

(English version)

Question for written answer E-004678/25
to the Commission
Arkadiusz Mularczyk (ECR)
(24 November 2025)

Subject: Recognition of the Yenish as a national minority in Germany and compliance with EU law

I am writing in relation to the discrimination that the Yenish people face in Germany. Numbering between 150 000 and 200 000 people, this group has a distinct language, culture, music and nomadic traditions in Europe that date back to the Middle Ages. Although the group was persecuted — interned and murdered — by the German Nazis for being ‘asocial’, the Yenish are not recognised as a national minority, preventing them from receiving any state support on the basis of their identity. A report from the Central Council of Yenish dated 18 November 2025 confirms that the group meets the criteria of a national minority, and thus calls for a debate to be held in the Bundestag.

This situation violates Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (non-discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin) and Article 22 (respect for linguistic and cultural minorities). Similarly, Directive 2000/43/EC requires equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, while the Minority SafePack initiative calls for strengthening the protection of minorities.

In light of the above:

1. Is the Commission monitoring the implementation of the above provisions in Germany in relation to the Yenish?
2. Does the lack of recognition constitute a breach of EU law and is the Commission considering investigating this matter?
3. What steps will the Commission take to support the rights of the Yenish under SafePack?

Submitted: 24.11.2025

Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(27 January 2026)

The respect of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is one of the founding values of the EU explicitly mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

Moreover, any discrimination on the basis of membership of a national minority is explicitly prohibited under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The Racial Equality Directive ⁽¹⁾ offers protection against discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin with regard to certain specific areas. It neither affects the rights of national minorities as such nor requires the recognition of such a status.

The EU does not have the competence to mandate changes in the political, administrative and institutional framework existing in the Member States regarding the status of national minorities.

In fact, it is for Member States to legislate as regards national minorities, in particular over issues relating to the recognition of the status of such minorities, their self-determination and autonomy or the regime governing the use of regional or minority languages.

In its reply ⁽²⁾ to the European Citizens' Initiative ‘Minority SafePack’, the Commission noted that the full implementation of legislation and policies in place provides a powerful set of measures to protect persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities and to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22-26.

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission on the European Citizens' Initiative ‘Minority SafePack — one million signatures for diversity in Europe’, C/2021/0171 final, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=PI_COM:C\(2021\)171](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=PI_COM:C(2021)171)