). Poetry was an especially popular art form among minority artists. In the period 1959-1968 34 poetry books were published by 24 Turkish poets, three local newspapers and one monthly magazine dedicated to Turkish news. The first Turkish novel was *Gun Dogarken* by Sabri Tatov (1963), who in 1967 also published two long stories called *Koyun Hamanasi* and *Iki Arada*. Halit Aliosmanof wrote *Sacilan Kivilcimlar* in 1965 and Ishak Rashidof published his *Ayrlirken* in 1968. From 1959 onward, short stories have been collected in anthologies. In 1961, around 50 Turkish authors published their works in separate books. In the period 1961-1968, around 30 books by 23 writers were published in Sofia. Turkish-minority drama was developed both by amateur groups known as *Heveskarlar Kollektifi* [The Collective of Heveskarlar] and by three professional groups in Shumen, Razgrad and Kardzhali. The playwright Ismail Bekir translated many plays into Turkish and wrote seven original plays. Turkish periodicals include: *Filiz* [New growth], a weekly for children, published by the Movement for Rights and Freedoms from 1992 to 1996, and since then as an independent publication; *Balon*, a monthly magazine for children, published since 1994; *Günül*, a monthly publication on education and culture, published by the Balkan Education and Culture Foundation since 1995; *Kainak* [Water source], a monthly magazine, published by the Turkish Centre for Culture in Sofia since 1999; *Deliorman*, a quarterly magazine, published by the *Deliorman* Turkish Centre and Literary Society of Turkish Writers since 2002; *Sabah*, a weekly newspaper, published by the *Utro* ("Dawn") Foundation since 2002.

2.6. The business world

There are no reliable data concerning the use of Turkish at the workplace. It seems that the language is often used, but always at an informal level, especially where many ethnic Turks are employed (tobacco growing industry etc.)

2.7. Family and the social use of language

The present linguistic situation of the Turkish minority does not appear to be sufficiently researched. In the regions with a predominantly Turkish population, Turkish is the everyday language of private and public communication.

3. Conclusion

The Turkish minority has retained and quickly revived its separate identity. However, this revival is difficult as this community is among the most affected by the current economic crisis in the country. Problems in education, politics, religion, and economy still exist.

1. Armenian

1.1 Armenian [*Hayeren*] is a language of the Indo-European family, though its relationship to the other Indo-European varieties is still debated. Together with the Slavic, Baltic and Indo-Iranian languages, Armenian belongs to the so-called Satem-languages. The Armenian alphabet, which is completely phonetically based (every sound has its own letter and each letter represents a single sound), is very old – it was created for religious and cultural purposes, after the introduction of Christianity to the Armenians in the 4th century. Armenian has more than 60 varieties. Eastern Armenian is the state language of the Republic of Armenia [*Hayastani Hanrapetut'yun*], where literary Armenian is used in education. The western dialects predominate in the diaspora communities. Of the estimated 7.4 million speakers of Armenian some 5.1 million live in European states and 3.2 million in Armenia, that became independent in 1991 after the break-up of the USSR.

1.2 The Armenians' presence in Bulgaria is long-standing, with troops from Byzantine-controlled eastern Anatolia being stationed in the territory back in the 4th-5th century (and their families since the end of the 6th century), a migration flow which continued well into the 10th century. Paulician dissidents seem to have been part of this migration (7th century). Several Byzantine Emperors were of Armenian origin (among them Constantine V, Leo IV, Basilus I). Armenian immigration in Bulgaria intensified in the 17th century, and between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, following their persecution under Ottoman rule. In 1922 Armenians refugees were allowed into Bulgaria, increasing the Armenian population to 25,963 in 1934. Many Armenians originally spoke Turkish, and learnt Armenian in Bulgaria. Since the end of World War II their number has progressively dwindled. They were 21,954 in 1956 (with a few thousands moving to the Soviet Union when Armenia became a distinct Republic in 1936), 20,282 in 1965, 14,526 in 1975 and 13,677 in 1992. The 2001 census recorded 10,832 Armenians, including more recent economic migrants. Armenians live in all major Bulgarian cities but especially in Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna. Since 10,294 citizens declared Armenian as their mother tongue, there is an apparently close match between *ethnos* and language – with language emerging as a strong element of self-identification. In 1992 a smaller number of people (9,796) had declared Armenian as their mother tongue.

1.3 Between the end of the 19th century and the end of World War II, education in Armenian (primary school level) was provided in 13 Bulgarian towns. In Plovdiv, schools included *Viktorija i Krikor Tjutjundzjan*, *Mahitarjan*, *Mesrobjan Dzemaran*, *Armjan Tabroz*. In the 1960s, under the communist regime, education in Armenian became optional – a development which drastically affected language use. Until the 1960s there had been a number of Armenian schools, especially in big cities such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas, etc. After the collapse of the communist regime these schools continued to exist and Armenian was reintroduced as the language of teaching, with the opening of new schools (mostly weekend primary schools) and the establishment of a chair in Armenian philology at the University of Sofia. Currently there are three big primary schools – two in Plovdiv and one in Sofia. Problems remain, with a dearth of textbooks, teaching aids and resources. Armenian press has a long-standing tradition. Armenian books have been printed in Bulgaria for a century, while in the period 1884-1944 approx. 70 newspapers and magazines were published. The first Armenian paper (*Huj*s) dates from 1884. In the interwar period the magazines *Meghu*, *Razmig* and *Azad Hosk* appeared, although their publication was later discontinued. In 1944 the paper *Ervan* was founded. Other Armenian publications

(bilingual Bulgarian-Armenian) include *Vahan* (weekly) in Plovdiv, *Hajer* and *Armentsi* in Burgas. One of the most ancient Armenian manuscripts (a Gospel from Bachkovo monastery) is preserved in Sofia. The associations *Vahan Manelian* and *Papekordzagan* were founded in 1905 and 1910 respectively. Between 1944 and 1989 Armenian social and cultural life was centred on the *Erevan* association, with a choir, an acting ensemble, a library and a (weekly) newspaper. The association is present in 13 districts. Other Armenian organisations include *Parekordzagan*, *HOM* [Woman's Beneficiary Organisation], *Haj tod* [Armenian History Club], *OSOK Haskain*, *Mesrob Mashtob*, the scouts' association *Homenatmen*, and *St.Hovaghimjan* school. Armenian theatre has been active for a long time: the first drama group was formed in Ruse (1870) and actors such as Berdz Taktakjan, Dartad Nashanjan and Edi Chaprasd were famous. In the 1950s, the Shirvanzade group from Varna and the Plovdiv Mechitarists were very popular. Other names in drama are Sarkis Muhibjan and the director Krikor Azarjan. In music, Armenian singers are Nadia Afejan and Stefka Onikjan; other Armenians are the director Hajgashold Amirhanjan, the composer Hajgashod Agasjan and the internationally renowned singers Silvi Tartan and Filip Kirkorov. Armenian writers in Bulgaria include Agop Melkonjan (1949) and Sevda Sevan (1945). The Armenian Apostolic Church in Bulgaria has 12 branches in various parts of the country. Services are held in the Armenian language. Although the family traditionally acted as a strong element in preserving language and culture, the lack of education and literacy suffered by generations of Armenians during the totalitarian regime considerably affected the use of the Armenian language. Nowadays it is no longer clear which is the language mostly spoken by Armenians within the family. Studies show that Armenians cite Bulgarian cultural and historical values without any bias.

2. Aro(u)manian/Vlac(h)/Wallachian

2.1 Aro(u)manian [*Armînesti*], also known as Macedo-Romanian and sometimes Vla(c)h or Wallachian [*Vlachika*] (as in the 2001 Bulgarian census), is a Romance language written in the Latin (or Greek) alphabet and used by scattered communities in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and former parts of Yugoslavia (including Macedonia, where Aromanians ("Vlachs") are constitutionally recognized as a minority) and in other countries of the Aromanian diaspora. Together with the two other sub-Danubian varieties of Romanian (Istro-Romanian and Megleno-Romanian), Aromanian is sometimes considered as a dialect of Romanian, while others prefer to define it as a distinct variety – probably originating from a "common" Romanian language and separating from the Daco-Romanian variety (now used in Romania) by the 10th century, with the arrival of Slavonic-speaking peoples in the region. It is the neo-Latin language spoken in the Balkans today – strongly influenced by Greek and abounding in Turkish, Albanian and Slavic loan words. The first Aromanian grammar was published in Vienna (1813). In 1996 the Aromanian language textbook *Limba Armânjlor* was published in Bulgaria, based on the dialect spoken in Krushevo (southern Macedonia).

2.2 The origin of Aromanians and Vlachs (in Bulgaria, Vlachs [*Vlasi*] or Aromanians [*Armâni*] are used as self-designations) has been the object of several hypotheses, with the term "Vlach" generally indicating Romance-speaking people in South-eastern Europe although – in the middle ages – it referred to all nomadic populations, irrespective of their ethnic affiliation (cf. also Greek in Bulgaria, 3.2). Their original settlements were in northern Greece, southern Albania and Macedonia among others. Aromanians in Bulgaria sometimes refer to themselves as "Vlachs" (cf. census data → *Bulgaria*, 3.1) but strictly speaking Aromanians

should be distinguished from the Vlachs: the former migrated to Bulgaria in the 17th century as craftsmen and tradesmen, the latter arrived in the 18th century mainly as nomadic and trans-humant stock-breeders. During the Ottoman period Aromanians were to be found in Mezovo, Nikulce, Linotipi, Varani, Fuscia and Moschopolis (which became the second most important city in the Balkans after Constantinople, with as many as 60,000 inhabitants until it was destroyed in 1789). The Aromanians, who mostly define themselves as belonging to the *fara armanescă* [Aromanian tribe] and rarely use the (neologism) *natsie* [nation], belonged to the Greek patriarchate of Constantinople and their cultural and economic activities were bound to the Greek Church. It was especially the urbanised Aromanians who spoke Greek (the first documents in Aromanian were written in the Greek alphabet and were not aimed at teaching Aromanian but spreading the Greek language). A second, different orientation of the Aromanians has been pro-Romanian (→ *Romania*, 4.2). In 1905 the Aromanian-Romanian movement culminated in the recognition of the Aromanians/Vlachs as a separate community [*milllet*] within the Ottoman Empire, but the formation of an Aromanian nationhood never occurred. Rather, it was the Aromanians who contributed to further that of other Balkan peoples. As a consequence, Aromanians underwent different states of assimilation and now show a great variety in self-identification, making them a very heterogeneous group as regards their ethnicity (Kahl, 2002).

2.3 In Bulgaria, the earliest Aromanian colonies (19th century) were in Melnik, Blagoevgrad, Doupnitsa, Pazardijk, Plovdiv, Asenovgrad, Peshtera and Stara Zagora. These urban Aromanians, the *tsintsari* [цинцари] were comparatively assimilated by the Bulgarian population. By contrast, herder communities of Vlachs tended to preserve a high level of endogamy. After the 1878 liberation, new waves of Aromanians came to Bulgaria, with part of them having a distinct Romanian education as a result of the Aromanian national revival. With the support of Romania, Romanian schools were opened in Gorna Djumaya and Sofia in 1896, and Aromanian associations were founded. The Aromanian craftsmen and tradesmen who migrated to Bulgaria in the 18th century have been largely assimilated, while the descendants of the Vlach herdsmen (at least the older generations) still consider themselves as Aromanians [*Vlachs* or *Armâni*]. Although urban Aromanians tend to identify themselves as *tsintsars* and call the Aromanian herders *Vlachs*, this does not seem to affect the sense of community. There are no reliable data concerning language transmission.

2.4 In the 2001 census 10,566 citizens declared to be “Wallachians” [влади], but only 6,587 appear to be speakers of “Wallachian” (in the census, the term is used to refer to the language spoken by the Aromanians/Vlachs). According to estimates from other sources, their number does not exceed 6,000 people. They mainly live in Blagoevgrad, Dupnica, Darkovo, Bistrica, Velingrad, Rakitovo, Bracigovo, Pirdop, Sofia, Plovdiv and Pazardzhik. The Aromanian Association has been restored in 1992 and the Romanian schools in Sofia offers courses in Aromanian, too. The quarterly *Armânlu* and the “Aromanians in Bulgaria and over the Balkans” are published by the Sofia Aromanian Society. During the past years there have been contacts between the Wallachian communities in Bulgaria and those in neighbouring countries, for example between Wallachian villages in the Vidin area and Wallachian villages in Romania and Serbia. For five years now (with the exception of 2002), an annual Wallachian song-and-dance festival has been held in Vidin-Rabrovo: it has become the focal point of cultural exchanges among Wallachians from Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova. Bulgarian Wallachians participate in the annual festival of Wallachian poetry in Lasi (Romania) and in meetings of writers in Skopje

(Republic of Macedonia). A mini-festival is also organized in Rabrovo with the participation of Wallachians from Romania and Serbia. In August 2001 a symposium was held in Constanta, Romania: “The eternal character of the Wallachian presence in the Balkans - Aromanian history and civilization”. There was also an International Aromanian Folklore Festival. Members of the Bulgarian Centre for the Aromanian Language and Culture and the Aromanian Society took an active part in it. In November of the same year, the second Aromanian Poetry Festival and the second Symposium of Literature and Culture were held in Skopje. Aromanians from Bulgaria attended both events. In the last few years, the festival took part in the International Wallachian festivals in Rabrovo (Bulgaria), Seres (Greece) and Konstanta (Romania). In September 2002, the first Aromanian folklore festival in the Rhodope Mountains has been organised.

3. Greek

3.1 Greek [*Ellinika*] represents an independent branch of the Indo-European family of languages. It is spoken mainly in Greece and Cyprus, but also worldwide by the members of the Greek diaspora. Standard Modern Greek (SMG), the official language of Greece, was previously known as *dimotiki* [common language], the variety that had coexisted for a long time in a diglossic situation with *katharevousa* [purified language]. *Dimotiki* was used in everyday interaction, while *katharevousa* – closely related to ancient Greek – was reserved for literary and official purposes. In the late 1970s Greece adopted SMG as its official language used in administration, education and the media.

3.2 Historically, Greek-speaking people in Bulgaria belong to two different groups (Assenova 1997): the descendants of the Greeks who established themselves in the Black Sea area, and the Karakachans (from Turkish *Kara* [black] and *kachan* [refugee]), also known as Sarakatsani [Σαρακατσάνοι], inhabiting the mountain region of Stara planina (the towns of Sliven, Kotel, Zheravna, Karnobat, Kazanlak, Karlovo, Sopot), the Rila mountains (Samokov, Dupnitsa) and parts of North-Western Bulgaria (Berkovitsa, Värshets, Montana, Vratsa). Greeks use dialects of the northern variety, which displays archaic features (Assenova 1997). During the Ottoman rule (1396–1878), the Greeks enjoyed considerable prestige, since the Patriarch of Constantinople represented all Christians (→ *Bulgaria*, 2.1) – a position which lasted until the Bulgarian Church proclaimed its independence (1870). Throughout this period, upper-class Bulgarians used to receive their education in Greek and were practically bilingual. Between the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century Greek schools were opened in Plovdiv, Melnik, Sozopol, Bourgas, Assenovgrad and Varna, and were attended also by Bulgarians. The origin of the Karakachans has been mainly attributed to either Greek nomadic groups or to Greek-speaking Aromanian (→ Aromanian) communities (Assenova 1997). They normally designate themselves as Vlachs [*Vláha*], refer to their language as Vla(c)h [*Vla(c)hika*] and appear to use a Greek dialect displaying archaic features. As they are a nomadic community, however, they are normally bilingual or trilingual and are of Greek Orthodox faith. Most of the Greek-speaking people left Bulgaria after the conflicts with Greece (1906) and the second Balkan War (1913): while the 1900 census counted as many as 70,887 Greek speakers, already in 1926 their number had dwindled to 12,787. In the 2001 Bulgarian census, 3,408 people declared a Greek ethnicity and 4,107 a Karakachan ethnicity. Greeks are mainly to be found in the Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna districts. As many as 6,876 declared Greek as a mother tongue (of these, 2,800 Greeks and 3,276 Karakachans). However, this is a slight decrease compared to 1992, when approx. 7,500 people declared Greek as their mother tongue (4,517 Greeks and

2,891 Karakachans) but there were also less people (4,930) who declared a Greek ethnicity and identified themselves as Karakachans (5,144). Unofficial estimates indicate higher numbers.

3.3 After 1989 distinct organisations for Greek speakers have developed, for both Greeks and Karakachans. Greek is mainly used in the family, with a diglossic Bulgarian-Greek situation: it should be noted that Greek has several features in common with Bulgarian, despite the fact that the latter is a Slavonic language (together with Romanian and Albanian forming the so-called Balkan *Sprachbund*). This phenomenon facilitates code-switching from Greek to Bulgarian (and the other way round). The National Federation of Greek Cultural and Educational Organizations in Bulgaria has branches in Burgas, Sozopol, Pomorie, Obzor, Sliven, Yambol, Topolovgrad, Golyam i malak manastir, General Inzovo, Okop i Kamenar, and publishes a monthly bulletin. It has contacts with over 77 national Greek associations around the world, the most active ties being with Germany, Russia and the USA. In 1991 the Karakachans' cultural association was founded in Sliven, later (1995) to become a federation of cultural associations. Their main goal is to promote cultural cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece and organise festivals such as the one in Karandila (near Sliven) on the first Saturday and Sunday of July. Unlike other minorities, the Karakachans have no press. There are also local associations such as the Bulgarian-Greek Association in Berkovitsa (since 1991) and the Karakachans' Association in Rechitsa (since 1996).

4. Romanian

4.1 Romanian [*româna*] belongs to the group of Balkan Romance languages. The Cyrillic script was used for centuries, then was replaced by the Roman alphabet in 1860. Varieties of Romanian used in Romania can be described in terms of structural aspects, a distinction being made between standard (literary) Romanian (→ *Romania*, 4.2) and in terms of regional distribution, with varieties displaying minor differences in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, and mutual intelligibility.

4.2 The Romanian minority in Bulgaria (*români* or *rumâni* in Romanian; *vłasi* or *rumuni* in Bulgarian) is concentrated in the northwestern part of the country, in the Vidin, Vratsa and Pleven provinces and speaks the Oltenian variety of the Romanian language. Romanians from the Vidin Province are separated into two main groups: the Dunăreni" (who live along the Danube river) and the "Pădureni" (who lived in the higher regions of the country). The territory where the Romanians live in Bulgaria never belonged to Romania and most of them declare their ethnicity using the Bulgarian name "vłasi" (= Vlachs) (e.g. in the census), though they call themselves "rumân" (= Rumanians) in their own language. The 2001 census counted 1,088 Romanians but many more (8,714) declared Romanian as their mother tongue. Among these 5,059 declared to be Wallachians (→ Aromanian in Bulgaria). The Romanian minority has recently started organizing its activities by founding the *Association of the Vlachs in Bulgaria* – Street Gradinska, no. 7. A new association, the *Community of the Romanians of Bulgaria*, was founded in 2002. *Timpul*, a Bulgarian and Romanian quarterly, has been published by the Wallachian Association in Bulgaria since 1993.

5. Russian

5.1. Russian [*russkij jazyk*] is an East Slavonic language of the Indo-European family, closely related to Ukrainian and Belorussian. Written in the Cyrillic alphabet, it is mainly spoken in the Russian Federation and former territories of the USSR. With the introduction of Christianity in the late 10th century, Russian literature developed from translations of the Orthodox liturgy into Old Church Slavonic; as Russia took a leading role within the Eastern Orthodox Church in the 16th century, Russian Church Slavonic (still used for liturgical purposes) superseded other Church Slavonic varieties. In the 17th century Russian gradually emerged as a national language under the reign of the Tsars. Owing a great deal to the efforts of the polymath Lomonosov and his *Russian Grammar* (1755), modern standard Russian was established by the time of Pushkin (1799-1837) and its written language became closer to the spoken norm. Since the Romanov Empire – and later on in the USSR – Russian has been in close contact with over a hundred other languages,

5.2. In the 18th century, a number of Russians who opposed Patriarch Nikon's reform (1605 – 1681) escaped to Ottoman-controlled territories, including Bulgaria. These “Old Believers” [староверы] (→ Russian in Estonia; Russian in Poland; Russian in Romania) still inhabit two villages in Tataritsa (near Silistra) and Kazashko (near Varna), which could be considered as “linguistic islands” where a specific Southern Russian dialect is used. A different, later presence can be traced back to Russian troops remaining in Bulgaria after the 1877-1878 Russian-Turkish war. Most Russians in Bulgaria, however, descend from a third immigration wave – those who left Russia after the 1917 Revolution (→ Russian in the Czech Republic), in particular White Guard refugees. Between 1919 and 1923 approx. 35,000 refugees arrived from Russia, a number which has dwindled over the years because of repatriations and other factors. At the time, no distinction was made by the Bulgarian government between Russians, Cossacks and Ukrainians. When the communists came to power in 1944, attitudes towards Russian refugees deteriorated: many of the White Guard immigrants who had not already been repatriated took Soviet citizenship, mixing with other Soviet nationals who settled in Bulgaria for various reasons (no Soviet troops, however, were stationed in Bulgaria). According to the 2001 census, 15,595 declared a Russian ethnicity – a further decrease compared to 1992 (17,000). 18,477 people declared Russian as their mother tongue (and 14,347 of these a Russian ethnicity), suggesting that the language has been preserved and transmitted as a strong element of identification. Most Russians are to be found in the districts of Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas and Varna.

5.3. The interrelationship between the Russian and the Bulgarian languages, cultures and literatures has been considerable. Byzantine culture penetrated Russia via the Orthodox religion, and the role of Bulgaria as a mediator and of the Slavic Bulgarian language as a factor for overcoming the language barrier between Greeks and Russian was highly significant (→ Bulgaria, 2.1). In the 19th century, Russian represented an educational model which posed an alternative to Greek (→ Greek in Bulgaria), significantly influencing the Bulgarian intelligentsia of the time. The first Russian associations and schools in Bulgaria were founded in the early 1920s by White Guard refugees from Odessa and Crimea. By 1925 pre-primary, primary and secondary school education was provided in Sofia, Varna, Pleven, Nesebar, Sozopol, Pomorie, Ljaskovets and Burgas, as well as Shumen, Peshtera and Tarnovo-Sejmen, with more than 1,500 pupils and students. During the communist period Russian became a compulsory school-subject and, although its role has been declining, Russian is still being taught at school. *Belaya Volna* is a quarterly published in Bulgarian and Russian by the Union of White Russian expatriates and their descendants in Bulgaria since 1992.

6. Other language groups

6.1 Albanian [*Gjuha shqipe*] is an Indo-European language representing a branch of its own, spoken primarily in Albania (where standard Albanian is an official language) and Kosovo but also in other areas of the Western Balkans as well as in Greece and Italy. It is now written in the Latin script. Its two main varieties are Gheg (northern) and Tosk (southern), reflecting the neat geographical division made by the river Shkumbini in the central part of the country. Each variety has its own literary tradition. After World War II the language was standardised on the basis of the Tosk variety (the south being politically dominant, and Gheg being highly fragmented in different dialects). Gheg, which has been revived since the 1990s (Gheg was an official language in former Yugoslavia together with Serbian), is used by most of the Albanian-speaking communities outside Albania. Albanian migrations took place to Greece (12th-14th century), as well as to southern Italy (15th-18th centuries to Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Molise, Sicily, Campania) where the linguistic variety is called *Arb(ë)resh*. Other migrants settled in Romania, Turkey, Egypt and Bulgaria (town of Mandritsa in Kurdzali). The Albanian presence can be traced back to the times of the Ottoman rule in Albania (late 15th c.) when Albanians were employed mainly as workers in agriculture and masonry. A second wave dates back to the period after the Russian-Turkish war in 1878, and mostly consists of craftsmen and merchants who participated actively in the establishment of the new Bulgarian state.

6.2 Judeo-Spanish [*Español*], also called Judezmo or Ladino (in its written form) has been for centuries the traditional language of the Jews in the Balkans – with the largest migratory influx originating from the expulsion of Sephardic Jews from Spain in 1492. The Ashkenazi communities are few and much smaller than the Sephardic communities, and there is no Yiddish tradition in Bulgaria. Under the Ottoman rule, Jews enjoyed many privileges and often attained positions of high prestige. Ladino derives from the late medieval Spanish dialects of North-Western and central Spain, with not only Hebrew but also Aramaic, Balkan (especially Greek) and Turkish elements. Until the 19th century texts in Ladino (translations from the Bible, commentaries etc.) were written in the ancient *rashi* characters, later superseded by the Latin script. As from the beginning of the 20th century Judeo-Spanish has been gradually replaced by Hebrew (Ivrit) and Bulgarian in the press. As a spoken language, it is nowadays used only by the oldest members of the Sephardic communities. The Hebrew language (Ivrit), previously confined to religious functions, has been spoken in Bulgaria for a long time. With the support of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, 31 schools were open in Bulgaria in the period 1902-1903. In 1907 there were Jewish schools in Shumen, Rousse, Samokov, Sofia, Pazhardzhik and Varna, with a total of 2,752 students. After a long interruption, Ivrit was re-introduced in 1992 as a school-subject in the Dimcho Debeljanov school. Ivrit classes are provided also in Sofia, Plovdiv, Rousse, Burgas and Varna. Jewish press has a long-standing tradition: the first newspaper, *Solun* [Salonico], dates from 1869-1874. Other popular magazines were in Ivrit, Ladino and Bulgarian (such as *Evrejski glas*, *Svetilnik*, *Atar-Nabel*). The Jewish organisation in Bulgaria “Shalom” (http://www.shalom.bg/static_pages/index.htm) is well-known for its publishing activities and other initiatives. The 2001 census counted 1,363 Jews but only 584 declaring Hebrew (Ivrit) as their mother tongue.

6.3 Macedonian [*Makedonski*] belongs to the Eastern group of the South Slavonic languages and shares a high degree of mutual intelligibility with

Bulgarian – so much so that in Bulgaria (and also according to some non-Bulgarian scholars) it is mainly, and officially, considered as a regional variety of Bulgarian. Its dialects form indeed a continuum with Bulgarian and Serbian dialects (Fielder 1997), but as a standard language it developed on the basis of the Titov Veles-Prilep-Bitola west-central dialect group (Schrijver 1998). Macedonian is written using the Cyrillic alphabet and was standardised as a literary language only in 1945. The geographical region of Macedonia, after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 and the Bucharest Treaty (1913), was partitioned between Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia, the south-western corner of Bulgaria), Greece (Aegean Macedonia) and Serbia (Vardar Macedonia). Many Macedonians left Vardar Macedonia for Pirin Macedonia to escape Serbian domination, while at the end of World War I and the Neuilly Treaty (1919) Bulgaria lost western Thrace (in Aegean Macedonia), with further thousands of Macedonians being transferred to Bulgaria and re-settled in the Black Sea area, formerly inhabited by the Greeks (Fielder 1997). The region's troubled history has generated many disputes over the existence of a separate Macedonian nationality (Kramer 1997), although in former Yugoslavia Macedonian was one of the official languages. In 1993 the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence. The 1946 Bulgarian census identified over 250,000 Macedonians, but after the Tito-Stalin split their number dropped (to less than 10,000 in 1965). According to the latest Bulgarian census (2001), 5,071 people declared themselves as Macedonians, and 3,518 declared Macedonian as their mother tongue (as against 10,803 and 3,109 in the 1992 census). Most of them (3,117) are resident in the district of Blagoevgrad, bordering with the Republic of Macedonia to the west and Greece to the south.

6.4 (Crimean) Tatar [*Qırımtatarca*] is a north-west Turkic language of the Altaic family, the language of the Crimean Tatars. It is spoken in Crimea, Central Asia (mainly in Uzbekistan) and, as a result of the Crimean Tatar diasporas, also in Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria. The formation of the Crimean Tatar dialects began with the first Turkic invasions of Crimea. However, the official written languages of the Crimean Khanate were Chagatai and Ottoman Turkish. After their Islamization, Crimean Tatars wrote using a Persian-Arab script. In 1928, this alphabet was replaced by the Uniform Turkic Alphabet based on the Latin alphabet. The Uniform Turkic Alphabet was itself replaced in 1938 by a modified Cyrillic alphabet, which, from the 1990s, is in the process of being replaced again by a Latin-based version, though the Cyrillic alphabet is still widely used (mainly in published literature and newspapers). The current Latin-based Crimean Tatar alphabet is the same as the Turkish alphabet with two additional characters: Ñ ñ and Q q. Tatars, of Islamic faith, first moved to Bulgaria (Dobrich district) in the 13th-14th century, when military units being persecuted in the wake of dynastic feuds in the Golden Horde defected to Bulgarian rulers. Other groups migrated to Bulgaria at the end of the 18th century during the Russian-Turkish war (1806-1812) and during the Crimean War (1853-1856). According to some sources, in the 19th century there were as many as 230,000 Tatars living in the Balkans. In the 2001 census, 2,388 people declared Tatar as their mother tongue. They live mainly in the areas of Kavarna and Balchik. There is a cultural centre of Tatar women in Dobrich ("Navrez"). Most Tatars in Bulgaria have become linguistically assimilated by Turkish), because they started communicating in Turkish after the liberation, and, later, because most children were sent to Turkish rather than Tatar schools. In 1910, 546 Tatars from Southern Dobruja declared Turkish as their native language. Tatar remains a means of communication among elderly people only; children appear to understand the language but do not speak it. Nevertheless Tatars seemingly regard their language as a distinctive feature of their collective identity and the loss of their language as a loss of ethnic differentiation.

6.5 Ukrainian [*ukrajins'ka mova*] is a language of the East Slavonic subgroup of the Slavic languages, along with Russian and Belarusian, all three languages being spoken in the Kievan Rus region (9th century). The denomination for the whole East Slavonic territory often caused confusion as *Rus* was equated with Russia – that is also why Russian was called “Great Russian”, Ukrainian “Small Russian” and Ukrainian was often classified as a Russian dialect. The language shares some vocabulary with the languages of the neighbouring nations, most notably with Polish and Slovak in the west, and Belarusian and Russian in the north and the east. On the basis of the south-western dialects of the medieval East Slavonic subgroup, Ukrainian developed as a separate language in the course of the 14th century, and as a written language using the Cyrillic alphabet by the end of the 18th century. The number of Ukrainian speakers today amounts to approx. 45 million worldwide; most of them live in Ukraine (ca. 37.4 million, or 70.5% of the country's population). There is a Ukrainian-Bulgarian Association in Varna (*Chernomorie*, on http://www.geocities.com/bulukr2000/index_en.htm). *Ukrainya press* (<http://ukrpress.bol.bg>) is a newspaper published in Sofia (in Ukrainian and Bulgarian). Since 1998 there is also a magazine published online (<http://www.ukrpressbg.com/index.html>) on political issues, business, history, culture and sports. Since 2001 the foundation "Mati Ukrajna" has been active in promoting Ukrainian culture. Ukrainian is taught at the Kliment Ochridski University of Sofia.

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