



**THE COOPERATION BETWEEN WESTERN AND RUSSIAN  
NGOS AND ORGANIZATIONS: DEVELOPMENT OF  
NETWORKS FOR JOINT PROJECTS AIMING TO THE  
PROMOTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY, THE STRENGTHENING OF  
DEMOCRACY AND THE PREVENTION OF CONFLICTS.**

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## Abstract

According to the latest population census, the number of ethnic groups inhabiting the Russian Federation is as high as 180 and represent about 28 million people, i.e. about 20% of the whole population. This diversity of nations reflect the diversity of languages in the country, most of which are severely threatened.

With the democratization of the Russian Federation, there has been an upsurge of interest in the future of the languages and cultures of minority populations. In 1999 representatives of linguistic minorities that gathered in Elista to participate in the conference "Minority Languages in Russia: Perspectives for Development" organised under the auspice of UNESCO within the International program Linguapax established RUMIDAP (Inter-regional coordinating committee "Russian Minorities' Initiatives for Democracy and Peace"), a pan-Russian network of mutual support. In 2001 Russia has signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. There are now hopeful indications that it will ratify the Charter within the next 3-5 years.

This paper gives an overview on both the already existing initiatives and the projects which are in their first stage carried out both my Western and Russian organizations in order to find ways to accommodate linguistic and cultural diversity and have it regarded, not as a cause for strife, but rather as a source of enrichment for all, as far as it is one of the major challenges facing the citizens of the Federation.

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## THE COOPERATION BETWEEN WESTERN AND RUSSIAN NGOS AND ORGANIZATIONS: DEVELOPMENT OF NETWORKS FOR JOINT PROJECTS AIMING TO THE PROMOTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY, THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PREVENTION OF CONFLICTS.

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### GENERAL FRAMEWORK

To carry on both long- and short-term projects, it is absolutely necessary to build up one single network/task force in order to design, plan, implement and monitor all this work. For practical and motivational reasons, the different organizations involved can't keep on working as 'snipers' who meet from time to time in one of another project or part of project.

Broadly speaking, we suggest that in a first phase of development, this network/task force should be integrated by the following experts and institutions (the list is, of course, merely prospective):

**In Russia:** Official partners at federal level, republican and regional official partners, research centers both at federal and local level, Independent organizations and NGOs. Official partners at federal and regional level would not form part of the network by themselves but should act as external advisers and mediators, providing logistic support and/or funding. On the contrary, research centers, independent organizations and NGOs would be full members of the network.

**In Western Europe:** European Center for Minority Issues, European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, LINGUAPAX Institute, FOCUS, anti-discrimination NGO specialized in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts, external advisers and researchers, national and/or regional official authorities of EU and CoE member states, namely the official bodies devoted to language policy and planning. They would probably not act as funding sources but they could provide expertise, advice services, logistical support, etc.

At the moment of writing this paper several joint projects have been already implemented or are next to be, aiming to the promotion of minority languages promotion, the prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts and the strengthening of democracy in the Russian Federation.

## 1. PROJECTS ALREADY IMPLEMENTED

### 1.1. Measures for protection, fulfillment and control of the legal rights of indigenous and minority languages in the republic of Kabardino-Balkaria.

The main goals and objectives of the project were as follows:

- To promote protection of indigenous and minority languages in Kabardin-Balkar's Republic (KBR)
- To give real methodical and methodological help to the cultural and educational institutions, NGO's, governmental structures of KBR in their activities aimed to preserve regional and minority languages, to create favorable conditions for unimpeded development of indigenous and minority languages, to fulfill individual language rights and language rights of communities.
- To promote strengthening of the spiritual, cultural potential and the content of ethnic and interethnic dialogue and interaction in KBR.
- To create a database "Linguistic situation in KBR". The database will include information about quantitative and qualitative aspects of regional and minority languages, the of the regional and minority languages in families, education, clerical work, service and other spheres of social life.
- To expose a list of historically formed objective conditions, which are unfavorable for existing and development of the regional and minority languages.
- To analyze the effectiveness of the legal measures for protection and fulfillment of indigenous and minority languages in Russian Federation and KBR
- To work out, submit and inculcate the system of additional steps, which can provide a real protection of indigenous and minority languages. The system will include the following steps: improvement of "The Law of Languages of KBR"; improvement of the use of languages in education and upbringing, mass media other spheres of social life.
- To distribute the international experience in protection and improvement of indigenous and minority language rights, the initiatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, the principles and thesis of the European Charter of regional and minority languages.

The general methodology of the Project supposed to carry out opinion polls, sociological researches and second processing of the previous data.

*Investigation of the linguistic situation in Kabardin-Balkar's Republic.* Methods and the methodology of the investigation were based on the general theoretical principles,

systematical approach to the estimation and interpretation of the phenomenon and expert and statistical analysis of the linguistic process. The conclusions of the investigation were established on the results of the content analysis of mass media, official statistics of the governmental bodies and NGO's.

In accordance with announced objectives, the Project was carried out in the following directions:

1. Gaining statistical data concerning linguistic situation in Kabardin-Balkar's Republic by analyzing information of the Statistic Board.
2. Carrying out a series of sociological researches according to especially devised methods.
3. Expert analysis of "The Law of Languages of KBR" and exposing forms and specifics of their fulfillment in various spheres of social life of the republic.
4. Compiling a detailed list of scientifically substantiated and adjusted measures for stimulation of the activities aimed to preserve and develop indigenous and minority languages. Publishing of the List and methodical recommendations.
5. Distribution of the information concerning optimum ways and means of improving the protection and realization of the language rights among governmental and legislative bodies, non-governmental organizations, in Mass Media and educational institutions of KBR.
6. Rendering permanent consultative assistance to existing and newly established NGO' s on the problems of preserving and development of languages and the problems of control the observance of the language rights of individuals and groups.
7. Working out social technologies aimed to preserve and develop indigenous and minority languages and their fulfillment in co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The problematic of the project was urgent not only for KBR but also for the other regions of the Russian Federation with analogous or the same linguistic situation. We refer to beneficiaries such groups as: governmental and non-governmental organizations, legislative assemblies, educational institutions, institutions of science and culture, teachers and lecturers, writers, journalists, scientists, workers in the field of arts, students, persons whose activities connected with protection of the language rights and with preserving and development of the languages.

## **1.2. Educational Project Professional Training in Language Policy and Democratic Administration and Management in the Multiethnic and Multicultural Community of North Caucasus.**



This Project aimed at elaborating and conducting a 32-hour training course designed for diverse classrooms: field trip classrooms in the region of North Caucasus; special classrooms (made up of the representatives of the political elite of the region) at the department for training and retraining government employees of North Caucasus Academy of State Service (NCASS); special classrooms for full-time and part-time departments of the State and Municipal Administration of North Caucasus Academy of State Service (NCASS).

Alongside this, programs, teaching manuals prepared within the framework of the project, as well as the teaching staff trained along the project lines can be put at the disposal of other regions, left outside this experimental approbation, and higher educational establishments of the republics of North Caucasus involved in the professional development and retraining programs for the higher echelons of the regional and local power structures.

The main outcomes of the project have been the publication of programs and teaching materials, the training of 10 project leaders who are further to conduct the training of 300 students from the subjects of the Russian Federation in North Caucasus in linguistic rights and state language policy; the organization of an interregional conference on the problems involved with a further publication of its materials.

Therefore, the project consisted of the following parts:

- preparation and publication of teaching programs and materials forming the educational part of the project;
- training of trainers ready for the project implementation;
- training of students acquiring the knowledge and skills of the democratic culture of management in the sphere of linguistic rights and language policy;
- organization of an interregional conference on the problem of “Language policy in a multiethnic and multicultural environment.”

A special team to be working on the project was collected on the basis of North Caucasus Academy of State Service (NCASS) which is affiliated to the Russian Academy of State Service of the President of the Russian Federation.

NCASS’s mission is to train a new generation of employees for state and municipal administration and management in Southern Russia and republics of North Caucasus. The training of cadres is implemented along three directions: state and municipal administration and management, law and world economics. NCASS’s objectives are:

- training of qualified specialists in the field of state and municipal administration, management, as well as specialists in the field of international economics and law;

- retraining and professional development of cadres for government structures - leaders and specialists of state power organs, local government and municipal services, deputies of representative bodies, leaders and specialists of market structures;
- training of trainers and scholars through post-graduate study programmes;
- informational and analytical support for the state service of the region;
- scientific and methodological supervision of the professional development organizations for government employees of the republic, krai, oblast and town administrations.

In implementing these objectives the staff of the NCASS (including 16 Professors, Doctors of Science and over 40 Candidates of Science, Associate Professors) were given contracts by the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, State Duma, Ministry for Ethnic Affairs of the Russian Federation, administrative and law structures of the subjects of the Russian Federation in Southern Russia, etc.

NCASS is in fact the sole regional scientific-educational centre, a federal affiliation performing regional functions of training, retraining and professional development of employees of the republics of North Caucasus on the basis of uniform approaches, requirements and standards for the state administration of the Russian Federation. It has signed contracts with the administrations of many towns and regions of Southern Russia (over 70 of them) on cooperation in the field of training, retraining and professional development of government and municipal employees, as well as scientific consultation services.

The project aimed therefore at elaborating educational means and methods of impact on the managerial mentality of the representatives of the administrative personnel of executive and law structures and public organizations of the republics and oblasts of North Caucasus, including their reserves, in order to achieve changes of values and skills in the administrative culture in the field of language policy.

The present situation in the administrative culture of North Caucasus is characterized by the development of controversial tendencies. On one hand, there is an ethnocentric bias with the practice of double standards in the management of democratic processes (democracy for the so called "title" nationalities and discrimination of minority rights). On the other hand, little attention is paid to some educational practices of civilized countries in democratic forms and methods of management and administration, solution of ethnic and language conflicts and problems.

Thus, there arises a problem of organizing forms and methods of educational impact, oriented towards democratic values in the sphere of linguistic rights and language policy.

Under present conditions the project in question is outside the current programs and functions of NCASS and is in fact a new initiative aimed at elaborating

innovative programs, approving new educational forms of activities designed as humanitarian opposition to ethnocentric processes.

The estimated effect of the project will concern the whole region of North Caucasus where there are 11 subjects of the Russian Federation: republics, krais and oblasts. Approved materials and educational technologies of the project can be spread among other educational establishments of the region, as well as further used in NCASS.

A team of scholars to implement the project are experienced in conducting research and teaching in the region. In 1997-99 several scientific projects were completed: they deal with administrative culture, the situation with administrative cadres and public opinion in the region. The results were reported in corresponding publications.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the main teaching programs of the educational part of the project it has been planned:

- To train 10 trainers and leaders of the project.
- To elaborate a system of testing to evaluate the development of the administrative personnel of the power structures and public organizations of the region along the lines of democratic orientations, knowledge and skills in the field.
- To organize special professional development courses in the field trip classrooms in 2 territories in accordance with 32-hour programme on the project topics. To conduct pre- and post-training testing of the students. To collect reviews and recommendations (100 persons).
- To organize special classrooms concerning the project program at the department of training and professional development of NCASS (50 persons from the republic of North Caucasus). To conduct pre- and post-training testing of students. To collect reviews and recommendations.
- To organize special classrooms at the full-time and part-time departments of state and municipal administration of NCASS (150 persons). To conduct pre- and post-training testing of students.
- To organize practical training of students in the organs of municipal and regional administration in accordance with special project program.
- To prepare the program for this practical training and forms of report.
- To organize an interregional conference on the project theme. To publish its materials and prepare recommendations for further activities.

<sup>1</sup> *Realizatsia printsipov federalizma*. Rostov-na-Donu. 1997; *Gosudarstvennaya vlast i mestnoye samoupravleniye: effektivnost i kadrovaya politika Respubliki Adygheya v sovremennikh usloviyakh*. Maikop - Rostov-na-Donu. 1999; *Tekhnologiya upravleniya etnopoliticheskimi protsessami v Severo-Kavkazskom reghione*. Rostov-na-Donu. 1999



- To publish teaching program and materials on the main courses of the educational part of the project and disseminate them in the regional administrative bodies and higher educational establishments of the subject of the Russian Federation in North Caucasus.

### *A long term strategy for the Project Development*

In case of positive outcomes of the project a NCASS team of trainers and scholars will come up with a proposal to begin the implementation of the forms of professional development, approved on the territory of North Caucasus, with financing in cooperation with regional administrations.

The educational part of the project, worked out within its framework, will be included into NCASS curriculums to be implemented by the teaching staff on the basis of published teaching and methodological materials.

Summing up of the outcomes of testing and evaluation procedures will result in working out and implementing recommendations concerning the measures for producing humanitarian and educational impact on values and behavior of ethnic political elites in the field of democratic language policy.

### *The Contribution of the Organization to the Project Implementation*

While implementing the project, NCASS makes use of its scientific, methodological, organizational experience and knowledge of ethnic political elites of the region; its contacts with the leaders of the republics helpful in carrying out planned activities; its teaching staff, trained to a large extent for implementing the project, as well as partly its teaching and scientific facilities ( transport, communication, rooms, computer and publishing hardware) and personal service ( program workers, laboratory workers, drivers, etc.).

### *Contribution of Other Organizations to Project Implementation*

Within the project it is planned to invite officials from the Representative Office of the Ministry of the RF for Federative and National Affairs as experts, organizers of practical training sessions, trainers, also officials from the republic administration of the Republic of Adygheya and the administration of Tuapsinky raion (Krasnodarsky Krai) as leaders of field trip classrooms on the territories.

## **2. SHORT TERM PROJECTS**

### **2.1. Language Usage Surveys in Kalmykia**

In order to carry on a successful plan of language promotion and to extend the domains of use of the language, the promotion of Kalmyk should lay on eight basic principles:

1. Participation: *The highest degree of continuous participation by the social sectors involved, from the very conception of the action.*
2. Research: *Periodical information and evaluation of the evolution of the process in society as a whole in order to find out about the change occurring.*
3. Graduality: *Scaling in the periodicalisation of the targets, taking best advantage of changes in society, without halts or sudden jerks, to arrive at a situation where the use of Kalmyk is necessary.*
4. Priorities: *Systematic globality depending on priorities.*
5. Multiplying effect: *Maximum yield of interventions, above all selecting actions which have a multiplying effect.*
6. Persuasion: *Preferably persuasive measures: the defence of individual or collective language rights should not affect the freedom of language use in private relations.*
7. Consensus: *The highest degree of consensus and avoidance of social conflicts: the reduction of difficulties or resistance is better than increasing demands.*
8. Prestige: *Association of the language to the most innovative elements of social progress, to make it prestigious.*

Insofar as language policy is a decisive tool to support the development of indigenous people, to promote the Kalmyk language, to ensure collective and individual rights and to design a legal framework regarding the use of both official languages, there is a need for a strategic plan of action in order to:

- *Detect trends in society, sector by sector, positive trends being considered as "Opportunities for promoting the language" and negative trends as "Threats to the language recovering".*
- *Analyse the situation of social, economic, cultural organisations according to the following issues: survey of strong and weak points as language promoters, selection of the most important trends and points in order to transform them later on into objectives to be achieved. For each objective, it is necessary to think of possible measures aiming to promote the language and each possible measure of support must be analyzed on four dimensions: a) How simple would it be to implement? b) How many resources would it require? c) How effective could it be? and d) How likely would social rejection be?*

In this context, setting up a language policy for Kalmyk means to develop both corpus planning (language standardization, dictionaries, teaching materials, etc.) and status planning (extension of domains of use, reversing language shift, etc.).

Before embarking therefore on the preparation of a suitable and effective language policy, it is necessary to have a clear, accurate and reliable picture of the current sociolinguistic situation to know if, how and at what cost Kalmyk can be saved from extinction. A new law on language has been passed but it is based in the vacuum as far as there is a dearth of information on intergenerational transmission of language, acceptance of the whole population towards promotion of Kalmyk language, institutionalization of the language, etc.

This survey (expected to be carried out in May 2003) will be undertaken by a team of 4 interviewers from the Kalmyk Centre for Intensive Languages Teaching (KCILT).

The surveys instrument to be used in the case of Kalmykia has been designed to gather data concerning highly relevant analytic variables for language production and reproduction: family, cultural reproduction, community, prestige, institutionalization, legitimation and education

It is customary to resort to a sample of at least 1,000 respondents for such surveys in order to assure that the numbers in each of the cells of the sampling frame contain sufficient numbers for analysis. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the Kalmyk demography of speakers (some 140,000 speakers at the most), a set of 200 interviews will be enough in order to collect, process and analyze data for producing a valid report on the sociolinguistic situation of the language.

The methodology to be used has been successfully applied in the case of 17 minority language groups of the European Union within the study EUROMOSAIC, commissioned by DGXXII of the European Commission and carried out by three leading research centres in Europe. It can be adapted to language groups at a very low cost.

This survey is scheduled for a six months period insofar as each stage must be carefully designed, tested, implemented and evaluated in order to ensure the success of the work done.

## **2.1. Development of the “Russian Minorities Website” hosted by BELTI**

In its present state the website only contains the abstracts (English and Russian) of the International Seminar held in Elista in 1999. It is therefore necessary to proceed to a conceptual change to transform it into a virtual platform for minority language groups in Russia (this can be done by gathering some issues from both the long- and short-term projects stated in this paper).

As for the contents, the main features should be as follows:

1. Online access (in Russian) to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages of the CoE, Convention Framework for Minorities, Fundamental Law of Rights of the EU and other relevant legal documents;
2. Works in progress (projects, etc.);
3. Call for partnership/application to the network;
4. Breaking news about the situation of minority language groups and identity issues (they can be collected from RFE/RL, Glasnost, Institute of War and Peace, Eurolang, Mercator Legislation, as well as from our partners in Russia);
5. Setting-up of an Intranet for those integrating the network;

6. Russian federal, republican and regional legislation about minorities (language, education, culture)
7. Funding: links to several websites where to apply for funding.
8. Regular exchanges of information, expertise, etc.

### 3. LONG-TERM PROJECTS

#### 3.1. Promotion of tolerance and improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the Russian Federation.

The responsibility for this project is in a consortium integrated by four organizations based in Western Europe with different statuses (institutions, independent research centres, NGOs). Each of these organizations enjoys a complementary and recognized expertise regarding the management of intercultural diversity and of inter-ethnic tensions: ECMI, European Center For Minority Issues, Institute Linguapax, AFORA and FOCUS.

Some of the above-mentioned organizations are more acquainted with the management of inter-ethnic relations while others deal more with non-discrimination activities. Likewise, some have a strong experience in working together with non-governmental structures while others cooperate with governments and international institutions. This complementarity as well as the fact that they belong and work actively in several specialized networks both in Western and Eastern Europe allows our Consortium to have at its disposal a wide range of competences and skills which are especially adequate for the actions to be implemented and described below.

#### *General approach of the proposal for Russia*

Beyond the tragic events which are taken place in Chechnya, inter-ethnic tensions and the increase of intolerance in Russia can not be comprehended without taking into account a specific situation of crossed discriminations. The hostility and coercitive practices directed towards ethnic minorities are not only a reality in the large urban centres. We can also observe the opposite in some minority regions of the Russian Federation or the CIS, where discrimination practices are directed towards groups which do not belong to the titular nationality in power. Tendencies to ethnocentrism and their related dangers are then to be found both amongst some sectors of the majority population and amongst some national minorities which hold power in autonomous territories.

We consider it of the utmost importance to take into account this double dimension in order to set up peaceful inter-ethnic relations and to implement actions both in:

- Large urban centers where intolerance is reaching its peak (Moscow, Saint Petersburg; regions of Krasnodar, Stravopol and Rostov-na-Donu in Southern Russia; regions of Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk in Siberia).
- Minority regions where tensions are especially significant, among others in Northern Caucasus (except Chechnya and its multiple challenges).

From this double target, our proposal is based upon the principle of a double-sided initiative which will focus:

- \* on one hand to give support to anti-discrimination activities regarding minority groups (operative support to victims, changing police attitudes and practices as well as legal instruments, monitoring and lobbying).
- \* on the other, to build up training processes for ethnic diversity management and formulation of suitable and adapted policies, whether at the federal level than in national republics (these training processes will target civil servants, politicians, members of the civil society and researchers).

These activities require a detailed preparation in order to work closely with the concerned Russian actors, especially the NGOs and the independent research centers, although the nature of these activities also requires a targeted implication of public authorities and administrations.

### *Proposed fields of work and experiences*

#### **A. Anti-discrimination practices:**

1. To support the creation of an independent center for assistance to victims of ethnic discrimination and lobbying:

Based in Moscow, this independent center would support Russian partners to undertake a threefold initiative:

- Operative (green phone number in the event of discrimination practices, legal advice to victims)
- Research and lobbying (fact-finding and monitoring team, proposal for legal documents, lobbying and cooperation with the institutions, submission of independent information to mass-media)
- Creation of regional branches (St Petersburg, Krasnodar, Stravopol, Rostov....)

We are currently in contact with several organizations in order to choose the most suitable one to work in this field.



2. Training and definition of an intervention framework for police bodies working within a multi-ethnic context:

The UNESCO Centre of Catalonia coordinates the PAVEMENT programme, supported by the European Commission, which associates police bodies, local authorities and members of the civil society with a strong experience in this field from five European countries (Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy and the region of Catalonia). The proposal is to take advantage of this experience in order to define and to set up new police practices against discrimination, especially taking into account the Chart of Rotterdam.

**B. Promotion tolerance and good practices regarding ethnic diversity:**

3. Specialized training for a good management of ethnic diversity and prevention of extremisms, as well as strengthening of the concerned Russian NGOs:

Based at the same time on federal and regional level, this processes of training for specialists will be carried on in close cooperation with both official and non-official Russian partners and will target civil servants, responsables of NGOs, politicians, etc. Starting from local situations and international experiences in this field, the main goal is to give a specialized formation for the management of multi-ethnic contexts which is often lacking in people involved in such kind of issues.

The ECMI has a strong and deep expertise regarding inter-ethnic relations in Western Europe and in those countries applying to enter the European Union, especially in the Baltic states and the former Yugoslavia. The centre integrates well-known experts and carries on its activities on the request of governments and international institutions such as the OSCE, Council of Europe, etc. According to this, three main fields of work can be included in the training courses: a) good practices in the management of multi-ethnic contexts; b) implementation and monitoring of these practices; and c) reduction of conflicts and support to peace initiatives.

The training courses will be strengthened by the support provided by AFORA to Russian NGOs working in this field. Founded in 1994, AFORA is a NGO which focuses its activities on the minority question in Asia. It has a strong expertise in China and Russia, with a deep commitment with Russian NGOs in Northern Caucasus and Siberian regarding language issues and strengthening contacts with Western European organizations and institutions. It also has a good knowledge about the Chinese immigration.

4. Support to federal and regional strategies aiming to promote peaceful inter-ethnic relations

This module proposes legal and thematic advice to federal and regional structures in the main fields linked to inter-ethnic tensions (representation of minority groups and civil society within the sharing of powers, anti-discrimination practices, language and educative policies, etc.). This support will deal with the analysis of existing situations, the design and implementation of pilot strategies integrating related international tools in these fields.

The ECMI will work in close cooperation with the Institute Linguapax (UNESCO Centre of Catalonia). Created in 1984, the Centre is a NGO which provides technical expertise to the UNESCO and to several states and regions regarding the implementation of multicultural and plurilingual policies. It also leads international initiatives such as the Forum for Civil Dialogue, the projects LINGUAPAX and PAVEMENT and so forth. Insofar as Catalonia is one of the most advanced regions in Europe regarding the setting up of harmonic relations between a strong regional identity and a State context, the transfer of this expertise to the Russian Federation would be very useful. A first seminar held in Kalmykia and funded by the Centre and AFORA (May 1999) gave the opportunity to discuss and analyze the above-mentioned issues with representatives of 18 Russian minorities and of federal authorities.

### **3.2. Pilot-project "Promotion of autochthonous languages in Russia and interethnic conflicts prevention. Pilot program in Kalmykia extendable to 4 other republics in Russia (Adygeia, Buryatia, Tuva and Khakassia)".**

The Russian Federation is formed by 176 national groups and a similar number of languages, most of them severely threatened. In a context defined by the mixture of populations, tensions focused on the capacity of titular minorities in respecting the interests of the other linguistic communities. Based upon the Catalan model, which is one of the most successful experiences regarding the harmonisation of the regional identity and the State framework, this project is formed by 4 dimensions :

- Pilot program of promotion of the autochthonous language in Kalmykia.
- Integration of the international legislations and recommendations in this field.
- Effective participation of civil society and support to the NGO Russian Minorities' Initiative for Democracy and Peace.
- Preparation of the extension of the project to 4 other republics in Siberia and North-Caucasus.

The project enjoys the support of both Russian federal authorities and those of the 5 concerned republics, with the support of the Council of Europe, the Delegation for Russia of the European Parliament and the High Patronage of the Unesco, which supplies technical and administrative support.

### Objectives:

General objectives:

- To design and to implement an efficient and tolerant program of language promotion in Kalmykia, suitable for other minority republics in Russia.
- To channel the needs and aspirations of minority groups to maintain and develop their own identity and characteristics from a methodic framework taking into account the interests of the other communities living in the territory as well as international treaties and recommendations.
- To ensure that both individuals and communities will be treated with equality within the boundaries of the republic, to ensure full and non-discriminatory access to opportunities in order to promote local recognition of the international standards regarding Human Rights.
- To create advisory and mediation tools between local governments and linguistic communities to guarantee a respectful management of potential tensions.
- To promote effective participation of civil society in the different national areas in Russia.
- To benefit from the expertise of some regions of the EU in the field of language and regional identity promotion, especially from Catalonia, and to build up direct contacts between these European regions and Russian minorities.
- To alert and involve the International Community on the question of national groups in Russia and to strengthen direct contacts between the parts concerned.

Specific objectives:

- Pilot program of promotion of the Kalmyk language:
  1. To build up a global language policy involving government and academic structures, relevant representatives of civil society and organizations aiming to promote Kalmyk in several fields as well as representatives of linguistic and cultural minorities.
  2. To adapt the local legal framework in order to include international laws and recommendations in this field.
  3. To design, produce and disseminate educational materials for Kalmyk learning in primary and secondary schools.
  4. To elaborate and implement training programs for in-service teachers in new teaching and immersion methods (especially through computing and telematics).
  5. To spread effective participation of civil society in the processes of language and identity promotion.

*At local and federal level.*

- Strengthen the NGO Russian Minorities' Initiative for Democracy and Peace and 2 of its regional branches.
- Create a legal advisory service regarding the promotion of minority languages and cultures.
- Create an advisory service to help local actors to submit reports in order to ask for suitable funding to international institutions and foundations.
- Strengthen an email/Internet network binding the different national groups in Russia.
- Support the ratification by Russia of the European Charter of Regional and/or Minority Languages.

*At the international level :*

- Organize national groups' missions to international institutions and regions of the EU.
- Prepare working proposals for these structures regarding national groups in Russia.
- Obtain a consultive status in the international institutions for the NGOs representing the national groups.
- To obtain, when and if suitable, the creation of a European specific budget line for Russian minority groups based on the model of LIEN-Tacis in the social domain.
- Extension of the project to other Russian minority republics.
- To organize training seminars in Kalmykia for the representatives of the other concerned republics in order to present the method used and the results of the pilot program.
- To offer to the concerned republics the services of RUMIDAP (legal advice and preparation of reports).
- To include other national groups in the contacts with international institutions and regions of the EU.

**Actions to be implemented according to the necessities**

From a general standpoint, the risks of tensions seem to be less related to the relations between federal authorities and minority groups (as far as Moscow is in general terms rather tolerant) than to the capacity of titular nationalities to:

- Take into account the situation and interests of the other linguistic communities living in the territory.
- Harmonize the urgency of autochthonous languages promotion with the necessity

of a long period of transition necessary for changing language attitudes in multinational regions.

- Develop fully operative structures in order to allow these other groups as well as titular nationalities to learn, when necessary, the autochthonous language which has become official together with Russian.

These issues demand a response to three priorities:

- To elaborate at the republican level a global language policy taking into account the interests and aspirations of local linguistic communities according to the existing international legislation and guidelines.
- To extend the processes of decision regarding languages beyond the sole official spheres (government, parliament and administration) to stimulate an active participation of civil society and NGOs as well as non-titular linguistic communities.
- To give financial support to global actions, including not only the design of plans of action but also through financing the publication and dissemination of school books in order to make possible the learning of the titular language for all linguistic communities and to avoid discrimination.

From our point of view the most realistic solution is to implement a pilot program addressing these issues in a relatively homogeneous republic known for its cultural tolerance (constituted for its most by an autochthonous nationality and the Russian ethnic group) and later on study with the representatives of other concerned republics how to extend this model to their republic.

### **Assets of Kalmykia as an adequate operative platform**

The election of Kalmykia, ethnic Mongol enclave in the Caucasus border, is justified at different levels:

- Its ethnic composition is relatively balanced (the whole population is of 323,000 people, 45% Kalmyks and 38% Russian) and the republic enjoys friendly relations both with other ethnic communities and federal authorities.
- Its geographic situation in the northern border of Caucasus on the one hand, its Asian origin as well as its cultural tradition linked to the peoples of Siberia and the North of Russia, on the other hand have made of Kalmykia a crossroads of nationalities unique in Russia.
- Its national language is severely endangered and need the urgent implementation of a promotion program (85% of young people consider Kalmyk as their mother tongue but only 6% can speak it fluently while Kalmyk is spoken as the main language in only 6 small villages).



- The flexibility of its authorities and the dynamism of an emerging civil society which is very active in the field of the modernization of Kalmyk and has a valuable experience in organizing highly specialized international seminars regarding minority language planning, as well as strong and fruitful contacts both at the international and federal level and with other minority language groups in Russia.
- The lack of geopolitical challenges in its territory, its status of ‘poor republic’ and its weak demography make of Kalmykia a well accepted partner by other republics.
- Its limited school population (35,787 pupils in whole in primary and secondary education) allows the complete financing of the project (including the publication of text books), which is an essential condition for its success, and this without raising the costs to an unattainable level (the budget for books publishing is as 120,000 euros).
- Finally, Kalmykia is also the All-Russian headquarters of our partner in this project, the Russian Minorities’ Initiative for Democracy and Peace, non-governmental structure created according to the Declaration of Elista (May 1999), which has five branches working in multinational regions (North Caucasus, Siberia and Far East, Central Russia and the Volga region, Ural, and Western Russia).

#### **Other difficulties faced by minority languages concerned by this program**

- The lack of resources and qualified personnel.

This is the main difficulty. In a context of bankrupt in the majority of the republics, there are no budgets allowing funds for language promotion. Most initiatives begin with a strong energy and then are gradually held back. The few qualified people leave the regions for big cities or foreign countries. More often reforms are limited to an administrative approach based in decrees which are often ineffective due to the lack of financing. This situation requires an integrative approach, not only limited to the design of actions but including additional essential costs such as those derived from the publication of text books.

- The isolation of existing initiatives.

Communications are still a daily battle, often without computers, seldom even without a fax in the neighbourhood, without salaries, waiting for hours, even for days, to contact with a correspondent in another region. The immensity of the territory is on the other hand an obstacle for direct relations. The lost of time is substantial and the isolation often leads to absurd blind alleys as far similar problems have been solved with success in other regions. The most adequate response is an intensive development of the Internet and email contacts insofar as it is the only way not only to spread communication between initiatives but also to supply the necessary information and on-line services.

- The lack of contact with international institutions and foundations.

The actions undertaken by most dynamic groups are limited by their inexperience regarding the preparation of reports, the difficulty to understand the prospects and the language used by international structures, and by the great prudence of the latter regarding nationalism or identity related issues. This situation leads often to negative answers which in return provoke a certain dejection and strengthens self-isolation. On the contrary, and likewise regrettable, the International Community has little information about concrete realities and this only under the prisma of organizations or newspapers based in Moscow, whose information is very often perceived by the minorities as biased or partial at least.

It looks as if a flagrant misunderstanding existed between national groups in Russia and international structures as far as the former consider that survival of minority languages doesn't interest the latter which consider that the tolerant attitude of Moscow towards minorities is by itself an adequate guarantee. Once again, the use of the Internet to offer on-line advice to minorities regarding for preparing reports and to supply updated information in English about the situation of the minority regions appears as a highly relevant contribution in order to reduce distances and mutual resentment. Furthermore, direct contacts between Russian minorities and international institutions by means of missions in the EU should be a priority.

### **Expected results**

Expected results for the target group

Two issues must be taken into account:

a. *Prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts:*

- An operative framework in Kalmykia, extendable to other minority republics.

Globally, the expected approval of a Law on the Languages of Kalmykia during the 3-year period of the project, which should take into account the situation and the necessities of the other linguistic communities living in the territory of the republic as well as the international legislation in this field on the one hand, and the institutional involvement of civil society in the taking of decisions on the other hand, appears to us highly relevant issues as far as it would be the first of such kind at Russian regional level. The preparatory work could be later on used by other republics once adapted to their specific necessities. The description and follow-up (in Russian) in our website of all this process as well as the other compendia will be of significant interest. The same is applicable to a local team which will be fully operative in order to disseminate its experience to other regions.

- A strong symbolic dimension at the service of tolerance:

This program represents a concrete evidence that a titular minority, by choosing the way of tolerance and opening to the others, is not only in a better position to obtain more relevant results in the field of the promotion of its language than republics

choosing an authoritarian strategy, but is also able to gain international support which until now is rarely given in this field.

- The creation at the Russian level of a civic network which can be immediately mobilized to prevent tensions:

The set-up of an Internet/Intranet network linking the leading actors of civil society and the concerned universities across Russia by means of a fully competent team will have a strong effectiveness insofar as it will allow almost immediate joint actions at the Russian level and this at different levels:

- Capacity to act immediately, for instance once a document on autochthonous identities is discussed in a republic.
- Capacity to act as a deterrent force, when possible, by giving national echo to an event supposed to be discreet.
- Capacity to act as an alarm network in the event of problems.

This role is usually that of the independent national press, but the deficiencies of Moscow newspapers in this field are well-known. As far as the local press is often subjected to established local powers, we think such a kind of electronic network can be the most suitable response.

It is worth noting that these actions will be fully reliable and effective to the extent that they would be accompanied by a suitable statute given by international organizations in order to offer the leading actors a potentially necessary protection, an international platform and the possibility to appeal to international institutions.

- A moderating and stabilizing role by involving international institutions and, later on, several regions of the EU, together with autochthonous minorities regarding concrete proposals. The whole operation is conceived to multiply the contacts between Russian minorities and the European Union.

The presence of competent experts of some of the most active European regions in the field of regional identity promotion and the first contacts established with these regions let us to foresee a strong implication of the latter to the activities of Russian minorities. The lasting support should complete and link the support of the international institutions and play a highly valuable role as moderating tool. Nevertheless this support involves a large amount of preliminary contacts which are the objective of the Russian missions to Western Europe in the framework of this program.

Finally, we want also to stress the relevance of a special European budget line for Russian minorities as an element of stabilization. If based on flexible criteria in order not to exclude field initiatives, this budget line should have a remarkable effectiveness with limited resources and should allow to act beforehand to avoid dramatic and very expensive situations as those we are facing in South-Eastern Europe.

The creation of the budget line is even more justified insofar as it would be fed by concrete proposals of action developed by our partners of the Russian Minorities'

Initiative for Democracy and Peace with the support of studies and the expertise of the external team.

Finally, all the team is strongly committed to the signature by Russia of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and is in permanent contact with Russian authorities. Furthermore, this program could be added to the progress report to be submitted by the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe regarding the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

*b. Impact on the promotion of autochthonous languages:*

Language policy processes mean to develop global policies in order to improve the usefulness of a given language in all social domains (compulsory education and formation of adults, family, professional activities, mass media, civil services, etc.). Due to the time-limit of the project, we will focus on children education as far as it represents an obvious priority and requirement (although not the only one) for the survival and promotion of the autochthonous language.

In Kalmykia

- A complete language learning set of materials for children aged 6-11 which is the most important period for language learning.

Regardless the chosen method, the publication of text books or teacher's training, the project has been prepared in order to disseminate a complete and immediately operative material regarding Kalmyk language learning at the best age for language learning.

- Studies of feasibility will be carried on to extend the action to other domains of daily life.

The language use surveys based on the Euromosaic model will be completed by the evaluation of Unesco regarding the efficacy of language learning and by the analytical models developed by the ECMI regarding cost-effectiveness of minority language policies.

The result will be proposals of concrete actions which will be presented both during the missions of information/sensitizing in the EU and to Russian federal authorities.

- A language acquisition process open to and suitable for all linguistic communities living in Kalmykia.

The issue is extremely important to avoid the difficulties faced by other states of the former USSR where the lack of opportunities to learn the new national language has led to increasing tensions with other language groups. It is also relevant to strengthen the conscience of a common destiny and to develop a real culture of peace.

#### In other minority republics

- A method of learning by means of a tested and successful immersion method easily applicable to other autochthonous languages.

#### Publications and other external results

The content of publications and other activities has been described in other sections. We recall here the main features:

- Bilingual Russian/English website regarding the questions of minorities in Russia, as well as a Russian translation of international issues regarding national minorities.
- On-line publication of the preparatory language use surveys carried on in Kalmykia and the evaluation reports made by Unesco and ECMI.
- On-line publication of several compendia: international, federal and local legislative documents concerning autochthonous languages.
- Publication of Kalmyk text books for 6 levels of learning (65,000 copies).
- New proposals of action regarding Russian minorities.

#### Durability of activities after co-financing

The durability of the action in Kalmykia doesn't offer any difficulty, either at the institutional level after the expected approval of a language act, or at the educational level, as far the financing of structures is assumed by the authorities. The actors in other republics will benefit from the training seminars held in Kalmykia as well from field missions carried on by the Elista's team. Furthermore, the set-up of Internet infrastructures will allow to strengthen communications at very low costs.

#### The financing difficulties will be at 2 levels:

- The continuity of the activities of the Russian Minorities' Initiative for Democracy and Peace, especially the salaries of the personnel of the information and on-line advisory services.
- The extension of the project to other concerned republics regarding the expenses of the language use surveys and the redaction/publication of text books..

In order to prevent this situation, and to the extent that is not foreseeable that Moscow or the minority regions will be able to allow funds in these fields in the short or medium term, 3 actions are to be implemented within the present program:

- The on-line advisory service for submission of dossiers (fully operative in the 2d year of the project) will seek for new potential sources of funding and support minorities to prepare their dossiers.
- Direct contacts will be established as soon as possible with the most active



European regions in the field of regional identity promotion to set-up technical and financial cooperation.

- Due to the vast necessities of Russian minorities and the urgency to prevent the rising of new interethnic tensions, we have already started with the Committee for Ethnic Affairs of the State Duma a work of sensitizing to the European Parliament, in order to seek for the establishment of a future special budget line for Russian minorities.