

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002630/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Loránt Vincze (PPE)
(30 June 2025)

Subject: The promotion and protection of the rights of traditional national and linguistic minorities within the European Union and beyond

While the Commission has consistently replied to parliamentary questions and in its communication on the European Citizens' Initiative 'Minority SafePack — one million signatures for diversity in Europe' ⁽¹⁾, that the EU has no general legislative competence for the protection of national minorities, press reports ⁽²⁾ indicate that the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) stated, in the context of future enlargement, that 'we are protecting minority rights within the EU and not outside of it'.

The European neighbourhood policy is grounded in shared values such as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

1. While EU candidate countries must meet the Copenhagen criteria, including for the protection of minorities, could the VP/HR confirm whether these criteria apply equally to all candidate countries, including Ukraine, and indicate how the VP/HR assesses their consistent application?
2. Which specific European Union instruments and measures did the VP/HR reference in relation to the protection of national and linguistic minorities within the EU?

Submitted: 30.6.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(1 August 2025)

Respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities as stated in Article 2 of the Treaty on EU ⁽¹⁾, are fundamental EU values and key to its relations with all its partners.

For potential and candidate countries, the Copenhagen criteria require stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.

These are central to the accession process and apply equally to all countries, including Ukraine. They are monitored and assessed by the Commission, notably through the annual enlargement package.

In the framework of accession negotiations, the rights of persons belonging to minorities are an integral part of Chapter 23 of the EU *acquis*.

The Commission screens candidate countries' alignment with *acquis* on fundamental rights and monitors implementation. Subsequently, countries are expected to prepare a rule of law roadmap outlining reforms.

In Ukraine's case, authorities are expected to implement adopted legislation and the action plan on national minorities effectively, in line with EU standards and in dialogue with the national minorities' representatives.

Within the EU, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ⁽²⁾. Monitoring, dialogue, and funding mechanisms such as the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, or the pre-accession financing instruments/facilities, among other initiatives, underline EU's commitment to fostering inclusive societies.

¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=intcom:C\(2021\)171](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=intcom:C(2021)171).

² <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news-corner/hungarian-fm-szijarto-slams-kaja-kallas-over-scandalous-remarks/>.

⁽¹⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2012/art_2/oj/eng.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>.