**The institutional arrangements of States that enable minority rights to flourish**

**Questions for the Czech Republic**

1. **Do you consider the interests of persons belonging to minority groups appropriately taken into account in your country? If yes, how? If no, why?**

Yes. Minority rights in the Czech Republic are defined by Act No. 273/2001 Coll. on the rights of members of national minorities. In addition, Government Regulation No. 98/2002 Coll., which sets out the conditions and method of providing subsidies from the state budget for activities of members of national minorities and for the support of integration of members of the Roma community, is also in force. The Czech Republic is also a party to international treaties, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

1. **Are there institutional arrangements that guarantee (or facilitate) effective political representation of persons belonging to minorities? For example, a Second Chamber in Parliament, the federal structure of the State, specific “minority institution” (such as a Council of Minorities or a dedicated Ombudsperson, or electoral mechanisms (quotas, separate lists for minorities).**

The government establishes the Government Council for National Minorities. The chairman of this Council is the Prime Minister, the vice-chairs are the Government Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the German minority. The following minorities are represented in the Council: German, Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, Croatian, and Vietnamese.

The government also establishes a specific Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and the position of Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs. The chairman of this Council is also Prime Minister, the vice-chairs are the Government Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs and a civilian member. Representatives of the Roma minority of all different specialties and groups, including original Czech Roma, Sinti, and Olah Roma, are represented in the Council. The existence of Committees for National Minorities, which are established in selected municipalities and regions, also follows from the Act on the Rights of Members of National Minorities. In the case of municipalities, the committee is established in those municipalities where at least 10% of the population of the municipality declared themselves to be a minority in the last census. In the case of regions, the limit is 5%.

There are no electoral mechanisms or quotas. A subcommittee for national minorities is established in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Representation of members of national minorities at the highest levels of politics is practically non-existent, sporadically at the local level.

1. **Are there minority issues insulated from (or not subject to) State authorities’ decisions (including the Parliament)? (For example, constitutional guarantee; political/traditional agreement; competence on minority issues at a regional level, where the persons belonging to a minority represent the majority of the population).**

In no municipality do members of a national minority represent the majority of the population.

1. **Are there institutional arrangements and/or political practices that de facto exclude persons belonging to minorities from effective participation in decisions at the national – and, where appropriate, regional level – concerning the minority to which they belong?**

No.

1. **Are there legal, administrative or other barriers that prevent persons belonging to minorities to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic or public life?**

In general, no. It may happen that some members of national minorities face some form of discrimination, especially in the case of the Roma minority - anti-Roma attitudes, so-called anti-Gypsyism. However, not only the government, but also both chambers of parliament (the Senate and subcommittees in the Chamber of Deputies) adopted the definition of anti-Gypsyism of the international alliance IHRA.

1. **What are the benefits and/or challenges of recognizing and granting sectoral (for example, concerning sectors like education) or territorial autonomy to minorities?**

Minorities whose language is protected by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages also acquire additional rights in the field of education. The Polish minority has a network of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, where the teaching language is Polish. There is a specialized center, the Pedagogical Center for Polish National Education in Český Těšín. From 2024, members of the German minority will have the same opportunity, because the Czech Republic has extended the protection of the language to a higher level, according to Part III of the Charter. It should be noted, however, that the founders of schools are (mostly) municipalities, and in order for there to be an obligation to establish a Polish/German school, a certain number of students declaring themselves to be a minority must express an interest in being educated in the language of the national minority. The same formal rights are achieved by the Slovak minority, but its members (mainly due to the mutual intelligibility of Czech and Slovak), do not take advantage of minority education (there is not enough interest).