

## European Union further supports ethnic and national minorities in Russia

Today, the European Commission decided to allocate €2 million to continue support to ethnic and national minorities in Russia. The objective of the second stage of this so-called preparatory action is to further enhance the protection and promotion of national minorities in the Russian Federation. Support will be given in the fields of languages, culture and education. Moreover, the project encourages the development of national strategies of intercultural dialogue in Russia and aims on promoting civil society participation in the country. The action is implemented through joint management with the Council of Europe.

The Russian Federation is a multi-national state with over 180 ethnic groups designated as nationalities which vary considerably in their composition, from millions in the case of Russians and Tatars to the so-called "small indigenous peoples of the North and Far East" (fewer than 50,000). Cultural and religious diversity are therefore fundamental elements of Russian society.

### **Background:**

The preparatory action "Minorities in Russia: development of culture, media and civil society" was originally proposed by the European Parliament in 2008 and has been ongoing in Russia since February 2009. The first stage entitled "Minorities in Russia: developing languages, culture, media and civil society" is currently being implemented and will last until February 2011. The funding for the preparatory action started in 2008 (€2.5 million) with further funding in 2009 (€2.5 million), and now in 2010 (€2 million). The project is managed and implemented by the Council of Europe which provided additional contributions of €250,000 for 2008 and €250,000 for 2009 budgets. The 2010 Council of Europe contribution is €100,000.

2010 marks the third and final year of funding for this preparatory action.

### **Additional information:**

- On EU - Russia relations:

[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/russia/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/russia/index_en.htm)

- On the project activities:

<http://www.coe.ru> (only in Russian) or <http://www.coe.int/minlang>



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