



## Assessing the Perception Index on Right of Education in the Mother Tongue (Pire) for Different National Minorities in Albania

Enida Kume

PhD, Faculty of Education,  
"Aleksandër Moisiu" University,  
Durrës, Albania

Received: 25 February 2024 / Accepted: 21 March 2024 / Published: 23 March 2024  
© 2024 Enida Kume

Doi: 10.56345/ijrdv11n126

### Abstract

Albanian legislation defines the education of national minorities in their mother tongue as a fundamental constitutional right. The judgment for the realization of this right using PIRE and its indicators evaluated for different national minorities in Albania showed that there are significant differences between them. The Greek, Macedonian, and Armenian minorities perceive the completion of the right to education in the mother tongue qualitatively better than Roma, Serbian, Bulgarian and Egyptian Montenegrin national minorities. Bosnian national minority values the completion of this right at the "Moderate" level. Among the component indicators of the index, citizens perceive legislation, desire and opportunities as the most important. This perception is more pronounced among the Greek, Macedonian, Armenian and Bosnian minorities. Citizens perceive more sensitive effects in the fulfillment of the right to education in the mother tongue generated by the factors: (i) the level of their information about this right and the paths they must follow to fulfill it; (ii) population size of national minority and its distribution in the territory; (iii) the level of use of the mother tongue in family communication; (iv) citizen cooperation and with local government bodies; (v) encouraging private initiatives and (vi) increasing capacities in bilateral and regional cooperation.

**Keywords:** Education, Mother tongue, National Minority, Albania

### 1. Introduction

According to the Law no. 96/2017 "On the protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania", Article 3, national minorities in the Republic of Albania are the Greek, Macedonian, Aromanian, Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Serbian and Bulgarian minorities. Article 13 of this law defines that "Persons belonging to a national minority enjoy the right to learn minority language". Creating opportunities for national minorities to be educated in their mother tongue is an issue that is given special attention in conventions and other international documents. Albania, as a member of the UN and a candidate country for membership in the European Union, has ratified Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), UNESCO The right to education of minorities: overview of States' measures reported in the 10<sup>th</sup> Consultation on the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education. (2023), Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1998).

International institutions pay special attention to the monitoring of the fulfillment of the right to education of national minorities in their mother tongue. The Council of Europe (CoE) in cooperation with the respective countries, publish periodically - Experts' Assessment Report on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

(CoE-Reports and Recommendations). The analysis, identification of problems and challenges that accompany the fulfillment of this right is addressed by many authors (Joshua, 1984; Duncan, 2002; Kozhemyakov, 2008; Azizi, 2011; Stoica, 2018; Vicsek, 2018; Mulolli 2020, Rrahmani 2020; Bayat et al.2923; Shala, et al. 2023).

To assess the level of fulfillment of the right to education in the mother tongue for national minorities, Kume (2024) has proposed the use of an index, the values of which are the perceptions of citizens belonging to national minorities regarding the fulfillment of this right.

This paper presents the results of the evaluation and analysis of the Index for the right to education in the mother tongue (PIRE index), for different national minorities in the Republic of Albania.

## 2. Aims and Methodology

### 2.1 Aims

The aims of this study are the following:

1. Evaluate of Index on right of education in the mother tongue for different national minorities (PIRE)
2. Identification of problems and challenges that condition success in efforts to fulfill the right of national minorities to education in their mother tongue

### 2.2 Methodology

The evaluation of perception Index on right of education in the mother tongue national minorities (PIRE) was carried out by applying the Model (Figure 1) and rules described in Approach Methodology developed by Kume (2024).

According to this Methodology, the evaluation of the PIRE was performed using the quantitative evaluation of perceptions for 33 items grouped in 5 indicators. Each of items was formulated in the form of an assertion to which citizens should the attitude with positive growth should be expressed, ranging from the lowest value (1) to the highest (5). For the evaluation of PIRE, the values of the indicators (average values of all the constituent items of the respective indicator) are standardized in values from 1 to 100 points.

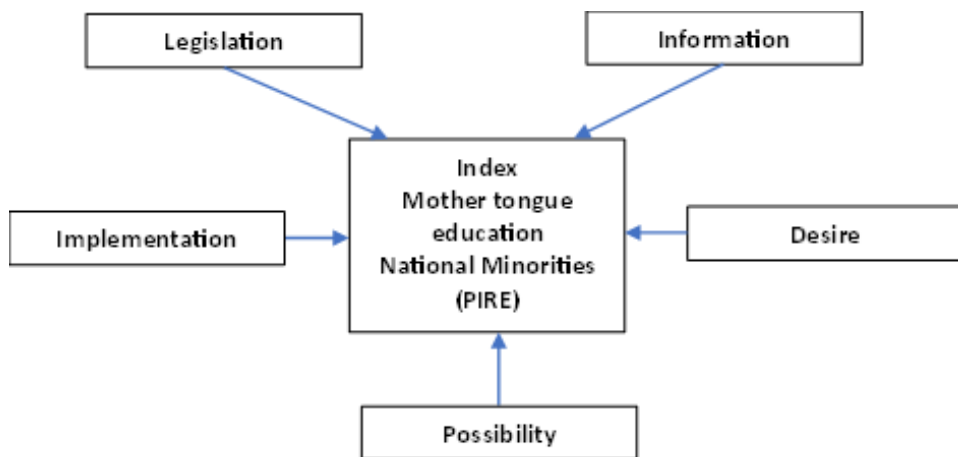


Figure 1: PIRE and its component indicators

Source: Kume, E (2024)

For the evaluation of the "Legislation" indicator, in addition to the perceptions of the citizens, the evaluations of 5 legal experts were also used. Standardized values are ranked in five intervals (Table no. 1)

**Table 1.** Evaluation of fulfilling the right to education in the mother tongue for national minorities based on PIRE value

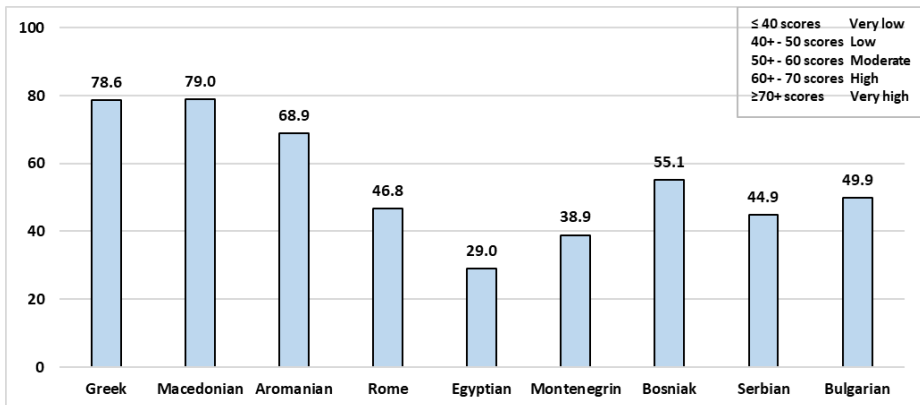
≤ 40 scores	Very low
40+ - 50 scores	Low
50+ - 60 scores	Moderate
60+ - 70 scores	High
≥70+ scores	Very high

For the evaluation of the PIRE Index, data from interviews with 516 citizens who belong to nine national minorities were used.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 The PIRE assessment

The values of PIRE index, evaluated based on the opinions expressed by citizens who belong to different national minorities (Figure 2) show that, among these minorities, there are significant differences in their perception of the fulfillment of the right to education in their mother tongue.



**Figure 2.** Evaluation of PIRE index corresponding to different national minorities

Citizens belonging to the Greek and Macedonian minorities evaluate the process of educating their children in the mother tongue at the "Very high" level, for the Aromanian national minorities, the realization of this right is evaluated at the "High" level. The citizens of the Bosnian minority perceive the fulfillment of this right at the "Moderate" level. Citizens belonging to Roma, Serbian and Bulgarian national minorities declare that the fulfillment of the right to education in their mother tongue is at the "Low" level and Egyptian and Montenegrin perceive the fulfillment of this right at the "Very low" level. Such a situation, which creates the impression that, in fulfilling this right, there is discrimination between different national minorities, it is necessary to explain. The current Albanian legislation, the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the laws: Law no. 96/2017 "On the protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania", Law No. 69/2012 "For pre-university system of education in the Republic of Albania", treats this right equally, without any discrimination for all national minorities. Therefore, to explain these differences, is necessary to analyze the sub-legal regulatory framework related to the implementation of legislation. The differences between the national minorities related to their size population and distribution in territory, level of use of mother tongue in community, the differences in the reaction of the national minorities towards this right, etc. must be analyzed.

### 3.2 Evaluation of PIRE component indicators

#### 3.2.1 Legislation

The values of the "Legislation" Indicator, for which the opinions of experts and the perceptions of citizens were used, show that the approach of different national minorities to the way in which the right to education in mother tongues is treated in legislation is different (Figure 3). Citizens, as a rule, depending to national minority, express themselves differently regarding the requirements that are foreseen in the legislation and the conditions that they must fulfill in order to enjoy this right. The Egyptian minority has the lowest rating (Very low) for the legislation and behind them are the citizens who belong to the Montenegrin minority (Low). The evaluation at the level "Moderate" (Roma and Serbian minorities), "High" (Bulgarian and Bosnian minorities) and "Very high" (Greek, Macedonian and Aromanian minorities) show that, in general, the Albanian legislation creates a good supporting for the implementation of the right to education in the mother tongue for national minorities. Citizens, especially those who belong to the Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin and Serbian minorities, say that the condition provided in the legislation regarding the threshold, the minimum number of students for opening a class is penalizing for them. The average standardized value of the respective item results in 8.75 score (very low). This condition has a penalizing effect, especially for national minorities that have a small population and that are scattered in the territory, as is the case of the populations that belong to these four national minorities.

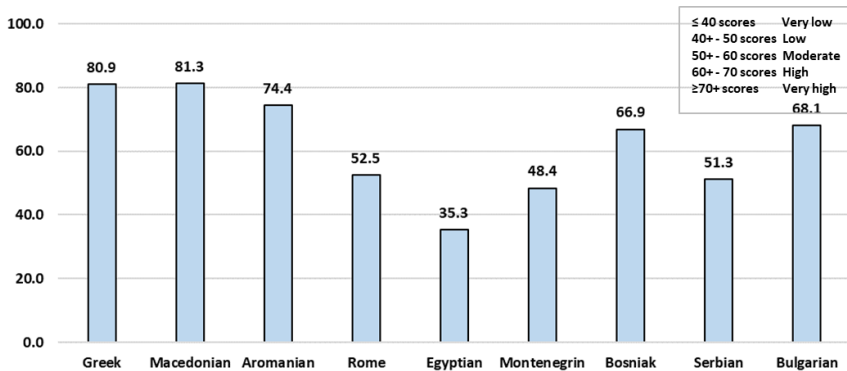


Figure 3: Indicator "Legislation"

#### 3.2.2 Information

Based on the perceptions of citizens, it can be affirmed that informing citizens who belong to national minorities about the right to education in their mother tongue has big differences between these minorities (Figure 4). Minorities that do not have a population distributed in different regions of Albania, such as the Greek, Macedonian and Bosnian minorities, rate their informing at the "Very high" level. At this level, the Armenian minority also values it, but the reason is not its concentration, but the level of culture that characterizes the population of this community. The community that belongs to Montenegrin national minority, although it is concentrated, mainly in the region of Shkodra, is not informed. The effects of the work of the local government and NGOs for informing this minority are negligible. The situation is the same in the Serbian minority. The peoples belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities are scattered in the territory and, therefore, the possibilities for their information are limited. NGOs that can influence the reduction of the negative effect of this factor, according to the citizens interviewed in relation to this issue, they are not effective.

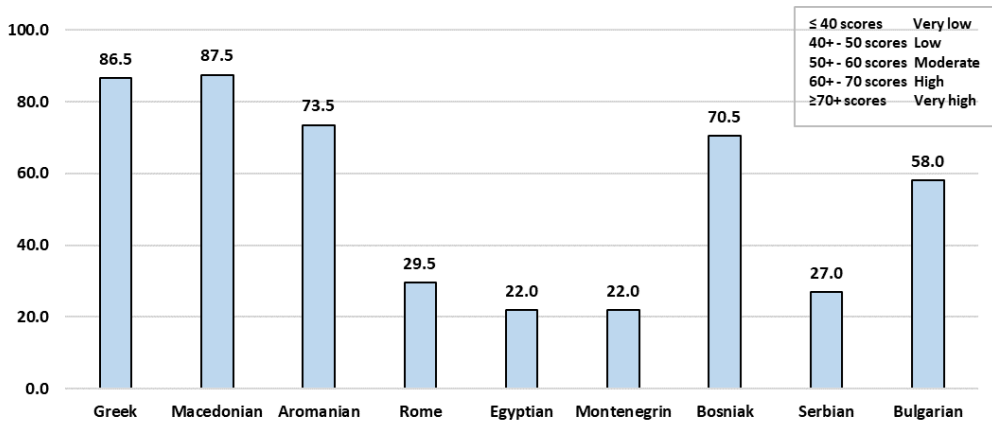


Figure 4: Indicator "Information"

### 3.2.3 Desire

In the result obtained for the "Desire" indicator (Figure 5), its low value for the Egyptian minority (Very low) stands out. Such a result is not surprising. This is among the national minorities in Albania where the phenomenon of not using the mother tongue has gradually and continuously occurred. Currently, in the community of this minority the native language is no used for communication. The desire for education in the mother tongue is also low in Montenegrin minority community for the reason that historically this community has not been offered the opportunity for education in the mother tongue.

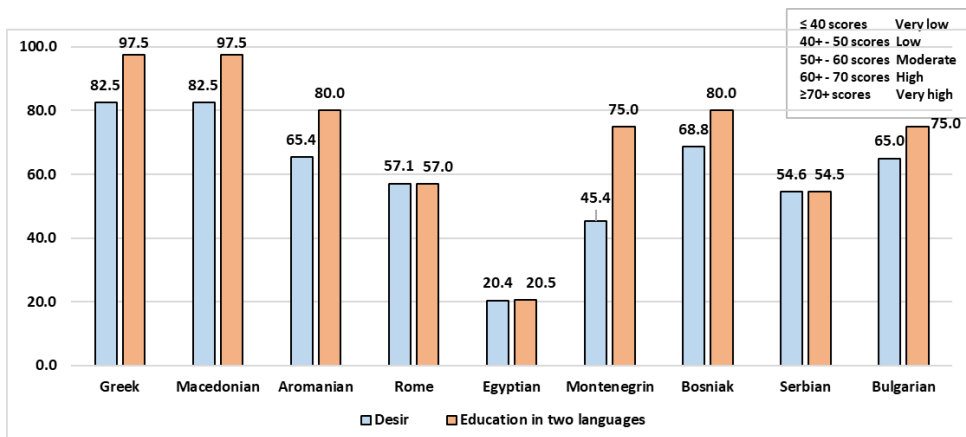


Figure 5. Indicator "Desire"

Education in two languages, Albanian and their mother tongue, except for the Egyptian minority, all national minorities value it as necessary. Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Montenegrin, Bosnian and Bulgarian national minorities perceive the need for bilingual education at a "Very high" level. Serbian and Roma minorities have a moderate attitude towards this alternative.

The result obtained for this indicator is important. It can and should be used as information in the process of drafting policies for the implementation of the right of national minorities to education in their native language.

### 3.2.4 Possibility

Citizens who belong to national minorities say that the opportunities for educating children in the mother tongue are real. Except for the Roma and Egyptian national minorities, the interviewed citizens who belong to all other national minorities rate these opportunities at the "High" or "Very high" level (Figure 6). According to their opinion, the opportunities for education in mother tongue are affected by the level of concentration and distribution of populations belonging to these minorities in the territory. This factor conditions the path that can be used to realize this right for national minorities - teaching in mother tongue in pre-school and elementary school or education in the mother tongue through the development of the optional subject "Mother language and culture" in secondary school. As a result, the approach of the national minority communities also changes. The cooperation between the members of the community, when they are scattered in the territory, estimate as a determining important factor for the fulfil of the right to education in the mother tongue.

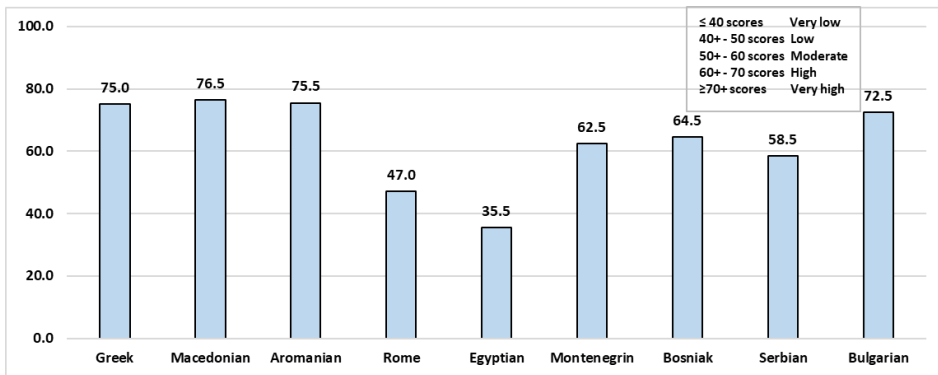


Figure 6. Indicator "Possibility"

### 3.2.5 Implementation

The general perception of the interviewed citizens regarding the fulfillment of the necessary conditions for realizing the right to education in the mother tongue of national minorities classifies this indicator at the "Low" level (47.5 scores). Differently from others, the interviewed citizens who belong to the Montenegrin, Serbian and Egyptian national minorities perceive the process of implementing this right at the "Very low" level. Roma, Bosnian and Bulgarian national minorities evaluate it at the "Moderate" level, while for the Greek, Macedonian and Aromanian minorities the implementation of this right is evaluated at the "High" level. (Figure 7).

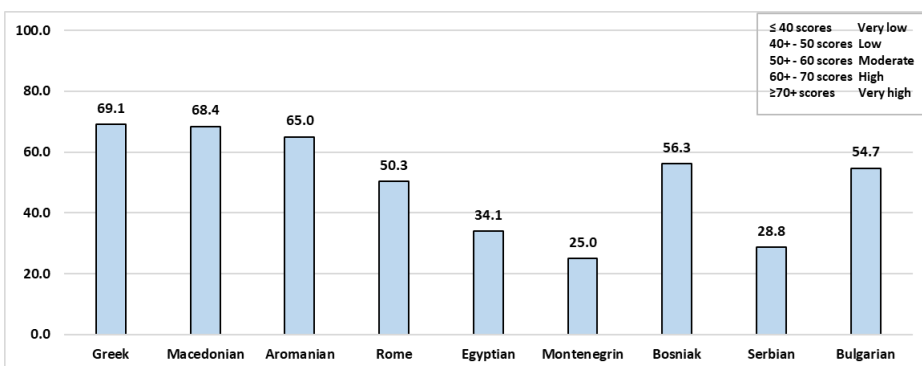


Figure 7. Indicator "Implementation"

The low rating for this indicator is the result of the fact that the interviewed citizens, in the majority, perceive at "Low" level (42.5 scores) the preparation of qualified teachers. According to them, this process fails to meet the needs for teachers. The level of completion with equipment with educational tools and textbooks is assessed as low (46.5 scores). A factor that negatively affects the implementation of the right to education in the mother tongue is also considered the threshold of 15 students, necessary for the opening the class to learning in the mother tongue for students belong to national minorities (37.25 scores). According to citizen's perception relate to bilateral cooperation and with kin-state does not respond to the real needs of the education implementation process in the mother tongue of national minorities (41.25 scores).

#### **4. Discussion**

The perceptions of citizens belonging to national minorities regarding the opportunities created by the Albanian legislation for education in their mother tongue show that a good legislative base has been formed in Albania for the implementation of this right. Meanwhile, the comparative analysis of these perceptions with the results published by other authors Stoica (2018, p.864-865); Vicsek (2018, p.85,88); Bllagojeviq et al. 2023.p.7); Shala et al. (2023, p.542) and in the monitoring reports for the fulfillment of this right by the CoE in the neighboring countries of the Western Balkans (Community Rights Assessment Reports pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE-Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2021) shows that the perceptions and opinions of Albanian citizens are similar to those of citizens of national minorities in these countries. Differences in the perceptions and opinions expressed by citizens belonging to different national minorities are indicators that can be effectively used by the relevant political institutions and private public institutions that engage in the process of implementing this right. The values of the composite indicators of the PIRE Index, corresponding to the perceptions and opinions of different national minorities, are similar to the differences identified in other Western Balkan countries. Therefore, even for the needs for intervention in the legislative framework and for increasing the opportunities and capacities for the fulfillment of this right, the differences between the countries of the Western Balkans are not essential. Referring to the PIRE index, these should be focused on efforts to increase capacities to meet the needs with school materials and textbooks, as well as to prepare qualified teachers. This is a request that is emphasized by other authors for the countries of the Western Balkans (Vicsek 2018, p.85,88; Bllagojevic et al. 2023.p.7; Shala et al. 2023, p.542). Likewise, according to the assessment of the citizens, efforts are necessary for their organization in communities through cooperation in NGOs.

The analysis of the component indicators of PIRE, highlights the need to encourage efforts to realize a bilateral and regional cooperation as effectively as possible. This need is emphasized more by the national minorities belong to kin-state those is in the Balkan region, such as the Greek, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Montenegrin, Aromanian and Bulgarian national minorities.

#### **5. Limitations**

The PIRE Index for the quantitative evaluation of the fulfillment of the right of national minorities to education in the mother tongue is a methodology that is applied for the first time in Albania. Being an index that uses the perceptions and opinions expressed by citizens belonging to national minorities for the various legislative aspects and the implementation of this right, the judgments based on the values of this index and the indicators included in it should be used only as information that serve to guide the work of political and implementing institutions, as well as to encourage national minority communities for cooperation. The information must be accepted as a statistical information that evaluates the level of fulfillment of this right. For more complete and real judgments, it is necessary that this information be completed with data and evaluations made by public institutions responsible for the implementation of the pre-university education system and the rights of national minorities.

The periodic evaluation of the PIRE index, including in the random sample as many citizens belonging to different national minorities as possible, is necessary.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The assessment of the index for right of education in the mother tongue for national minorities (PIRE) and its component indicators shows differences between these minorities in fulfilling this right.

The Greek, Macedonian, and Armenian minorities perceive the completion of the right to education in the mother tongue qualitatively better than Roma, Serbian, Bulgarian and Egyptian Montenegrin national minorities. Bosnian national minority values the completion of this right at the "Moderate" level

Among national minorities, there are no essential differences regarding their perceptions of legislative solutions.

The perceptions of national minorities for the functioning of the information process, for the desire they have for the education of children in the mother tongue, the possibilities that exist for its realization and for the process of implementing this right are different. These changes are a consequence of the differences that exist between them in: (i) population size and distribution in the territory; (ii) the level of use of the mother tongue in family communication, (iii) the level of their information about this right and the way that should be followed for its implementation.

Citizens perceive as an effective factor in the realization of the right to education in the mother tongue: (i) civic cooperation through organization in NGOs and with local government bodies; (ii) the promotion of private initiatives supported by kin-state and (iii) the increase of capacities in bilateral and regional cooperation.

## References

- Azizi, A. (2011). "The Right to Education in the Republic of Macedonia: The Right to Education in one's Mother Tongue" *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 15 (2011) p. 2435–2440. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042811006690/pdf?md5=71263c5b650283525908f1bc72a1768f&pid=1-s2.0-S1877042811006690-main.pdf>
- Bayat, Z., Kircher, R. & Van de Velde, H. (2023). Minority language rights to education in international, regional, and domestic regulations and practices: the case of Frisian in the Netherlands. *Current issues in language planning*. vol. 24, no. 1, 81–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2022.2037291>
- CoE-Reports and Recommendations-Albania 2021 "Fifth Report - Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities", p. 5. <https://rm.coe.int/5th-sr-albania-en/1680a2614c>
- Duncan, W. (2002). Minority Rights in Education. Lessons for the European Union from Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, p. 50. [https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Duncan\\_Minority\\_Rights\\_in\\_Education\\_2002\\_en.pdf](https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Duncan_Minority_Rights_in_Education_2002_en.pdf)
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1998). <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities>
- Joshua A. F. (1984) "Minority mother tongues in education". *Prospects*, Vol. XIV, No. 1. p.50-61. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000059073>
- Law No. 69/2012 "For pre-university system of education in Republic of Albania" <https://www.acce.al/sites/default/files/download/laws/Ligji%20per%20arsimin%20parauniversitar%20ne%20Republiken%20e%20Shqiperise%20%282012%29.pdf>
- Kozhemyakov, A. (2008) The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Ten years of protecting and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity. Museum International. Languages, between heritage and development Vol LX, n°3 / 239. Published by UNESCO Publishing and Blackwell Publishing Ltd. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000162982>
- Kume, E. (2024) Perception index for right to education in the mother tongue of national minorities. A methodological approach. *Bilsel international world science and research congress*. 17-18 February, 2024, Istanbul/Türkiye.
- Mulloji-Jahmurataj, M. (2020). "Education Policies in Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo for Non-Majority Communities of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian." *Prizren Social Science Journal* 4, No. 1 (April): 57-62. DOI: 10.32936/psj.v4i1.143
- Rrahmani, B. (2020). "The Position of Minorities in the New State of Kosovo". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 6 (1):130-51. <https://ejlia.com/index.php/ijlia/article/view/180>
- Stoica, D-C. (2018) "Language rights and Linguistic Minorities in Central and Western Balkans" *Actas do XIII Congresso Internacional de Linguística Xeral, Vigo*, Conference paper, p.862-870
- Shala, S., Gega, G. & Berisha, E. (2023) "The non-majority communities' rights in Kosovo: Implementation of the right to employment and education". *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs, Volume 9, Number 2*: 531-549. <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2392716sh>
- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960 <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-against-discrimination-on-education>
- UNESCO 2023. The right to education of minorities: overview of States' measures reported in the 10th Consultation on the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385259>
- Vicsek, A. (2018) "Minority Education in the Republic of Serbia – A Success Story with Challenges" *Hungarian Journal of Minority Studies. Vol 2. No. 1*. p. 85-100 <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=798457>