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Croatian

The Croatian language in Austria



★ numerically small language communities

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Foreword

Background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has made efforts to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of the state where they are spoken and which are traditionally used within a given territory by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population.¹

To date, Mercator-Education has been successful in establishing a computerised data bank containing bibliographic data, information about people and organisations involved with minority language issues. It has published data collected during four inventory studies on pre-school education (Goot, Renkema & Stuijt, 1994), primary education (Sikma & Gorter, 1991), learning materials (Tjeerdsma & Sikma, 1994) and teacher training (Dekkers, 1995). In addition there is a need for documents which give a brief outline of the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser-used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers we intend to meet this need.

Aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

Target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can

also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research or as a source of ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

Link with EURYDICE

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of education in member states of the European Union.² The information provided in the regional dossiers is focussed on language use at the various levels of education.

Contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region being studied, followed by six sections which each deal with a specific level of the educational system. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources with a list of publications.

1

Introduction to this issue

Language

Croatian, in the regional variant of *Gradišćansko hrvatski* is the second official language of the Austrian province of Burgenland, besides German. Croatian, belonging to the southern Slavic language group, is a native language of Burgenland where it has been spoken since the 16th century and developed into a standardized language in the late 19th century. It differs somewhat from the Croatian language spoken today in the Republic of Croatia. Apart from Burgenland, where it is spoken by approximately 30,000 people in 50 villages, there are about 12,000 speakers of *Gradišćansko hrvatski* in Vienna, and around 10,000 in villages across the borders in Hungary and Slovakia.³ The Croatians of Burgenland speak a variety of archaic dialects,

which reflect the origins of the 16th century settlers from various parts of modern day Croatia and Bosnia, from where farmers fled northwards to escape the advancing Ottoman armies.

Statistics

According to the latest Austrian census of 1991, Croatian is spoken by 30,000 Austrian citizens (0.4% of the Austrian population). In the province of Burgenland the census registered 19,000 Croatian speakers (7% of the population of Burgenland). The census registered a further 6,600 speakers of Croatian in Vienna (0.4 % of the population of Vienna).

Minority organisations such as the *Österreichisches Volksgruppenzentrum*, the Austrian Minorities Centre, and various church organisations estimate the number of speakers of *Gradišćansko hrvatski* to reach 35,000 in Burgenland and 15,000 in Vienna.⁴ Not included in these figures are 30,000 Croatian speakers who are not Austrian citizens, and 16,600 Austrians and 158,000 non-Austrian permanent residents who declared their language to be Serbo-Croatian.⁵

Status

Croatian language rights in Austria apply only to Austrian citizens living in six of the seven districts of the province of Burgenland, but not to those living in Vienna or any other regions of Austria. Language rights are administered according to territorial principles. By moving out of the official bilingual area, e.g. to Vienna, the federal capital, minority speakers lose all their language rights. Minority rights for Croatians in Burgenland are recognized under Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, which is an integral part of the Austrian Constitution. The Austrian Constitution, the State Treaty of 1955 and the *Volksgruppengesetz* (Law on Ethnic Groups) of 1976⁶ regulate language use but do not contain specific personal rights or ethnic group rights. Within Burgenland the use of Croatian in dealings with state administration was only legalized by a decree in 1990,⁷ after Croatians had fought their cases all

the way to the Austrian Constitutional Court. Bilingual topographical signs, although expressly instituted by Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, were only erected in July 2000, after a government decree⁸ had put an end to 45 years of bickering between political parties, local administrations, provincial and federal governments.

Austria has signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of Minority Rights, and has signed but not ratified the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Despite its lack of official recognition Croatian has always been widely used in all spheres of public life in Burgenland, especially at a local level, although before 1990 it was not used in written form. All Croatian speakers of Burgenland today are in fact bi-, tri- or multilingual. Whereas virtually all Croatian speakers also speak German, only 0.8% of the general Burgenland population understand Croatian passively, whilst only 0.6 % of the population speak Croatian as well as Hungarian, the second of the three regional minority languages.⁹ Apart from these languages Burgenland Romany is spoken by the Roma population. All Croatian speakers under 30 years of age are more or less fluent in English, having had at least 5 to 10 years of schooling in it.

Education System

Austria guarantees general access to public schools without distinction of gender, race, religion, language or social status. Compulsory schooling starts at the age of six and lasts for nine years. Private schools, which by contrast may select their pupils according to different criteria (mostly linguistic or religious), have always played a minor role in the Austrian education system. Private schools also teach the Austrian curriculum and are to some extent subsidized by the state. (A table of the Austrian education system can be found after section 10).

Administration

Overall legislative authority and responsibility for primary

and secondary education in Austria rests with the *Bundesministerium für Unterricht und Wissenschaft*, the Federal Ministry for Education and Science, including teacher training colleges, vocational education and all other forms of non-university education. The provincial governments issue regional laws for the implementation of public education, but only have legislative autonomy in the sphere of pre-school education, such as nurseries and kindergarten education. Implementation of education policies is further monitored by education boards on regional and district levels. Other important players, often neglected in the analysis of the practical implementation of education laws, are the pupils' and parents' representatives within the so-called school-democracy, which is an organising principle of the Austrian education system. Wherever Austrian educational laws allow for extensive differences of interpretation, which with minority language teaching is often the case, these bodies can block effective implementation of governmental policy or reduce it to mere window-dressing.

Education in minority languages is an integral part of the Austrian education system and in the case of Burgenland it is incorporated into the general framework of the law on compulsory education¹⁰ of the Province of Burgenland, and further regulated by special regional laws. In 1990 the possibility of introducing Croatian as an optional subject in all Austrian schools was created by the 12th amendment on school organisation, if at least five pupils register for it and provided that there is a teacher available.¹¹

*Regional Minority
Education Laws*

Education in Croatian was first regulated by the *Burgenländisches Landeschulgesetz* of 1937,¹² which guaranteed tuition in Croatian at primary school level in all municipalities where the minority made up at least 30% of the local population. However no provisions were made for secondary schools. The new *Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland* of 1994¹³ brought a number of drastic changes. Whereas the old school law of 1937 had linked tuition rights in Croatian to census figures, the new law

provides for tuition in Croatian in all provincial schools, classifying 28 local primary schools and two lower secondary schools as bilingual German-Croatian schools. The possibility of tuition in Croatian was extended to the whole education system within the province and the number of pupils necessary per class has been reduced. Specifically the number of pupils required for the introduction of Croatian as an optional subject was reduced to seven pupils, in some cases five.

School inspection for Croatian teaching was extended throughout the education system and a special office for minority education was created within the schooling department of the provincial government. Since 1994 bilingual school certificates can be issued to pupils of bilingual schools. There are two representatives of the Croatian-speaking minority on the provincial inspection board as well as on the district school inspection boards.

However the new Minority Language School Law of 1994 has some major flaws. According to the old law of 1937 all pupils in bilingual municipalities had to attend bilingual schooling irrespective of their mother tongue whereas now parents may choose to opt out of bilingual education. Whereas the old school law of 1937 defined the extent to which Croatian had to be used in tuition, the new law contains no such provisions, defining neither the extent of minority language tuition, nor curricula or general educational goals and standards for minority language schooling. Croatian tuition and language planners have thus labelled it “the beginning of the end of bilingual tuition in Burgenland.”¹⁴

*Social and Political
background of
Croatian teaching*

For over hundred years the teaching of Croatian was closely linked with religious and political issues. The teaching of Croatian was originally promoted by the anti-liberal Viennese Habsburg court, in order to isolate the Croatian-speaking rural population from the liberal and anti-royalist Hungarian and German national movements. It was im-

plemented through Catholic village schools, directly supervised by local priests, whilst teachers were employees of the local Catholic congregation. In Burgenland this structure remained in place until 1938, when, following the annexation of Austria by the Third Reich, all schools were nationalised and teaching in minority languages was generally abolished until 1945.

In Burgenland these close links between Croatian education and conservative politics and the Catholic Church led to a lasting estrangement of the growing working class segment of the Croatian speaking population, which renounced education in Croatian as a anti-modernist ploy and opposed it wherever possible. Social Democrats started to send their children to German-speaking schools in neighbouring villages and came to regard education in Croatian as a hindrance to social mobility. This attitude was underlined by the fact that up to the 1980s there were virtually no secondary schools offering tuition in Croatian. Language tuition as a political issue also became closely related to party politics, as Social Democrats tried to oppose education in Croatian whilst Conservatives and the Catholic Church actively supported it. The use of Croatian and the insistence on its being taught in schools became identical with a conservative, Catholic perspective. These political fronts began to crumble only in the middle of the 1980s and have now more or less disappeared.

In the meantime the reform of the Austrian school system, which in 1962 replaced the last four years of the eight year primary school with four years of lower secondary school, led to the effective abolition of education in Croatian after the age of ten. Rapid social change in rural communities transformed most of the Croatian-speaking villages of Burgenland from farming communities into commuter societies. Whereas Croatian had previously functioned as the language of everyday life in the farming communities, it often became increasingly restricted to family life and Catholic Church functions. The break-up of traditional

family structures and the reduced role of Croatian in the new four-year primary schools have greatly diminished the active transmission of Croatian within families. It was mostly conservative sectors of the population which made a conscious effort to halt this process. Since the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe however, the attitude of the Social Democratic segments of the population towards the use and teaching of Croatian has undergone a 180-degree change. But today, even if more and more parents actually want their children to learn Croatian in school or at least don't mind if they do so teachers are faced with pupils who can hardly speak the language adequately, and are left to battle this process using educational means and legal provisions which many of them consider insufficient.

2 Pre-school education

Target group

The traditional Austrian form of pre-school education for children between the age of three and six is the *Kindergarten* or nursery school. Since pre-school education is optional it is not part of the national Austrian education system and is regulated by provincial laws. In contrast to all public education after the age of six, which is completely free of charge, pre-school education has to be paid for by parents and the rates vary greatly.

Structure and Legal Position

Most public nursery schools in Austria are run by municipalities, some by the provincial or federal administration. Most private nursery schools in Austria are run by church congregations, by minority organisations, parents' associations, or even by private companies. Before 1989 there were no legal provisions for the teaching of Croatian at nursery school level and the use of the minority language depended entirely on the initiative of nursery school teachers.

In 1989 the amendment of the kindergarten law for Burgenland, the *Burgenländisches Kindergartengesetz*¹⁵, introduced bilingual pre-school education in German and Croatian in 25 municipalities in 6 districts. In all other municipalities of Burgenland education in Croatian has to be provided for six hours a week if 25% of the parents request it. In this case the municipality has to employ a bilingual pre-school teacher or if this is not possible the province provides an assistant with Croatian language skills. In the year 2000 about 600 children attended 27 bilingual nursery schools in Burgenland. There are no private Croatian pre-schools in Burgenland and only one in Vienna, which is run by a Croatian minority organisation and attended by 20 children.

Staff Training

Austrian pre-school teachers are trained in special schools at upper secondary level. Training in Croatian teaching is provided by the federal pre-school teacher training school in Oberwart / Veliki Borta which offers Croatian as an optional subject. Advice and inspections are provided by a special advisor employed by the provincial administration.

Current situation

In the 25 bilingual pre-schools of Burgenland Croatian is recognized as the second *Kindertartensprache* (pre-school language) besides German. Unfortunately the law does not specify any language standards, or the extent of Croatian to be used in these institutions so that practices vary greatly, from effective bilingual education to mere singing of a few Croatian folk songs, depending on the initiative and competence of the pre-school teacher. In some of these bilingual pre-schools the social status of Croatian seems so low that children have been known to refuse to continue to speak Croatian at home after starting nursery school. In several cases municipalities have neglected to check the bilingual qualifications of pre-school teachers, so that in 1997 the municipal government had to bring a specific resolution requiring municipalities to enforce bilingual training requirements for the employment of bilingual pre-school teachers. Two municipalities have refused to allow the

language assistant provided by the province to enter the premises of the municipal nursery school, arguing that at least one person on the staff spoke some Croatian. In one case 93% of the parents signed a statement in favour of the provincial assistant, but the local mayor refused to back down.

3 Primary Education

Target Group

Primary education starts at the age of six and covers four grades of *Volksschule*, an optional *Vorschulstufe*, a pre-school year, is offered to some six year olds, who will then spend five years in primary school.

Legal Status, School Organisation and Statistics

Primary education in Croatian is guaranteed by the Austrian State treaty of 1955 and regulated by the Provincial Minority School Law *Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland* of 1994,¹⁶ which classifies 29 local primary schools as bilingual German-Croatian schools. Eight of these are so called bilingual primary schools, *zweisprachige Volksschulen*, 21 are primary schools with Croatian language tuition, *Volksschulen mit kroatischem Sprachunterricht*. In both types of school all pupils attend bilingual education. A total of 12% of all primary school pupils of Burgenland attend bilingual education courses of some kind.

The number of pupils in bilingual German-Croatian primary schools has steadily risen during the 1990s from 1,324 in 1992 to 1,404 in 1999. In four German monolingual schools around 60 children attend classes in Croatian as an optional subject. In 1999 only 342 of the 1,404 pupils in bilingual German-Croatian primary schools were of Croatian mother tongue whilst the vast majority of pupils (751) gave German as their mother tongue. In contrast to the Slovenian bilingual schools in Carinthia, the possibility of opting out of bilingual education, which was introduced in Burgenland by the new regional minority school law of 1994, has not led to

a decrease of pupils in bilingual primary schools and the initial fears of Croatian school planners have proved unfounded. In 1999 only one pupil opted out of Croatian bilingual education in the entire province.

	Schools	Pupils
Bilingual primary schools	29	1404
Croatian as a optional subject	4	60
Total	33	1464

Table 1: Figures of schools and pupils receiving Croatian primary education in Burgenland 1999

An important difference exists between bilingual and monolingual primary schools in Burgenland, as the maximum number of pupils per class was lowered from the standard 30 in Burgenland primary schools to 20 pupils per class for bilingual schools only. This step by the provincial government was well received by educators, who are public employees in Austria. The provincial government may have been motivated to introduce this measure by the continuous decline in general numbers of pupils and a relatively high number of teachers within the province. Since these teachers are public employees of the province but are paid by the federal government, this practice has come under heavy criticism from the federal government, which has recently introduced a number of severe budget cuts and tried to cut back on teaching costs as well.

*Croatian as the
Medium of
Instruction*

There is no primary school with Croatian as the primary medium of instruction in Burgenland. Education is only bilingual in some schools, in that Croatian is used as second language alongside German in the teaching of all subjects. However, in most schools Croatian is taught as a second language for three hours a week. The decision rests with the teacher and is often influenced by factors such as village politics, the language skills of the pupils themselves, a shortage of educational materials, and especially the inadequacy of educational standards and curricula for Croatian primary education.

- Croatian in Vienna* The Austrian education system provides *Muttersprachlichen Zusatzunterricht*, supplementary education in the mother tongue for children of migrant families, in the course of which (among many other languages) Croatian and/or Serbo-Croatian are taught in order to help children to follow the primary and secondary school curriculum and to keep up their mother tongue skills. These courses are organised completely independently from the Croatian minority education system. As to the extent of Croatian used in these courses, no data are available. In 1999 altogether 12,000 Austrian children attended such courses in Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian or Serbo-Croatian, 6,840 of them in Vienna alone, as opposed to only 43 in Burgenland.
- Teaching Materials* The production of Austrian teaching materials in Croatian has a long history and goes back well into the 19th century. However these teaching materials focus primarily on Croatian language education and there is a marked shortage of teaching materials in Croatian for the many subject areas covered by the Austrian curriculum. Several Croatian initiatives have recently begun to fill this gap. A new curriculum was implemented in 1998 which enables a flexible kind of teaching, and a private initiative, the Croatian Cultural and Documentation Centre, *Kroatisches Kultur und Dokumentationszentrum*, has started to produce new teaching materials and aids in co-operation with teachers from bilingual schools. In the sphere of primary education there is a marked shortage of teaching aids and multimedia materials such as films, videos and computer based teaching materials and programs.¹⁷
- Special Education* There are no provisions in the Burgenland Minority School Laws for bilingual special needs education. Over the last two decades there has been growing a tendency to integrate pupils with special needs into the normal classes of primary schools, usually with the help of a specially trained teacher.

4 Secondary Education

Structure

Secondary education in Austria starts in at age 11 after four years of primary education, and takes three major forms. The general secondary schools, *Hauptschule*, last for four years and is usually followed by a so called *Polytechnischer Lehrgang*, or technical course, which is designed to prepare school leavers for their entry into the job market. The second form of secondary education, *Allgemeindindende Höhere Schule (AHS)* or *Gymnasium*, a general higher secondary school, also starts in the fifth year and lasts for eight years, taking pupils up to the *Matura* exam, which functions as a general university entrance exam in Austria. The third form of secondary education is the *Berufsbildende Mittlere Schule (BMS)*, a general vocational secondary school lasting for four years and followed by the *Berufsbildende Höhere Schule (BHS)*, a vocational higher secondary school, which starts at the age of 14, lasts for five years and finishes with the *Matura* exam and a professional training certificate, which enables students to either go on to university or enter the job market, usually in technical professions.

The choice between the different types of school in rural areas is usually influenced by availability and proximity of secondary school types. In Burgenland general secondary schools are frequent, whereas schools of the AHS and BHS type are few and far between, usually located in district capitals.

The curriculum of the first four years of *Hauptschule* and *Gymnasium (AHS)* for pupils between 10 and 14 are more or less parallel, in order to enable children to switch to other schools and to continue their studies after finishing *Hauptschule* in an school of the AHS or BHS type. *Gymnasia (AHS)* are usually considered more demanding and more academically orientated, but standards vary greatly between areas and schools so that in effect there are

often no perceivable differences between rural *Hauptschulen* and urban *Gymnasia (AHS)*.

General secondary schools

Bilingual education at secondary level is not compulsory as it is in bilingual primary schools; instead pupils have to specifically register for it. In 1999 there was only one general secondary school in Burgenland which offered bilingual education in the form of German and Croatian tuition in all subjects, and a second general secondary school which offered Croatian as an optional core subject, *Wahlpflichtfach*, and bilingual German and Croatian tuition in several other subjects. In these two schools 141 pupils had registered for bilingual education. Apart from that 102 pupils in 9 further general secondary schools had registered for Croatian as optional subject. This means that in 1999 only 243 pupils continued their Croatian education in the *Hauptschule*, the most common form of secondary education in rural areas of Austria, which represents 70% of German-Croatian bilingual primary school leavers in Burgenland. In the year 2000 the number of pupils registering for bilingual German-Croatian courses dropped to 233, but an additional 83 pupils chose Croatian as a optional subject in monolingual German schools of this type, so that the overall number of pupils taking Croatian in one of its many forms rose to 316, which represents an increase of 30%.

	Schools	Pupils 1999	Pupils 2000
Bilingual school	2	141	233
Croatian as a optional subject	9	102	83
Total	11	243	316

Table 2: Croatian in general secondary schools (*Hauptschule*) in Burgenland

As with primary education in Burgenland the maximum number of pupils per class for bilingual general secondary

schools, *Hauptschulen*, is 20 as compared to 30 in monolingual schools.

Viennese *Hauptschulen* occasionally offer Croatian as a optional subject, but no clear data on this are available.

*General higher
secondary school
(AHS)*

In 1991 the federal government established a bilingual higher secondary school (AHS), the so-called *Zweisprachiges Gymnasium*, bilingual gymnasium, in Oberwart/ Veliki Borta. This secondary school of the AHS type is divided in two bilingual groups, one German-Croatian, one German-Hungarian. Currently 114 pupils attend the German-Croatian classes, where all tuition is in both languages. The school is the only one of its kind, and was established 36 years after Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 guaranteed “a representative number of secondary schools for the Croatian minority in Burgenland. Seven other secondary schools of the AHS type offer tuition in Croatian, ranging from core subjects (*Wahlpflichtfach*) to optional subjects (*Freifach*). In most cases this is restricted to Croatian language tuition only. Altogether in 1999, 335 pupils in secondary schools of the AHS type attended classes in Croatian, which compared to 275 in 1998 made for an increase of 21.8% of registered students.

	Schools	Pupils
Bilingual general secondary school	1	141
Language tuition in general secondary schools	7	194
Total	8	335

Table 3: Croatian in general secondary schools in Burgenland 1999

*Vocational
secondary schools
(BMS) and (BHS)*

There is only one vocational secondary schools of the BHS type in Burgenland that offers courses in Croatian as a second foreign language, which are attended by 70 pupils. Since this school is situated in the southern part of the province it is more than 50 to 100 kilometres from the main

Croatian settlement areas in central and northern Burgenland, where no school of this type offers any tuition in Croatian.

Teaching materials

For most subjects apart from straightforward language training, books in Croatian are not available, so instead German books are used. For bilingual education teachers have to prepare their own materials or use textbooks from the Republic of Croatia. But since the Croatian language spoken in Croatia itself differs significantly from the variant spoken in Burgenland, and since the curricula of the two countries are not at all compatible, this option is of limited usefulness. One major teaching aid for secondary education in Croatia is a special dictionary which gives all words in German, in the local variant of Croatian, *Gradišćansko hrvatski*, and also in the version of Croatian which functions as the official language in Croatia itself.

5

Vocational Education

Vocational education, which starts at the age of 15 after completion of the compulsory ninth year, is organised in a dual system comprising a three year practical training in the workplace as well theoretical courses in special schools, which are alternated with ongoing apprenticeship training. None of the vocational schools in Burgenland or Vienna offer any kind of tuition in Croatian or courses in Croatian as a language.

6

Higher Education

At all of the 17 Austrian Universities, technical and art colleges, as well as at the recently established vocational post secondary high schools, the *Fachhochschulen*, the language of instruction is German. Croatian as a subject can be studied at two departments for Slavic languages, at several departments for translation studies. Two university

departments also offer teacher-training courses for general secondary higher schools (AHS) in Croatian.

The vocational post-secondary high school for international commercial relations in Eisenstadt/Zeljezno, the *Fachhochschulstudienlehrgang für Internationale Wirtschaftsbeziehungen*, teaches a compulsory course in an Eastern European language. Currently 17 students learn Croatian, which is one of the languages on offer besides Hungarian, Slovak, Russian and Czech.

Teacher training

Pre-school teachers are trained in kindergarten teaching methods at special vocational upper secondary schools. Only one of these offers training for bilingual German-Croatian pre-school education as an optional subject.

Primary school teachers and teachers for general secondary schools, *Hauptschulen*, are trained at Teacher Training Colleges, *Pädagogische Akademien*, which do not have university status in Austria and are administered by the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Sciences. Teachers for bilingual German-Croatian education are trained at such an institution in Eisenstadt/Željezno, the provincial capital of Burgenland. No comparable training exists in Vienna or elsewhere in Austria.

Teachers for general secondary higher schools (AHS) are trained at universities. During their studies as well as after graduating they work as trainees in schools, prior to permanent employment. Work placements for teachers form part of the university curriculum and a requirement for the attainment of the secondary school teaching diploma.

Work placements and seminars for teachers of Croatian from all types of schools are organised by the *Pädagogisches Institut des Bundes*, the federal pedagogic institute in Eisenstadt/Željezno at irregular intervals. Special courses for bilingual education and intercultural learning are offered by the University of Klagenfurt in the province of Carinthia

as extramural studies. Seminars and courses focusing on intercultural education are also offered by the Teacher Training College of Vienna and the federal pedagogic institute in Eisenstadt/Željezno.

7

Adult Education

There is a wide range of adult education opportunities: a variety of courses are offered by a number of public, private, minority and church institutions, which do not usually lead to formal qualifications.

There are two adult education institutions for the Croatian speaking population of Burgenland. The principle one, the *Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Kroaten / Hrvatska Narodna Visoka Škola*, offers a multitude of lectures and courses on the history, culture and current affairs of the Croatian speaking minority of Burgenland, some in German, some in Croatian and some bilingual. The second Croatian adult education institution is the *Bildungswerk der Burgenländischen Kroaten / Društvo za obrazovanje Gradišćanskih Hrvata* which has a similar profile. Adult education courses are also organised by the Croatian Cultural Association, *Hrvatsko Kulturno Društvo* and the private initiative *Kulturna zadruga KUGA*, which focuses on the cultural needs of Croatian speaking youths and young adults. Their activities are financed either by the Austrian Ministry of Education, by the Austrian Chancellery or to some extent by the provincial government. All of them have recently participated in several EU programs and have received funding for certain projects.

Several years ago the Burgenland Research Association/ Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft, with funding from an EU program, set up a multimedia Croatian conversation course which was targeted at the German speaking population of Burgenland.

8 Educational Research

Educational research is organised either by the Austrian Ministry of Education or by so-called School Development Centres set up by the ministry in several provinces. Two major education evaluation studies on Croatian education in Burgenland were organised by the Croatian Cultural and Documentation Centre, *Kroatisches Kultur und Dokumentationszentrum* and the *Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Kroaten/Hrvatska Narodna Visoka Škola* in cooperation with the provincial school board and with researchers from Vienna and the University of Klagenfurt. Educational research into the special requirements of bilingual education for Austrian minorities increased in the 1980s, especially at the University of Klagenfurt, which since then has become an internationally renowned centre for intercultural studies and teaching methods. Numerous Masters and PhD dissertations on questions of German-Croatian bilingual education have been completed there in the past few years. However, by international standards Austria, with its many native minorities, is lagging far behind other countries, and the situation is characterised by a marked lack of co-ordinated in-depth research on bilingual and minority education problems.

9 Prospects

The greatest task for the future will be to develop an integrated policy for bilingual education at all school levels, which integrates teacher training from pre-school to secondary and vocational level, as well as the development of teaching material. The major problem for German-Croatian bilingual education in Burgenland is the rapidly declining language standard of children on entering primary school. Even in bilingual schools, tuition in Croatian primarily has the character of foreign language teaching. In 1999 only 24% of pupils entering bilingual primary schools were native Croatian speakers. After leaving primary school,

pupils in the bilingual areas of Burgenland switch from a compulsory bilingual education of which one can opt out, but few do to an education system in secondary education which requires special registration for bilingual education. After this transition participation figures drop drastically. The situation is extremely unsatisfactory, especially in the sphere of vocational middle and higher secondary schools (BMS) and (BHS) and in vocational schools. Whereas 12% of all Burgenland pupils attend German-Croatian bilingual classes in primary education, the percentage then drops dramatically to 3.1% in the whole of the provincial secondary education system. Demographical data show that the social profile of Croatian speakers in Burgenland is already characterised by a relative ageing of active speakers compared to the rest of the population. A focussed strategy will be necessary to counteract the perceptible linguistic assimilation of the younger generations.

Summary statistics

10

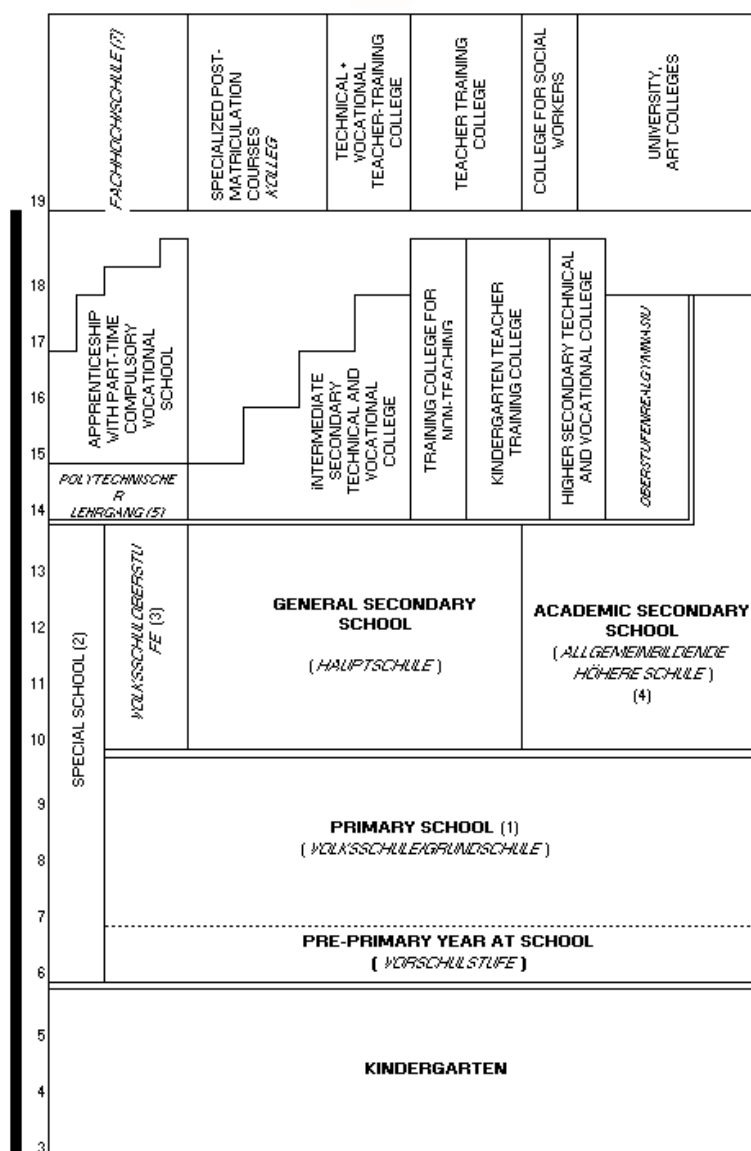
Type of education	number of schools	enrolment figures
Kindergarten	27	600
Bilingual primary schools	29	1,464
General secondary schools (Haupshule)	11	316
General higher secondary schools (AHS)	5	335
Vocational middle and higher secondary schools (BMS) (BHS)	--	70
Vocational education		--

Table 4: Figures of schools and students enrolled in Croatian education (1999 or 2000)

Endnotes

1. Source for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. November 1992. European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens, 148. <http://conventions.coe.int/>
2. This document called '*Structures of the education and the initial training systems in the European Union*' has been prepared jointly by Eurydice and Cedefop. Address: European Unit, European Unit, Rue d'Arlon 15, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32-2-2383011, fax: +32-2-22306562.
3. Bundeskanzleramt der Republik Österreich, Bericht der Republik Österreich gemäß Artikel 25 Abs.1 des Rahmenübereinkommens zum Schutz nationaler Minderheiten, Vienna 2000.
4. Österreichisches Volksgruppenzentrum, Volksgruppenreport 2000, Vienna 2000.
5. The official census figures for Austria include Croatians from Burgenland as well as migrants from the successor states of former Yugoslavia, who have settled in large numbers in Austria since the 1960s, but especially since the outbreak of wars on the Balkans in the 1990s, and since then to some extent have become naturalized Austrian subjects. Currently 384,000 former subjects of Yugoslavia are living in Austria, about a 140,000 more than in 1991. Non-permanent residents such as students, refugees and illegal immigrants, currently some 200,000 persons altogether, are not included in any of these census figures.
6. Österreichisches Volksgruppengesetz vom 7. Juni 1976, BGBl. Nr.196/1976.
7. Verordnung der Bundesregierung vom 24.4.1990 über die Bestimmung der Gerichte, Verwaltungsbehörden und sonstige Dienststellen, vor denen die kroatische Sprache zusätzlich zur deutschen Sprache als Amtssprache zugelassen wird, BGBl. Nr. 231/1990.
8. Topographieverordnung Burgenland, BGBl. Nr.107/2000.
9. Microcensus of the province of Burgenland 1990/91, for details see Werner Holzer und Rainer Münz, Eds., *Trendwende. Sprache und Ethnizität im Burgenland*, Vienna 1993, 19.
10. Burgenländisches Pflichtschulgesetz 1995, Bgld. LGBl. 36/1995.
11. Schulorganisationsnovelle 1990.
12. Burgenländisches Langessschulgesetz 1937, Bgld. LGBl. 40.
13. Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland, Bgld. LGBl. 202/1994.
14. Anne Kathrin Hänel, Petruska Krčmarova und Dietmar Larcher, Evaluation des zweisprachigen Schulwesens im Burgenland /Dvojezicno školstvo u Gradiscu, Eisenstadt/Željezno 1997, 165-166; Österreichisches Volksgruppenzentrum, *Volksgruppenreport 1997*, Vienna 1998, 114-115.
15. Novelle zum Burgenländischen Kindergartengesetz 1989, Bgld. LGBl. 7/1990, Burgenländisches Kindergartengesetz 1995, Bgld. LGBl. 35/1995.
16. Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland, Bgld. LGBl. 202/1994.
17. Anne Kathrin Hänel, Petruska Krčmarova und Dietmar Larcher, *op.cit.*, 136.

Education system Austria Eurydice



A general differentiation is to be made between non-school establishments, schools, Fachhochschulen (university-level study course which intends to convey a scientifically based vocational education), universities, and fine-arts colleges.

References and further reading

*Main official texts
regulating the
teaching of Croatian*

Österreichisches Volksgruppengesetz vom 7. Juni 1976, BGBl. Nr.196/1976.

First act passed by the Austrian parliament trying to regulate the rights of autochthonous minorities in Austria, recognizing only, Carinthian Slovenes, Burgenland Croats and Hungarians and Czechoslovaks in Vienna. The "Volksgruppenbeiräte", advisory boards with the Austrian chancellery for each recognised minority, were established through this act, but only the "Volksgruppenbeirat" for the Hungarian minority was actually implemented shortly after. All the other minorities refused for more than a decade to nominate candidates to this representative body and rejected the parliamentary act, since it curtailed their rights guaranteed in several older bilateral treaties.

12. Schulorganisationsnovelle 1990.

Amendment of Austrian education law, which enabled the teaching of languages spoken in neighbouring countries as voluntary subjects possible in all Austrian schools, thus overcoming the highly politicised use of minority languages in schools within clearly defined minority areas.

Rahmenübereinkommens zum Schutz nationaler Minderheiten des Europarats 1988

International European agreement ratified by the Austrian parliament concerning support for recognised ethnic groups, containing mainly declarations of intentions and very few binding commitments.

Verordnung der Bundesregierung vom 24.4.1990 über die Bestimmung der Gerichte, Verwaltungsbehörden und sonstige Dienststellen, vor denen die kroatische Sprache zusätzlich zur deutschen Sprache als Amtssprache zugelassen wird, BGBl. Nr. 231/1990.

Implementation of Croatian language rights guaranteed in the Austrian State Treaty in 1955, 45 years previous, in six of seven districts of the province of Burgenland after a decision of the Austrian constitutional court.

Topographieverordnung Burgenland, BGBl. Nr.107/2000.

Decree regulating the implementation of mainly Croatian and some Hungarian bilingual topographical signs as stipulated in the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, 45 years previous, 25 years after bilingual topographical signs had been erected in the province of Carinthia.

Burgenländisches Langeschulgesetz 1937, Bgld. LGBl. 40.

Provincial law regulating the use of minority languages in local mainly primary education institutions, making the amount of minority language used in tuition dependent from the percentage of minority language speakers in the community.

Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland, Bgld. LGBl. 202/1994.

Provincial law enabling the tuition of minority languages in Burgenland schools possible in all educational institution, but at the same time weakening the position of minority languages as primary means of tuition in minority communities. The law handed more power to local school authorities and parents' representative bodies in questions of minority language use, thus reflecting the actual language change within the Croatian minority, at the same time it undermined the strong legal position of Croatian as language of tuition, which it had according to the Burgenländisches Landesschulgesetz, the provincial education law of 1937.

Novelle zum Burgenländischen Kindergartengesetz 1989, Bgld. LGBl. 7/1990, Burgenländisches Kindergartengesetz 1995, Bgld. LGBl. 35/1995.

Amendment of the provincial law concerning kindergarten education, enabling the introduction of Croatian into virtually all Burgenland pre-school institutions, but at the same time undermining the compulsory use of Croatian in pre-school education in communities with a high percentage of Croatian speakers.

Publications

Baumgartner, G. (1995) *6 X Österreich, Geschichte und aktuelle Situation der Volksgruppen*, Klagenfurt.

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Bundeskanzleramt der Republik Österreich, Bericht der Republik Österreich gemäß Artikel 25 Abs.1 des Rahmenübereinkommens zum Schutz nationaler Minderheiten, Vienna 2000.

Geosits, S. (Ed.)(1983) *Die burgenländischen Kroaten im Wandel der Zeiten*, Vienna.

Goot, A.Sj.van der, W.J.T.Renkema & M. Stuijt (Eds.)(1994) *Pre-primary Education*. Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, The Netherlands.

Holzer, W. & Münz, R. (Eds.)(1993) *Trendwende. Sprache und Ethnizität im Burgenland*, Vienna.

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Kolonovits, D. (2000) *Sprache in Österreich*, Vienna.

Kroatisches Kultur und Dokumentationszentrum (Ed.) (1998) *Warum nicht? Argumente für die Zweisprachigkeit in der Schule /Zač ili zašto ne? Argumenti za dvojezično školstvo*, Eisenstadt/Željezno.

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Sikma, J. & Gorter, D. (1991) *European Lesser Used Languages in Primary Education: Inventory and Proceedings of the Colloquy*. Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, The Netherlands.

Tjeerdsma, R.S. & Sikma, J. (1994) *Provision of Learning Materials for Primary and Pre-primary Education*. Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, The Netherlands.

Addresses

Official bodies

Mag. Edith Mühlgassner
Landesschulrat für das Burgenland
provincial school board department for minority schools
A - Eisenstadt / Željezno, Kernausteig 3.

Pedagogical institutions

Hrvatsko Kulturno Društvo
Kroatischer Kulturverein
A - 7000 Eisenstadt Željezno, DR. Lorenz Karall Straße 23

Cultural centres and organisations

Hrvatski kulturni i dokumentarni centar
Kroatisches Kultur und Dokumentationszentrum
A - Eisenstadt / Željezno, Permayerstraße 3/3

Hrvatsko Gradiscansko Kulturno Društvo u Becu
Kroatisch Burgenländischer Kulturverein in Wien
A - 1040 Wien/Bec Schwindtgasse 14

Hrvatska narodna visoka skola
Volkshochschule der burgenländischen Kroaten
A - 7000 Eisenstadt / Željezno, Pfarrgasse 10

Društvo za obrazovanje Gradiscanskih Hrvata
Bildungswerk der Burgenländischen Kroaten
A - 7061 Traisdorf / Trajstof, Weinberggasse 11.

Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator* **www.troc.es/mercator**
General site of the Mercator-project. It will lead you to the three specialized centres:
- Mercator-Education* **www.mercator-education.org**.
Homepage of Mercator-Education: European Network for regional or minority languages and education. The site contains the series of regional dossiers, a database with organisations and bibliography and links to minority languages.
- Mercator-Media* **www.aber.ac.uk/~merc/**
Homepage of Mercator-Media. It provides information on media and minority languages in the EU.
- Mercator-Legislation* **www.troc.es/ciemen/mercator**
Homepage of Mercator-Legislation. It provides information on minority languages and legislation in the EU.
- European Union* **<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html>**
At the website of the European Union an explanation is given of its support for regional or minority languages.
- Council of Europe* **<http://conventions.coe.int/>**
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995) European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens 148+157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice* **www.eurydice.org**
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- EBLUL* **www.eblul.org/**
Homepage of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages. This site provides general information on lesser used languages as well as on projects, publications and events.

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website

www.mercator-education.org

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Mercator-Education is part of an information service and research network of three centres. They provide reliable and in depth information on regional or minority languages in co-operation with many experts throughout Europe. *Mercator-Education* is hosted at the Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden. *Mercator-Media* resides at the University of Wales (Aberystwyth) and *Mercator-Legislation* at Ciemen (Barcelona).

newsletter

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publications

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