

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG)		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 19 Politics and International Studies		
Title of case study: Promoting Minority Rights in Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003–2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): (1) David Smith (2) Federica Prina (3) Graham Donnelly (4) Andreea Udrea	Role(s) (e.g. job title): (1) Alex Nove Chair in Russian and East European Studies (2) Lecturer (3) Research Assistant (4) Research Affiliate	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: (1) 2002–present (2) 2014–present (3) 2015–2016 (4) 2017–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Over the past decade, growing nationalism and authoritarianism have made ethnic minorities more vulnerable. This has been a visible trend in Russia, whose 2014 annexation of Crimea inflamed nationalist sentiments in Ukraine. This worsened the position of Russian and other minorities living there, and threatened to compromise the stability of other ethnically diverse states in Central and Eastern Europe. In response, key international organisations (Council of Europe, European Union and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and NGOs (European Centre for Minority Issues) called on governments in the region to reaffirm their commitment to minority rights. By focusing on the needs and concerns of the region's minorities, Smith's team has contributed an evidence base for these organisations, and worked with them to deliver new legal instruments and programmes to protect the rights of ethnic minorities.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The current resurgence of nationalism in Europe denies ethnic minorities a political voice, 'othering' them and painting them as a threat to the cohesion and integrity of majority-dominated states. Smith's research reverses the perspective by analysing examples of governance that have enhanced the participation of minorities and showing how they have—in this way—contributed positively to the democratisation and fuller integration of diverse societies in Central and Eastern Europe.</p> <p>Smith's AHRC-funded project 'The quest for cultural autonomy in inter-war Europe' (2003–2008) showed how ethnic tensions in the 1920s Baltic States were ameliorated by allowing minorities to set up their own autonomous institutions of cultural self-government (covering, e.g. education in their native language), without linking these to a particular territorial (and thus potentially secessionist) sub-region within a state. The research also detailed how democratic minority activists from the Baltic lobbied governments and international organisations for the more generalised adoption of this approach at the European level.</p> <p>This research attracted widespread interest at a time when the EU was enlarging to include Central and Eastern European states, and non-territorial approaches to minority cultural autonomy were again being discussed and adopted in the region. For instance, in 2005 the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)—Europe's leading advisory and advocacy NGO in matters of minority governance and conflict regulation—invited Smith to brief the Romanian government on cultural autonomy as it drafted a new minority law, as part of a project funded by the UK Foreign Office.</p> <p>With the integration of diverse societies firmly back on the agenda after 2014—both in new EU member states and EU partner states (especially Ukraine)—and minority activists also demanding greater voice at EU level through the Minority Safepack Citizens' Initiative, insights from the AHRC project have remained central to Smith's recent research [3.1].</p> <p>His follow-up ESRC project on contemporary Central and Eastern Europe 'National Minority Rights and Democratic Political Community' (2014–2018) analysed minority political participation in the region. It highlighted examples of good practice such as the successful implementation of cultural autonomy by Serbia's Hungarian minority, suggesting that these could provide a</p>		

template for resolving current tensions surrounding the Hungarian minority in Ukraine [3.2, 3.5], but also brought to light growing concerns articulated by minorities in Russia about their decreasing ability to participate meaningfully in public life. This was a key finding of work by Prina [3.3, 3.4], who was appointed to the project as a post-doctoral Research Associate.

Given the risks to societal cohesion posed by the exclusion of minorities, the project research concluded that relevant international organisations such as the EU, Council of Europe and [Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#) (OSCE) should do more to engage with minorities directly, rather than simply interceding on their behalf with state authorities. This was also a core finding of associated research conducted (under Smith's direction) by Donnelly, on minority rights issues in the EU's Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia).

As the post-2014 Ukraine crisis shows, intra-state ethnic tensions can increase when an ethnic minority (Russians) in one state is a *majority* in another, neighbouring state (Russia). If the minority is excluded by its home state, it becomes more susceptible to external influence from—and political manipulation by—this external 'kin'-state. Smith's ESRC project highlighted the need to address this inter-state security dimension as crucial to any discussion on advancing minority rights in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, prompting work with Udrea to develop a follow-up project on Poland's kin-state policies (2018–2020), as well as a wider 'Observatory on Kin-State Policies' led from Glasgow. This strand of the research analysed the structural conditions facilitating stable and positive relations between home states, minorities and 'kin'-states, as well as the ways that international organisations can engage more effectively by ensuring that both home and kin-states uphold the rights of minorities rather than prioritising the needs of a single ethnic group.

3. References to the research

3.1. Smith, D., Germane, M. and Housden, M. (2019) '[Forgotten Europeans](#)': [transnational minority activism in the age of European integration](#). *Nations and Nationalism*, 25(2), pp. 523-543. (doi: [10.1111/nana.12401](#))

3.2. Smith, D. J. and Semenyshyn, M. (2016) [Territorial-Administrative Decentralisation and Ethnocultural Diversity in Ukraine: Addressing Hungarian Autonomy Claims in Zakarpattia](#). Working Paper. European Centre for Minority Issues.

3.3. Prina, F. (2016) [National Minorities in Putin's Russia: Diversity and Assimilation](#). Series: Routledge contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe series. Routledge. ISBN 9781138780828.

3.4. Prina, F. (2015) [The Position of National Minorities in Putin's Russia: Uniformity or Diversity?](#) Discussion Paper. Cicero Foundation.

3.5. Smith, D. J. and Semenyshyn, M. (2019) [Effective participation of national minorities, representation and self-governance in Zakarpattia, Ukraine](#). In: Romans, W. and Ulasiuk, I. (eds.) *The Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life - 20 Years after Lund*. Brill. (Accepted for Publication) [available on request from HEI]

3.6. Prina, F., Smith, D. J. and Molnar Sansum, J. (2019) [National cultural autonomy and linguistic rights in Central and Eastern Europe](#). In: Hogan-Brun, G. and O'Rourke, B. (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Minority Languages and Communities*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, pp. 181-205. ISBN 9781137540652 (doi:[10.1057/978-1-137-54066-9_7](#))

Evidence of research quality: Output [3.1] is published in a journal using rigorous double-blind peer-review processes. Outputs [3.3, 3.5] and [3.6] are published by leading academic publishing houses. Outputs [3.2] and [3.4] are policy and discussion papers published by organisations affected by the impact strategy, and emerging from competitively-funded projects subject to external evaluation (most notably 'National Minority Rights and Democratic Political Community: Practices of Non-Territorial Cultural Autonomy in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe', Economic and Social Research Council, 31/10/2014–31/08/2017. GBP603,000.00).

4. Details of the impact

4.1. Context

As a result of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, Ukraine's government passed new legislation strengthening the public role of Ukrainian at the expense of Russian, but also of smaller minority languages (e.g. Hungarian) within the country. At the same time, the government's desire for closer association with Western political structures gave organisations such as the Council of Europe, EU and OSCE scope to press for greater attention to be given to minority rights in Ukraine. Ukraine's government subsequently agreed to extend the period for implementing new legislation until 2023, while also undertaking to pass a further law spelling out the rights of national minorities. Within this context, Smith's team has worked with all of these organisations to identify relevant issues and shape international engagement in Ukraine and the wider region, as follows:

4.2. Shaping international engagement on minority issues

In 2014, Smith engaged the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) as a knowledge exchange partner in his ESRC project. This provided a pathway for the UofG team to shape the outcome of a 2015 public consultation on the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy, initiated by the European Commission. Specifically, ECMI and the Eastern Partnership Minorities Network (uniting 80 minority NGOs) responded to an initiative by Donnelly (a Research Assistant for whom Smith arranged a visiting fellowship at ECMI's Tbilisi office in 2015, as a channel for the underpinning research). Working alongside these organisations, Donnelly drafted a consultation response drawing upon the underpinning research, which called on the EU to engage in direct dialogue with minority representatives, rather than just with state officials in the countries concerned (confirmed by consultation response [5A]).

The final European Commission report on the consultation duly noted that, *'in many neighbourhood countries ethnic and cultural identities and traditions play a crucial role [...] Stakeholders referred to these factors and asked the EU to allow more co-ownership. The EU should therefore expand outreach to relevant members of civil society'* [5B]. The ECMI and the Eastern Partnership Minorities Network hailed this as a significant outcome and attributed it to the consultation response that Donnelly drafted (confirmed by collated evidence [5C]). Senior European Commission officials gave substance to talk of a new approach by arranging a follow-up meeting with Eastern Partnership Minorities Network representatives in Brussels, at which Donnelly was invited to present his research (confirmed by collated evidence [5C]).

In June 2016, Smith involved the ECMI in co-organising a conference in Kyiv to discuss cultural autonomy and its applicability to addressing minority issues in contemporary Ukraine. This was attended by 67 participants, including representatives of the EU, OSCE, Council of Europe, Ukrainian ministries, and—crucially, given the focus of the research—minority NGOs, which were thus able to articulate their concerns *directly* to an influential international audience. Smith's team presented their research findings at the conference [3.3], which shaped the concluding recommendation of ECMI's Eastern Partnership Programme that, *'Ukrainian legislation on minorities should be updated and the principles of cultural autonomy specified in a special framework law'* (confirmed by report [5D]).

4.3. Informing Council of Europe recommendations

Since 2017, the Council of Europe has engaged Prina as an expert as it continues to work with Ukraine to secure fuller legislative guarantees for minority rights. Specifically, Prina was asked to prepare a study on best practices of bilingual and minority language education in Council of Europe member states. This enabled her to feed insights from the research [3.6] into the Council of Europe's ongoing joint project with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education to prepare an action plan on bilingual education. The Project Coordinator noted that Prina's work: *'allowed us for the first time to compile all the existing practices, look critically into the outcomes of the different policies and draw general lessons which can be shared with policy makers all over Europe'*. (confirmed by statement [5E])

Prina's research also provided supporting evidence for the [Fourth Opinion on the Russian Federation](#), which was adopted in 2018 by the Advisory Committee on the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities [5F]. Specifically, output [3.3]

guided the report's recommendations with regard to education, participation and consultation of national minorities in Russia. Here, a spokesperson observed that: *'given the scarcity of independently conducted empirical research about minority rights in the Russian Federation, the book written by Dr Prina was an important source for the Advisory Committee's report ... I was not aware of any other English-language publication... which would provide a similar level of both empirical details and analytical depth on the problems around minorities and diversity politics in Russia.'* (confirmed by statement [5G])

4.4. Informing OSCE international guidelines

Smith's ESRC research has guided the approach and policy recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM). He noted that engagement with the project and its associated KINPOL Observatory, *"informed my work and allowed my staff to consider new and relevant issues [in the] integration of diverse societies."* (confirmed by statement [5H]). Reflecting further on the collaboration with Smith's team that began through discussions around output [3.2], and developed through the co-organisation of a 2018 conference on 'Minorities in Inter-state Relations', which united diplomatic representatives from 39 of the 57 OSCE participating states, the High Commissioner underlined the academics' role as, *"very well-informed facilitators of dialogue"* in the current, sometimes highly-politicised atmosphere surrounding the discussion of minority rights (confirmed by recorded interview [5I]).

A key concern of the HCNM's office had been to update its recommendations and guidelines to respond to challenges arising from a rapidly-changing international environment. To this end, Prina was invited to join a 20-strong expert group convened to update the 2003 HCNM Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media. This engagement resulted in the new Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age, launched in February 2019 [5J]. The Chair of the expert group commended Prina's, *'very valuable contribution to the preparatory process'* of guidelines that will, *'guide national law and policy-makers, and OSCE work in this area for some time to come'*. (confirmed by statement [5K])

Within the drafting process, Prina was able to clarify several substantive points related to obstacles to effective participation of minorities in developing media policies. In particular, she was able to: *'raise the concerns of stakeholders (representatives of national minorities) from Eastern Europe, particularly the Russian Federation, based on interviews that were part of research undertaken by the University of Glasgow'* [5K]. On the basis of her research findings [3.3, 3.4], Prina was able to contribute specifically to shaping sections 19 and 24 of the guidelines, which set out how rights to such participation should be incorporated into the legislation of the 57 OSCE participating states (confirmed by statement [5K]).

4.6. Next steps

New draft legislation spelling out the rights of national minorities in Ukraine was originally scheduled for the Autumn of 2020, but is still pending due to delays arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this delay, the UofG team led by Smith has made significant contributions to this ongoing process, both in the Ukraine and the wider region (as outlined above), by informing the approaches and recommendations of key international organisations as they press for greater attention to be given to minority rights at this important juncture. These established international organisations and minority NGOs are the primary beneficiaries of the research within the REF period. The region's ethnic minorities are secondary beneficiaries, who benefit through enhanced international understanding of their specific concerns and perspectives.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5A] ECMI consultation response (authored by Donnelly, which draws upon the underpinning research and calls on the EU to engage in direct dialogue with minority representatives, rather than just with state officials in the countries concerned) [PDF available].

[5B] European Commission 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy' document (quote acknowledging the consultation response recommending that the EU should expand outreach to relevant members of civil society from p.7) [PDF available].

[5C] Collated evidence: (i) Email from the ECMI confirms the role of the consultation response in eliciting EU acknowledgement of minorities' concerns; (ii) Email from Coordinator of the Eastern Partnership Minorities Network noting progress following the consultation response and

Donnelly's involvement in the follow-up 'advocacy initiative' visit to Brussels in March 2016 **[PDFs available]**.

[5D] European Partnership Programme Monthly Report (May-June 2016) (confirms the main conclusions and recommendations from the conference on p.3) **[PDF available]**.

[5E] Statement from the Project Coordinator, Anti-discrimination Department, Council of Europe (18 June 2020) (confirms the contribution of UofG research to the Council of Europe's ongoing joint project with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education) **[PDF available]**.

[5F] Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, [Fourth Opinion on the Russian Federation](#) (20 February 2018) ACFC/OP/IV(2018)001 **[PDF available]**.

[5G] Statement from the Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe (27 May 2020) (confirms the role of UofG research in the formulation of the Advisory Committee's report [5F]) **[PDF available]**.

[5H] Statement from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (30 August 2018) (confirms that OSCE policy and practice has been informed by UofG research) **[PDF available]**.

[5I] [Video recording of interview and visiting lecture by OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities](#) during a visit to University of Glasgow (13 November 2018) (quote from section 4:39–6:22) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_UShP1egsM&feature=youtu.be> **[MP4 available on request from the HEI]**.

[5J] Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age (2019) (lists Prina as a contributing expert on p.12) **[PDF available]**.

[5K] Statement from the Principal Drafter of the 2019 Tallinn Guidelines (12 June 2020) (confirms the role of UofG research in the formulation of the guidelines) **[PDF available]**.

Mitigation Statement evidence:

[5L] Collated evidence: (i) online news article, 'Zelensky announces a bill on the rights of national minorities'. (9 July 2020) *[translated from Russian]* (confirms plans to submit a bill on the rights of national minorities to the Supreme Council of Ukraine in Autumn 2020); (ii) Wilson Center, 'Ukraine Quarterly Digest: October–December 2020.' (7 January 2021) (confirms impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing constitutional crisis); (iii) online news article, 'Ukraine's new parliament sets itself hectic legislative schedule.' (3 September 2019) (confirms details of an already hectic legislative schedule pre-COVID) **[PDFs available]**.