Multiculturalism in Europe and the Balkans

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the process of recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity in Europe and the Balkans. While European states, under the framework of protecting national domestic minorities pursuant to "European Heritage" on the basis of ethnicity and culture, the others favored to "integrate" international minorities to society. This distinction is nothing but an externalized and institutionalized form of "we"-"they" or "us"-"them" distinction having persistently occupied European mentality as early as the dawn of imperialism till present day. Although in Balkans multiculturalism has at all times existed as a reality, it has not necessarily been viewed as a positive concept from an ideological and political dimension. Multiculturalism phenomenon has been overshadowed by the process termed Balkanization. Upon the short-term trials in Europe and instabilities & conflicts having emerged in Balkans after Cold War, European public has, with the initiatives of European Council, secured an international protection on domestic minorities. Thus they have in a way limited multiculturalism with domestic minorities. In that respect, in political and legal texts on both international and national scale they started to draw definite distinctions between domestic minorities and international minorities.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Europe, Balkans, Integration, Balkanization, Immigrant and Domestic Minorities.

Avrupa ve Balkanlarda Çok Kültürcülük

ÖZ

Bu çalışma Avrupa ve Balkanlardaki etnik ve kültürel çeşitliliğin tanınma süreçlerini tartışmaktadır. Avrupa ülkeleri yerli azınlıkları, "Avrupa Mirası"nın korunması başlığı altında etnik ve kültürel olarak tanırken, yabancı azınlıkları da topluma "entegre" etme yolunu tercih etmişlerdir. Bu ayrım, Avrupa zihniyetinde sömürgecilikten bu yana hep varolagelmiş olan "biz"-"öteki" ya da "biz"-"onlar" ayrımının dışsallaşmış ve kurumsallaşmış biçiminden başka bir şey değildir. Balkanlarda çokkültürlülük bir realite olmasına ragmen, ideolojik ve politik olarak her zaman olumlu bir öğe olarak karşılanmamıştır. Çokkültürlülük olgusu, Balkanlaşma (Balkanization) olarak ifade edilen sürecin gölgesinde kalmıştır. Avrupa'daki kısa ömürlü denemeler ve Soğuk Savaş sonrası Balkanlarda ortaya çıkan istikrarsızlık ve çatışmaların akabinde Avrupa kamuoyu, Avrupa Konseyi'nin girişimleriyle yerli azınlıklara uluslararası bir koruma imkânı sağlayarak çokkültürcülüğü yerli azınlıklarla sınırlı olarak kabul etmiştir. Bu bakımdan hem uluslararası hem de ulusal ölçekte siyasal ve hukuksal metinlerde yerli azınlıklar ile yabancı azınlıklar arasında bir ayrım yapılmaya başlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çokkültürcülük, Avrupa, Balkanlar, Entegrasyon, Balkanlaşma, Göçmen ve Yerli Azınlıklar.

Unlike Balkan states, multiculturalism is a newly emerging phenomenon in European states and closely linked to international migration movements witnessed during the last decade. Although exists as a reality in the entire globe, the original roots of multiculturalism concept is connected to North America, *Canada* specifically, where it was manipulated as a central concept during the program of Trudeau-government in 1971. 'Quebec case' in particular held a share in the emergence of this concept. Following Canada the concept has started to circulate around Australia and United States. In European continent, the first country officially recognized the concept has been Sweden in year 1975. With the implementation of official policies in the Netherlands as of 1980s, certain aspects of multiculturalist perspective, which encompasses concept of multicultural society as well, have become more frequently pronounced than ever. In the rest of European states, with the advent of migrants as of Second World War and with the acceptance of the fact that these migrants would stay for an indefinite period of time, the concept of multiculturalism has started to be used widely in the 1970s. As is the case for a vast body of concepts, this particular concept has not been implemented within the same scope and by the very same actors in all places. In Germany for instance, this concept has been particularly popular among church groups and leftist political discourses (Vermeulen, 1997:129).

While examining multiculturalism both in European and Balkan settings, this phenomenon demands to be analyzed from a variety of levels. To being with, multiculturalism is employed as a social reality and definer concept. Accordingly in Europe as well as Balkans multiculturalism stands out as a historical and social reality. In Europe there are near one hundred indigenous minorities and unpredictable quantities of foreign minority groups. Historically speaking, Balkan states have always maintained a heterogeneous structure. In these countries a variety of small and large scale ethnic & religious groups have coexisted since dawn.

Official statistics picture that in Europe, at least 21 millions of immigrants are habitants. Immigrant population has concentrated over five European states: three out of four are located in Germany (7.343. 591), France (3.596.600), England (2.281.000), Switzerland (1.406.630) and Italy (1.116.394) (Wanner, 2002:16). Considering the fact the immigration process is still ongoing via family reunification and refuge attempts, these numbers shall expected to rise increasingly. Besides the number of children immigrant families have are also higher in contrast to European parents.

Another form of migration which drives multiculturalism in Europe higher is internal migration as a byproduct of free movement of European people within the framework of European Union. Since the 1990s, internal migration towards a number of European states has accelerated further. As of current conditions, the ratio of internal migration within European states is exceptionally higher than the ratio of

migration from non-European countries. For instance in 1999 the ratio of internal migration by total ratio of migration varied between 33,2 % (England) and 97,9 % (Slovenia) (Wanner, 2002:8-10). In any case, the ratio of internal migration is, many a times, above the migration ratio originating from non-European states.

Secondly, multiculturalism goes much beyond being only a reality today; it is now utilized as an ideological concept bearing an attitude towards approving ethnical & cultural diversity. Diversity has, throughout ages, been interpreted in a variety of ways in Europe. In the 1980s, with the recognition of "guest workers" as a nonmigratory group ethnical and cultural diversity has started to be accepted in European states as an indicator of multicultural society. Nonetheless since this phenomenon has, in the course of time, sabotaged integration process of related groups and evoked the worries on potential conflicts in Europe, the notion has then been labeled as a source of problem.

Thirdly, multiculturalism also points to the political stance to hold in the face of diversity. As a political model multiculturalism has, starting with the 1980s, become a current issue in some European states (the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland); that said this policy has been abandoned since the ideological attitude towards multiculturalism has shifted. Presently European states name the policy towards minority groups and newly-arrived immigrants as "integration" policy. Integration policy, rather than taking ethical and cultural diversity as data, aims at enabling the participation of minorities into social sectors and gradually adapting to the structure of settled (permanent) society.

Although in Balkans multiculturalism has at all times existed as a reality, it has not necessarily been viewed as a positive concept from an ideological and political dimension. Multiculturalism phenomenon has been overshadowed by the process termed Balkanization, which implies disintegration & splitting processes Balkan states have undergone through ages. Indeed Balkanization voices not only ethnical & religious disintegration, split and conflict between state & society but also the lack of cooperation amidst different components. Historically speaking, Balkanization process first took place in the 19th century (1817-1912) when the region previously dominated by Ottoman Rule divided into autonomous sections. In the aftermath of disintegration stage, this process kept on till the end of World War I and Cold War.

There are relatively positive connotations of Balkanization concept such "decentralization" and "mosaic communities"; but still the adverse developments and discussions have overshadowed these positive inferences.

In that case what exactly does multiculturalism as an ideology and policy stand for? Currently the core values of multiculturalism are outlined with three principles (Vermeulen&Slijper, 2003:8-11). The first principle is recognizing cultural diversity

which has been defined as "*The Politics of Recognition*" by Charles Taylor; one of the leading theorists of multiculturalism. The second most significant principle is social equality. Multiculturalists argue that equal treatment underlined in the first principle fails to provide a sufficient explanation in terms of cultural and ethical aspect. It is also necessary that the groups are equally treated in terms of social and economical aspect as well. Hence concepts such as equality and recognition entertain a social context as well in addition to their legal connotation. The third and last principle is social integration. As opposed to counter- arguments, multiculturalists are not in favor of disintegrating different groups in the community within ghettos. On the contrary they aim to establish, on the basis of equality and recognition, social cooperation and unification of groups without facing any barriers. They claim that the key reason causing ghettoization in society is social & economical inequality; once this inequality is eradicated, ghettoization shall disappear per se.

Symbolized with these three assets, multiculturalism ideology has been attempted to put into practice via different policies in different countries. Multiculturalism policies vary across different countries and there also exist major theoretical dissidences among the scholars and scientists constructing the philosophy of multiculturalism. While some of these scholars place greater value to cultural differences and promotion of such differences, some thinkers put social and economical equality and equal treatment between groups into a central position. Likewise a number of countries and groups view social integration as top priority. In Europe particularly the intellectuals and political elitists have focused on this last issue. Hence despite being filled with dissimilar contexts, it can still be claimed that on a general scale "integration" policies aiming to secure social integration are still practiced in Europe. Yet from the perspective of integration policies, multiculturalism has received multi-faceted criticisms.

As the comments of intellectuals and politicians looking from a critical perspective to multiculturalism are analyzed, it surfaces that they have constantly highlighted some given theories and arguments which can be listed as below (Canatan, 2002:331).

1) Multicultural society brings with itself cultural clashes between dissimilar ethnic groups. The projection underlying such conflicts is the idea that each culture bears irreconcilable conflicts in itself.

2) Cultural divergences pose obstacles against the adaptation and integration of ethnic groups into settled society. Immigrants, due to excessive loyalty to their own culture, alienate themselves from the wider community.

3) Western culture is already a privileged and exemplary culture. The rest of cultures, leave aside contributing to Western societies, can do nothing but only cause trouble for settled society as well as immigrant groups.

4) Integration problem can be remedied by full or partial assimilation of immigrants. Immigrants and minorities are, within public sphere particularly, obliged to obey dominant tenets and norms.

It can be argued that these hypotheses have been structured within a complementary and rational connection. The first hypothesis, since based on the thesis that cultures are radically different, disables any demand for conciliation and stability. Even more, cultural differences are perceived as a mechanism blocking the harmonization among immigrant groups. As a consequence the only choice left for them is to adopt the privileged and exemplary culture of the Western World. Thus assimilation is suggested as the only natural and valid form of solution to accept.

Vis-à-vis all forms of oppositions and rejections, multiculturalism has, since the second term of last decade, dominated and shall keep dominating the global stage as a powerful intellectual and political movement. It is not something to deem strange that as a concept and policy, multiculturalism has originally emerged in "immigrant-attracting countries" as Canada, the U.S. and Australia. On accounts of their immigrant habitants, these countries portray a rich diversity of ethnicity, culture, religion and language. There exists no dominant culture likely to eradicate this diversity and there is no such attempt either since prevailing belief is that domination of one single culture would push their countries to a deplorable chaos. Consequently diversity is valued as a source of richness in these states and through "managing this diversity" it is aimed to gain maximum benefit from this variety.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMMIGRANT-ROOTED MINORITIES AND DOMESTIC MINORITIES

Speaking of the point reached today not only in Europe but in Balkans as well, multiculturalism policy can be based on the division between immigrant minorities and domestic minorities. For the former group an integration policy or harmonization with settled society is envisaged whereas for the latter group ethnical and cultural recognition policy is relatively applied.

Cultural diversity reflected by domestic minority groups which are basically defined as "national minorities" arise from putting the cultures, which were formerly self-managed, within a particular territory under a wider roof of the state. On a general scale, these cultures demand to sustain their existence as a separate group next to majority culture and to ensure their existence as independent communities they claim self determination or self management in a number of forms (Kymlica, 1998:38). The traces of such minority types can be found in Basque and Catalan groups in Spain;

Northern Irish groups in the United Kingdom; Frisian group in the Netherlands and Lapp group in Scandinavian countries. Upon the disintegration of Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and birth of baby states in these territories, new states have been added to the list of such minority groups. To illustrate, in the new republic states born after the disintegration of Former Soviet Union Russian minorities; Serbian minorities born after the disintegration of Yugoslavia federation; Polish minorities in Lithuania; Armenian minorities in Azerbaijan; Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Albanian minorities in Macedonia have emerged in that way.

Despite the signing of a number of treaties to protect the rights of national minorities, in none of these agreements has the concept of national minority been explained sufficiently. Yet European public has eventually reached a consensus on that particular matter. What is implied by the concept of domestic minorities is ethnic (public) groups constituting a minority within total population of the state. These groups, by means of their ethnic (historical, religious, linguistic etc.) features, divert from the majority and have been living for a long time as settled (permanent) groups on the lands of particular states. At this point we are not referring to immigrants and refuge groups who hold a different position as a new minority group in Europe. Currently in overall Europe there are hundreds of domestic national minority groups of which members exceed one million in number (Couwenberg, 1994:97).

In Europe, the protection of minorities dates back to signing 1950-dated "Convention for the Protection of Basic Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms". Yet the main actions could only be taken at the onset of 1990s as an outcome of the conflicts having arisen with the termination of Cold War. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the implementation of July 1992-dated "Helsinki Decisions", set up High Commission on National Minorities as "a tool to prevent the conflicts in the soonest earliest stage possible".

A more substantial development in terms of legal dimension has been European Council originated & declared conventions/charters on the global protection of minorities. The first of these conventions is 1992-dated "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages" directed by Committee of Ministers of the European Council and effectuated in March 1998. The attitudes that states and people have taken towards this Charter can be analyzed under three groups: 1) 25 states have signed, approved and effectuated the Charter; 2) 8 states have signed only and 3) 11 states have remained neutral.

The states that can be defined as multiculturalist on accounts of being actively involved in the particular Charter are as grouped below:

Table 1. Signatory Parties of European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	
Balkan States	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia
European States	Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Great Britain.

Among the Balkan states, non-signatory parties rejecting the Charter thus can reasonably be defined as anti-multiculturalist states are; Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia and Turkey. One European state that can be listed in the same group is France which is seemingly afflicted with "*There are no minority groups in our country*" rhetoric.

Prepared and effectuated by European Council, February 1 -1995 dated "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" is the second most important convention. This convention has been signed, approved and effectuated by 1) 39 states collectively; 2) four states (Iceland, Greece, Belgium and Luxembourg) have signed only and 3) four states (Andorra, Turkey, France and Monaco) have remained neutral.

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia are Balkan states within the first group whilst Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Slovakia are among the list of European states. The states within non-signatory group are Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

Table 2. Minority and Regional Languages Recognized by States		
No	**States**	**Recognized Minority and Regional Languages**
1	Armenia	Aramaic, Greek, Yazidic, Russian
2	Austria	Burgenland Croatian, Hungarian, Romany, Slovenian, Slovakian, Czech language
3	Bosnia Herzegovina	Albanian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Ashkenazi, Ladino, Macedonian, Montenogrian, Ukrainian, Polish, Romanian, Roetheens, Romany, Slovenian, Czech language and Turkish.
4	Croatia	Hungarian, Italian, Ukrainian, Roetheens, Serbian, Slovakian and Czech language
5	Cyprus	Armenian
6	Czech Republic	German, Polish, Romany, Slovakian

7	Denmark	German
8	Finland	Romany, Samisch and Swedish
9	Germany	Danish, Lower German (Nederduits), Lower Sorbish, North Friesian, Higher Sorbish, Romany and Sater Friesian
10	Hungary	German, Croatian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian and Slovakian
11	Lichtenstein	*There is no national minority language to recognize*
12	Luxembourg	*There is no national minority language to recognize*
13	Montenegro	Albanian, Romany
14	The Netherlands	Friesian, Ashkenazi, Limburgian, Lower Saxony Language, Romany
15	Norway	Sami/Sami
16	Poland	Armenian, German, Hebrew, Ashkenazi, Karaimian, Kazebsian Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Rusin/Ruthenian, Romany, Russian, Slovakian, Tatar language, Czech language, Belarussian
17	Romania	Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Ashkenazi, Croatian, Macedonian, Polish, Rusin/ Ruthenian, Romany, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian , Tatar language, Czech language, Turkish, Ukrainian
18	Serbia	Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Rusin/Ruthenian, Romany, Slovakian
19	Slovakia	Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Polish, Rusin/Ruthenian, Romany, Czech language
20	Slovenia	Hungarian, Italian, Romany
21	Spain	Basque, Catalan, Galician
22	Sweden	Finnish, Ashkenazi, Romany, Tornedal Finnish
23	Switzerland	Italian, Reto-Romanian
24	Ukraine	Bulgarian, German, Gagauzian, Greek, Hungarian, Ashkenazi, Crimean Tatar language, Moldavian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovakian and Belarussian
25	Great Britain	Cornish language , Irish-Celtic, Manks-Celtic, Gaelic and Ulster Gaelic, Scottish Celtic, Welsh

Source:http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europees_Handvest_voor_regionale_talen_of_talen_van_ minderheden and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Charter_for_Regional_or_Minority_ Languages (June 21, 2012).

There are a set of similarities as well as divergences between the first and second convention. While the first convention (charter on languages) lays emphasis on language rights of minorities the second convention identifies minority rights on a wider range. In the first convention a definition of regional & minority languages has been provided whilst in the second one no definition has been provided thus exemplification and recognition of national minorities have been left to the sole discretion of signatory states. Nonetheless there is one issue worth attention: the criteria set in the first convention on national minorities seem to be widely applicable to the second convention likewise. Alongside with differentiations the ways to protect the rights and relevant units are analogous. In both conventions Advisory Committee's report and Committee of Minister's surveillance and decisions have been accepted as sufficient for the effective implementation of conventions.

In the table above, the languages recognized within the framework of "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages" by concerned states have been presented (Table 2). The first point worthy of attention in the table is that almost the entire states having signed the convention have already recognized national or regional minority languages existing in their own territory. To put this in a different way, the charter has not been pseudo convention on paper but put into real life practice which might be viewed as a sign that European states have embraced their own cultural heritage. There are only two countries (Lichtenstein and Luxembourg) which, despite having signed and approved the convention, failed to recognize any given national or regional minority language since in those states there exist no regional or minority languages in need of recognition. At this point it should be noted that immigrant- rooted minorities are excluded from the convention.

Second of all, the most frequently spoken languages in European states are recognized as Romany (language spoken by Roman people & Gypsies), German, Hungarian and Ashkenazi (language spoken by Spanish - Jewish communions). 13 states have recognized Romany, 9 states have recognized German, 8 states have recognized Hungarian and 6 states have recognized Ashkenazi language. Turkish has been recognized as official national minority language in two countries alone (Romania and Bosnia-Herzegovina). Macedonia, a signatory part of this charter, has not approved and effectuated yet. Nonetheless Turkish groups in this country are, within the framework of "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" which shall be mentioned shortly after, have been recognized to possess a "national minority" status.

In a replicate manner to the previous charter on languages, many of the states have taken a positive attitude towards "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" (Table 3). Among the signatory and approving states of this convention, none has effectuated the convention before 1998 though a few have signed and approved earlier. Very few states have physically identified national minorities. Among the few states having physically identified minorities, Denmark has recognized the "Germans" within their territory; Germany has recognized "Danish" followed by "Sorbens", "Friesian", "Romans" and "Sintis" as national minority. Macedonia recognized the dweller "Albanians", "Bosnians", "Turks", "Serbians", "Ulahs" and "Romans" as national minority. The Netherlands recognized only "Friesians" as national minority. Austria recognized "Hungarians", "Croatians", "Slovenes", "Slovakians", "Czech people" and "Romans" as national minorities. Slovenia recognized "Hungarians" and "Italians". Sweden recognized "Jews", "Romans", "Swedish Fins", "Samis" and "Tornedalers" as national minorities in need of protection. Malta, Lichtenstein and Luxembourg who belong to this category have declared that there are no national minorities living in their lands.

France, Iceland, Italy, Malta and Republic of Macedonia are European states that have, despite signing the convention, not approved and naturally not effectuated the convention. Moldova, Russia and Azerbaijan are also in the same list. San Marino, Turkey, Portugal, Monaco, Latvia, Ireland, Greece, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia and Georgia are the countries that have neither signed nor approved the particular convention. Countries that have signed but not approved as well as countries that have persistently avoided signing are labeled as, by European Council and general public, insensitive states to minority rights.

A general classification of European states with respect to their political stance towards national minorities and government structure provides us with three modeling types. Within Europe, a small group typically represented by France, Greece and Turkey which all bear a centralist and unitary political structure claims that all citizens are "equal" before the law so there is even no necessity to use "minority" concept. Claiming that "we have no minority groups" in our lands, the states mentioned above have not yet approved the conventions on the protection of national minorities listed hereinabove. France, although signed European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) in 1999, refused to approve or effectuate this charter in the subsequent years. Hence there is no way we can define France's attitude towards this charter as positive.

No	States	Date of signature	Date of approval	Effective since
Table 3. Attitudes of States towards Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)				
	Group A States			
1	Albania	29-6-1995	28-9-1999	1-1-2000
2	Armenia	25-7-1997	20-7-1998	1-11-1998
3	Austria	1-2-1995	31-3-1998	1-7-1998
4	Bosnia Herzegovina	24-02-2000	24-2-2000 a	1-6-2000
5	Croatia	6-11-1996	11-10-1997	1-2-1998
6	Cyprus	1-2-1995	4-6-1996	1-2-1998
7	Czech Republic	28-4-1995	18-12-1997	1-4-1998
8	Denmark	1-2-1995	22-9-1997	1-2-1998
9	Bulgaria	9-10-1997	7-5-1999	1-9-1999
10	Italy	1-2-1995	3-11-1997	1-3-1998
11	Malta	11-5-1995	10-2-1998	1-6-1998
12	Moldova	13-7-1995	20-11-1996	1-2-1998
13	Russia	28-2-1996	21-8-1998	1-12-1998
14	Macedonian Republic	25-7-1996	10-4-1997	1-2-1998
15	Azerbaijan	26-06-2000	26-6-2000 a	1-10-2000
16	San Marino	11-5-1995	5-12-1996	1-2-1998
17	Portugal	1-2-1995	7-5-2002	1-9-2002
18	Latvia	11-5-1995	6-6-2005	1-10-2005
19	Ireland	1-2-1995	7-5-1999	1-9-1999
20	Estonia	2-2-1995	6-1-1997	1-2-1998
21	Finland	1-2-1995	3-10-1997	1-2-1998
22	Georgia	21-1-2000	22-12-2005	1-4-2006
23	Germany	11-5-1995	10-9-1997	1-2-1998
24	Hungary	1-2-1995	25-9-1995	1-2-1998
25	Lichtenstein	1-2-1995	18-11-1997	1-3-1998
26	Lithuania	1-2-1995	23-3-2000	1-7-2000
27	Montenegro	11-05-2001	11-5-2001 a	6-6-2006
28	The Netherlands	1-2-1995	16-2-2005	1-6-2005
29	Norway	1-2-1995	17-3-1999	1-7-1999
30	Poland	1-2-1995	20-12-2000	1-4-2001
31	Romania	1-2-1995	11-5-1995	1-2-1998
32	Serbia	11-05-2001	11-5-2001 a	1-9-2001
33	Slovakia	1-2-1995	14-9-1995	1-2-1998
34	Slovenia	1-2-1995	25-3-1998	1-7-1998
35	Spain	1-2-1995	1-9-1995	1-2-1998
36	Sweden	1-2-1995	9-2-2000	1-6-2000
37	Switzerland	1-2-1995	21-10-1998	1-2-1999
38	Ukraine	15-9-1995	26-1-1998	1-5-1998
39	Great Britain	1-2-1995	15-1-1998	1-5-1998

	Group B States			
1	Iceland	1-2-1995		
2	Greece	22-9-1997		
3	Belgium	31-7-2001		
4	Luxembourg	20-7-1995		
	Group C States			
1	Andorra			
2	Turkey			
3	France			
4	Monaco			
A. States that put into effect after signing and approving				39
B. States signed only				4
C. States neither signed nor approved				4
Source: Treaty Office on http:/conventions.coe.int (19-7-2011)				

While signing European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on May 7, 1999 France annotated on this charter that no group rights would be created on the basis of this particular Charter. Despite the existence of such annotation, on June 15, 1999 Constitutional Council of France (*Conseil Constitioneel*), fearing the emergence of specific languages and group rights, announced that this Charter was in contradiction with French Constitution. The Council maintained that French Constitution valued every single French citizen as equal and unified members of one society and named French as the single national language. From that date on, a vast number of nongovernmental organizations in France demanded the appropriateness of Constitution with the Charter on minority languages and these bodies have applied great pressure on political forces. These pressures have proved their power on 2008 and appropriated French Constitution in accordance with the articles in the Charter; yet France has not yet approved the Charter. In the event that France approves and effectuates the Charter it is envisaged that around 75 regional and national minority languages shall be recognized as a result. It is most probable that the huge quantity of languages to recognize is the issue intimidating France.

As opposed to France and Turkey, vast majority of European states, by virtue of their decentralized structuring and positive attitudes towards the conventions, have favored to recognize national minorities and protect their cultural rights within the framework of protecting cultural heritage of Europe. These states are West Europe group including Germany, Austria, England, the Netherlands as well as North European and East European groups. It is for certain that attitudes and political choices of these countries towards immigrant-rooted minorities are problematic. Yet it is also indisputable that unlike the norms, they held a courageous attitude and not acted hesitantly or adversely while recognizing national minorities.

Regardless of its federative structure, Belgium is hard to put into a specific category with the rest of European states. Belgium has rejected to approve the particular conventions on the protection of European minorities. This rejection could be explained with the specific governmental body of the state and its social and cultural structuring comprising of a variety of language groups. Belgium, although established as a unitary state at the very onset, has in the course of time evolved into a federal state. 1831-dated Constitution has defined Belgium as a decentralized unitary state. In those days French people alone were the members of elitist group. By means of the freedom fight of Flemish group Belgium has, in due course, evolved into a federal state with two groups.

Belgium federal state is formed by seven legal entities as Kingdom, three groups and three regions all of which are equal to one another. Each entity bears specific rights. Despite that equality however there come to exist a bipolar structuring due to the dominating French and Netherlandish (or Flemish) language paradox. In this bi-language state, Brussels stands out as a cosmopolitan city playing the role of a transition zone. It is a violation of tradition to speak Netherlandish in French region or to speak French in Flemish region. Both language groups enjoy the same channels to express, protect and develop their own identity. On the other hand French and Flemish are not the sole languages spoken in the entire state; there is also German. Including the capital city Brussels which bears a complex structure, four different language regions are defined. These are distinctively specified and divided language regions; however there are also specific regions in which these languages intersect. In such intersection points, French and Flemish languages bear equal rights. In such structure it poses an insoluble dilemma to decide which section to name as the national minority part. That must be the potential explanation underlying Belgium's hesitant attitude towards conventions. Yet French region has, with a decree law, accepted to recognize "regional languages" in their own regions and promote their use. Nonetheless it has not yet been determined which languages are, by this decree law, physically recognized. A commission has been set up towards this mission but no result has been achieved yet.

CONCLUSION

It is a certain fact that there exist a number of multicultural societies in Europe and Balkans; however it is a disputable issue to what extend multiculturalist politics is effective as an ideology and form of politics. Upon the short-term trials in Europe and instabilities & conflicts having emerged in Balkans after Cold War, European public has, with the initiatives of European Council, secured an international protection on

domestic minorities. Thus they have in a way limited multiculturalism with domestic minorities. In that respect, in political and legal texts on both international and national scale they started to draw definite distinctions between domestic minorities and international minorities. While European states, under the framework of protecting national domestic minorities pursuant to "European Heritage" on the basis of ethnicity and culture, the others favored to "integrate" international minorities to society. This distinction is nothing but an externalized and institutionalized form of "we"-"they" or "us"-"them" distinction having persistently occupied European mentality as early as the dawn of imperialism till present day.

Montenegro has, since the beginning of 2000s, posed a positive attitude to the conventions of European Commission; initiated the required procedures and recognized the Albanians and Romans in their homeland as "national minority". In addition, the road to receive education in their own language has thus been opened for these groups. However considering that there are different domestic minority groups in this state there still remain specific steps to take for Montenegro government on the issue of minorities and multiculturalism.

France among European states and Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey in Balkan states draw attention as the countries staying in the maximum distance away from multiculturalism policy. And yet Turkey, with the recent rule of a conservative & democratic party, has now introduced an initiative process to remedy Kurdish problem hence managed to gradually wriggle itself out of these countries. Nonetheless the issues having surfaced during this process and the ongoing failure to maintain a systematic approach to solve these problems still seem to pose a huge handicap on the road to pave.

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