

## **Protection of Ethnic and Language Minorities in the European Union**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the development of minority rights in the European Union, specifically with regard to the rights of ethnic and language minorities. To insure enduring peace and prosperity, the EU is giving more attention to minorities and “minority rights” issues: the Jews, Romans and Yiddish peoples etc. Focus has also been placed on minority language issues in South Tyrol, Brittany, Corsica and Basque etc. Regional or minority language conflicts are highly-charged issues that must be dealt with special care. Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has continued its expansion to Central and Eastern European countries; therefore, it’s foreseeable that in the future the minority rights issues will be much more subtle because in these areas, the problems of ethno or language diversity are much more acute. In its external relations, the degree of respect toward minority rights is also one of the criteria of the EU for evaluating applicant countries. For example, the entry of Turkey into the EU has been postponed, because of its lack of respect for human rights and minority rights. The EU has also founded programs such as TACIS or PHARE to help applicant countries or former communist countries to establish the rule of law and become democratic states.

**Key Words:** minority rights, ethnic minority, language minority, European Union, European Court of Justice