Abstract

Language has always been one of the most pertinent factors contributing to the cultural diversity of societies throughout the world. Whereas the socio-historical processes of state-formation and nation building in the modern age have been accompanied by exclusive language policies aiming at linguistic homogenisation of the population, language rights have been central to the claims of national minorities for recognition of their identities.

The preservation of linguistic diversity has, thus, become a major concern to many researchers, politicians and leaders of linguistic communities in Europe in general and countries of the former Soviet Union in particular. The issue of linguistic minorities has taken on a particular urgency because of the increasing recognition of the threat of extinction faced by many minority languages.

The need for immediate action has become obvious. Europe has slowly but steadily started to come up with responses to how to keep the most vulnerable languages from extinction and guarantee rights to speakers of such languages at the same time. Today we can talk about the emergence of a European minimum standard of protection of language rights as it has developed since the 1990s in the European conventions and their monitoring activities. The impact of such standard varies in different countries and is being assessed in the present doctoral thesis with respect to Russia and Ukraine.