

ARTICLES

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF PRESENT-DAY EUROPE

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Everybody, who intends to pursue the issues of the rights and the status of persons belonging to ethnic minorities in Europe, should primarily realize the political, demographic and ethnic composition of the whole of Europe, which is the result of long, complex and often also conflicting historical development. Within European international politics, the issues of ethnic minorities and the rights and position of persons belonging to them have in recent years been presented as if these problems existed only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as if persons belonging to ethnic minorities lived only there. However, this is not true, members of ethnic minorities live in all European countries, including Western Europe.

In the last six years the issues of the rights and status of persons belonging to ethnic minorities have come to the forefront in international politics, particularly in Europe. It has, however, been presented as if the problem existed only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as if persons belonging to ethnic minorities lived only there. However, this is not true: members of ethnic minorities live in the countries of Western Europe as well. In order to better understand the breadth and complexity of minority issues, we have to realize at the very beginning the political, demographic, and ethnic composition of the whole of Europe, which is the result of the long, complex, and often conflicting historical development.

The foundations of current state and political picture of Europe, its division into states, were laid after World War I. In Western Europe, the borders changed between Germany and her neighbours. In Central Europe, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was dissolved and Czecho-Slovakia, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Poland, Hungary, and Austria came into existence. Parts of the Monarchy were annexed to Rumania and Italy. In Eastern Europe, after the disintegration of the Russian empire, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Soviet Union were formed, the Soviet Union later absorbed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Part of the Russian empire was annexed to Rumania.

The period after World War II meant the return to the original status, which was interrupted by German aggression during the war. The frontiers of the countries occupied by Germany were renewed and confirmed. The Slovak Republic, which had come into existence before World War II, disappeared and the Czechoslovak Republic was re-established in its former frontiers. Hungary and the Soviet Union returned to their pre-war frontiers. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established in the Balkans. The greatest change was recorded in Germany: it was divided in two states.

The contemporary picture of Europe was shaped at the beginning of the 1990s after the dissolution of the socialist camp in Central and Eastern Europe. It was accompanied primarily by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and by revival of independent statehoods of Belarusians, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Moldovans and Ukrainians. The Russian part of the Soviet Union was transformed into the Russian Federation. Germany was re-unified. The Czecho-Slovak Federal Republic split into two independent states: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia disappeared. The nation-states of Croats, Macedonians, and Slovenes separated. During the war conflict, independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is formed. The Serbs and Montenegrins formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the rest of Yugoslavia.

This is the place where we should make a short excursion into the issues of understanding the concepts of nation and ethnic minority. In order to understand the difference between the terms used in international and political practice in different European states and their contents, the first thing to explain should be the content of the concept nation. To simplify matters, in Europe there are two different ways of understanding the concept of "nation" in English and in French. In Western Europe, especially in Great Britain and in France, but also in the USA, nation is identified with the full-fledged citizenship of the inhabitants of the state, i.e. it concerns the so-called political or, better to say, civic nation. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, nation is perceived as a linguistic and cultural community, to be more exact, as a community of people sharing a common ethnicity and common ethnic consciousness.

All documents of international organizations pertaining to minority issues, recognize three minority groups: ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities. Ethnic minorities are called "national minorities" in English or "minorités nationales" in French. The English and French languages have other two terms, "ethnic minorities" and "ethnic groups". The legal and political practice in European countries is, however, much more complicated and more varied in this connection.

The legal systems of Denmark, Finland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and Malta do not know the term national minority or any other similar term. In Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, and Greece, the most often used term "minority" is not particularly specified. The term "national minority" exists in the legal systems of Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. The terms "ethnic minority", "ethnic group" are used in the legal practice of Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and

Russia. The term “linguistic minority” is used in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Switzerland. Portugal also knows the term “cultural minority” and the term “religious minority” is used in Switzerland.

There are less frequent terms “autochthonous small nation/people” in the Russian Federation in relation to nations of the North or “untitled ethnos” (i.e. ethnic communities) in relation to nations which do not have their own ethnic-administrative territorial units. “Sorbian nation/people” and “Sorbian nationality” were used in Germany in relation to the Lusatian Sorbs and “Lapp population” in Norway. A special solution was chosen in the Netherlands, where the term used in this connection is “civil minority”. A very similar solution is applied in Greece and in Sweden using a descriptive term “persons/citizens of ... origin”. The most consistent is the legal practice in Rumania, which carefully observes the use of the descriptive term “persons belonging to ethnic minorities” stating clearly that all their rights are individual rights. A similar solution is also applied in Turkey.

As is seen, the legal and political practice in this area is very diverse in most European countries. Various terms are used and often also several terms are used side by side. Moreover, in none of the countries have the terms concerning minority issues been precisely defined.

An attempt should be made, however, to initiate the use of such terms in international politics, which would have a systematic relationship and could be translated into all European languages without problems.

For denoting affiliation to ethnic, national community the term ethnic affiliation should be used. Every person is a member of a nation, an ethnic community sharing a common cultural tradition, language, or religion and even characteristic racial features. This fact cannot be changed even by the legal relation to a particular state, whose citizen the person is. For denotation of the relation of a person or a group of people to the state, the term state affiliation should be used.

The term national minority should be replaced by the term ethnic minority. The content of the term should be expressed only by two objective facts – by the number and by cultural, linguistic or religious characteristic features based on the basic assumption that the people are citizens of the particular state.

Present-day Europe consists of 43 countries, 34 of which were established as nation-states of one dominant nation. Contemporary European countries can be divided into republics and monarchies according to political elites and according to the division of power into unitary and federal states built on either territorial or ethnic principles. The monarchies in Europe are Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. The Vatican is also a monarchy and can be denoted as a theocratic monarchy. All other European countries are republics.

The unitary states are Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the

Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine.

The federations on the territorial principle are Austria, Germany, and in a certain way also Switzerland. Federation on the territorial principle means that one nation lives in several federal states which create together a nation-state. Austria has 9 federal republics. Germany consists of 16 federal states. Switzerland is divided into 26 cantons.

The federations on the ethnic principle are Belgium, Bosnia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Great Britain. Such federation means that several nations with their nation statehoods, at least two, constitute together a state. The dominant nations in Belgium are the Walloons and Flemish. In Bosnia the Muslims and Croats are dominant. The dominant nations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are the Serbs and Montenegrins. The dominant nation in Great Britain is the English although according to the official title of the country the Irish, Scotch, and Welsh nations should also be dominant.

The autonomous units of Spain and the Russian Federation represent the combination of ethnic and territorial principle applied in the state arrangement and state control. In Spain, with the dominant Spanish nation, the whole territory of the country is divided into 17 communities. Three of them are inhabited by other, non-dominant nations, i.e. the Basques in the north, Galicians in the north-west, and Catalans in the north-east of the country. Each province and thus also the nation which lives there, has wide economic and cultural powers within the common state.

The Russian Federation represents the most complicated picture of state arrangement in Europe. The Russian Federation consists of 89 administrative units which are organized into a six-member hierarchical typology: autonomous republic, autonomous region, autonomous circle, national region, national circle and city of federal significance. Thirty two units, including 21 republics, 1 autonomous region and 10 districts with the status of autonomous circle have an ethnic-administrative character. The extent of economic and cultural rights corresponds to the hierarchy and typology of administrative units. Autonomous republics have a significantly limited international legal sovereignty and in practice cannot secede from the Federation. The dominant nation of the Russian Federation are the Russians. The Russians also predominate in some other administrative units of the Federation in spite of the fact that these have their own recognized ethnic-administrative character.

All forms of federation based on territorial and ethnic principle and their combinations function as a unitary state in international relationships. Apart from dominant nations with their own statehood in Europe there are, apart from the territory of the European part of the Russian Federation, 26 non-dominant nations without their own statehood, with members different in number, from millions to several thousands or hundreds of persons. Among them there are the Basques in France and Spain, Bretons in France, Cornish in Great Britain, Faeroese in Denmark, Frisians in Germany and in the Netherlands, Friulians in Italy, Gagauz in Moldova, Rumania and Ukraine, Gaels

in Great Britain, Galicians and Catalans in Spain, Gipsies in all European countries, Greenlanders in Denmark, Izhors in Estonia and the Russian Federation, Corsicans in France, Crimean Tatars in Ukraine, Ladins in Switzerland and Italy, Lapps in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Federation, Livonians in Latvia, Lusatian Sorbs in Germany, the Manx in Great Britain, Moravians in Czechia, Provençals in France, Ruthenians in Poland, Slovakia and in Ukraine, Sardinians in Italy and the Scotch and Welsh in Great Britain (see map No 1).

Apart from members of European nations and the dominant nations of former Soviet republics the European part of the Russian Federation is inhabited by the following nations: Adygeys, Abazas, Aguls, Avars, Balkars, Bashkirs, Cachurs, Chechens, Circassians, Chuvash, Dargins, Ingush, Izhors, Kabardins, Kalmyks, Karachays, Karelians, Khantys, Komis, Komi-Permyaks, Kumyks, Laks, Lapps, Lezgins, Mansis, Maris, Mordvins, Nenets, Nogays, Ossetians, Rutuls, Tabasarans, Tatars, Udmurts, Veps (see map No 2).

According to the rule of law of the states in which they live, Greenlanders and Lapps have a special status among non-dominant nations; they are perceived as autochthonous populations, which has approximately the same content as indigenous populations, e.g. in Africa or Australia. A similar situation exists in the Russian Federation, in its European part or in the case of the so-called nation small in number of the North, like Komis, Nenets, Mansis, Khantys.

To make the ethnic picture of Europe complete, we should also mention the extensive migration of the people from Eastern and Central Europe to Western European countries in search of jobs, which began towards the end of the 19th century and continued through the first half of the 20th century. One cannot omit mentioning the violent displacements of whole nations on the territory of the former Soviet Union, e.g. of Crimean Tatars or Volga Germans and others. A large migration of nations was launched after World War II in connection with the displacement of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The influx of Russian inhabitants into all republics of the former Soviet Union brought significant changes in the ethnic composition of Eastern Europe.

In almost every European state, by the side of dominant nations, there live members of other European and non-European nations, creating in many cases a very complex ethnic picture of the particular state. According to the proportion of the members of ethnic minorities to the population of the state, European countries can be divided into seven groups (see map No 3).

The first group consists of ethnically homogeneous states. The smallest (in the sense of the size and the number of inhabitants) European countries belonging to this group: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, and San Marino.

The second group contains ethnically almost homogeneous states: Hungary (2.5% of population belong to ethnic minorities), Iceland (1.5%), Ireland (2.0%), Italy (4.5%), Norway (2.0%), Poland (2.0%), and Portugal (0.5%).

The third group includes states with natural proportions of ethnic minorities: Albania (10%), Belgium (10.0%), Finland (6.2%), Germany (7.3), Greece (7.1%), Sweden (9.8%).

The fourth group contains countries with a slightly increased proportion of ethnic minorities: Austria (11.2), Bulgaria (15.0%), Great Britain (13.9%), the Netherlands (12.3), Rumania (10.6%), Slovakia (14.4%), and Slovenia (11.7%).

The fifth group consists of the countries with the increased proportion of ethnic minorities: Czechia (18.8%), France (18.9%), Switzerland (15.5%), and the Russian Federation (18.5%).

The sixth group contains countries with a high proportion of ethnic minorities: Belarus (20.6%), Croatia (26.2%), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (29.0%), Lithuania (20.1%), Spain (29.4%), and Ukraine (26.6%).

The seventh group contains countries with a very high proportion of national minorities: Bosnia (46.2%), Estonia (35.1%), Latvia (46.3%), Macedonia (38.8%), Moldova (35.5%).

The proportion of the members of ethnic minorities to the number of inhabitants of a particular state is only one side of the problem. The numbers of the members of ethnic minorities expressed in absolute numbers which vary between several hundreds and thousands or millions give another picture of Europe, equally complex and interesting.

The situation in particular states is as follows: Albania, approximately 30,000 members of ethnic minorities, Austria 876,000, Belgium 100,000, Belarus 1,628,000, Bosnia 2,015,000, Bulgaria 1,345,000, Croatia 1,247,000, Czechia 1,938,000, Denmark 105,000, Estonia 562,000, Finland 316,000, France 11,098,000, Germany 5,730,000, Greece 730,000, Great Britain 8,010,000, Hungary 258,000, Iceland 4,000, Ireland 70,000, Italy 2,538,000, Latvia 1,230,000, Lithuania 753,000, Macedonia 793,000, Moldova 445,000, the Netherlands 1,861,000, Norway 85,000, Poland 765,000, Portugal 53,000, Rumania 2,459,000, Russia 17,200,000, Slovakia 762,000, Slovenia 230,000, Spain 11,481,000, Switzerland 1,059,000, Sweden 847,000, Ukraine 13,686,000, Yugoslavia 3,018,000 (see map No 4). This survey is based on the statistical data which reflect the population status in European countries between 1988 and 1992. We have not included the very small European countries: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, and the Vatican.

The demographic and ethnic picture of Europe thus obtained is many layered and complex. On the one hand there are countries which are almost homogeneous or minorities represent there only a small constituent in the number of inhabitants and on the other hand there are countries with a high percentage of minorities. There are European countries where the number of the members of ethnic minorities represents several tens of thousands or several hundreds of thousands persons and the countries where the members of ethnic minorities can be counted in millions.

If we begin to perceive simultaneously the absolute and the relative proportions of the members of ethnic minorities to the number of inhabitants of particular countries, the demographic and ethnic picture of Europe becomes still more complicated and interesting. There will be seen countries with the low number and low proportion of persons belonging to ethnic minorities, e.g. Albania, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Norway or Sweden. Germany belongs to the countries with the low proportion of minorities but their number approaches almost 6 millions. The number of the members of ethnic minorities in Great Britain is more than 8 millions but their proportion to the population is only 13.9%. The number of 17.2 millions of the members of minority groups in the Russian Federation represents 18.5% of its all inhabitants. Eleven million members of minority groups make up 18.9% in France, but in the neighbouring Spain the members of non-dominant nations and members of minority groups represent together as much as 29.4% of all citizens. With its 46.1% proportion of the members of minority groups, Bosnia can be considered an extreme case in this direction, their number being not more than 2 millions of persons.

Another layer in the ethnic picture of Europe will be obtained if ethnic variety of individual countries and the scatter of the members of European nations in the countries other than their nation-states will be followed. In more than one quarter of 43 European countries maximally five nations represent ethnic minorities. In one quarter of the countries the number of ethnic minorities ranges between 8 and 12, the greater number of minorities living in Bulgaria (14), France (17), Germany (14), Italy (16), Rumania (19), Ukraine (18), and Yugoslavia (22). The Russian Federation is an extreme case, where members of another 46 European nations live together with the dominant Russian nation.

However, not only members of European nations live in European countries, there are also immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America. A large number of the members of non-European nations live in Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Russian Federation. In their ethnic characteristics, in addition to culture and language, their racial affiliation and different religions, e.g. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, come to the forefront.

An interesting picture is provided by the statistics of the scatter of the members of European nations in the countries other than their nation-states. About 42% of the 113 nations have members living as a minority in one other state. A further 43% have members living in 2 to 5 other states. The Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Slovaks, and Turks live in 10 to 12 countries. The Germans as a minority live in as many as 18 countries. The extreme scatter in Europe show two nations – the Jewish people living in 30 states and the Romanies in 32 countries. For the analysis, we took into account only the numbers which exceeded 1,000 members of the minority group.

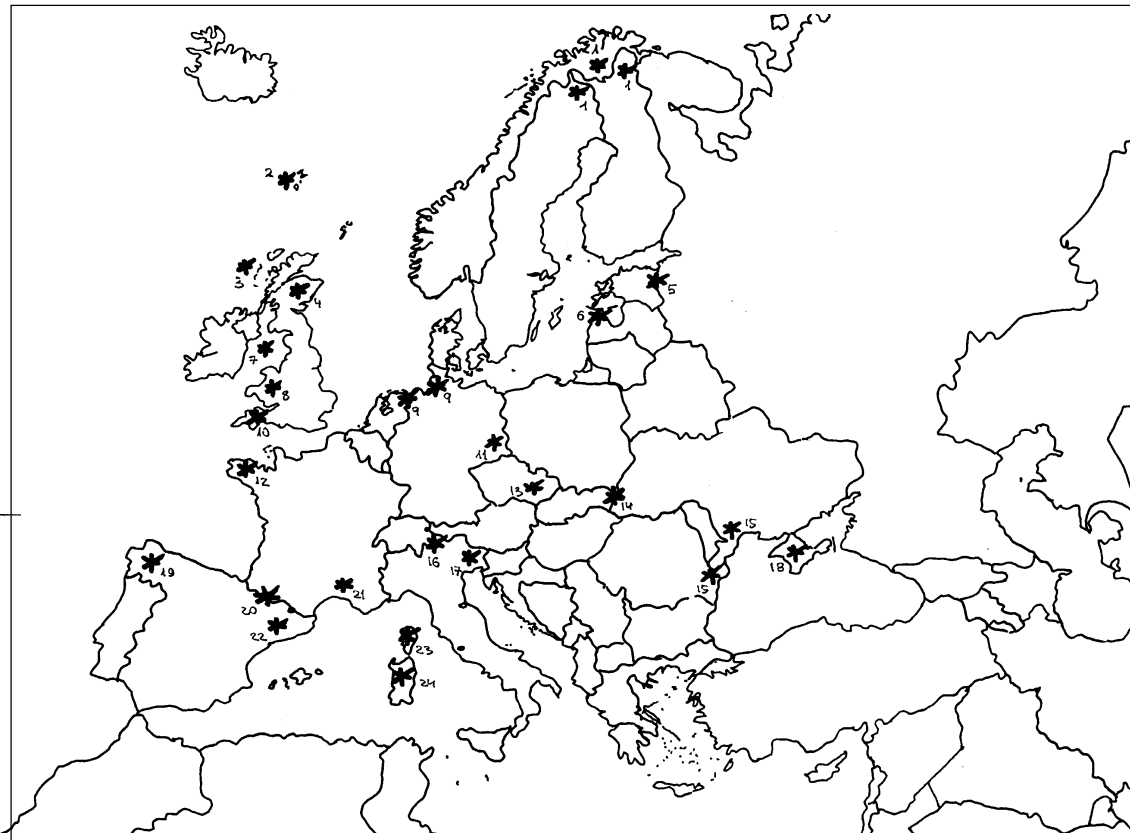
Every person, who wants to pursue the issue of the rights and position of persons belonging to ethnic minorities, should realize the facts mentioned above to-

gether with peculiarities and specific features of demographic, ethnic, historical, cultural, political or economic development not only of each country but also of a group of countries which were or still are interconnected with stronger or weaker bonds.

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Map 1 – Nations without own statehood



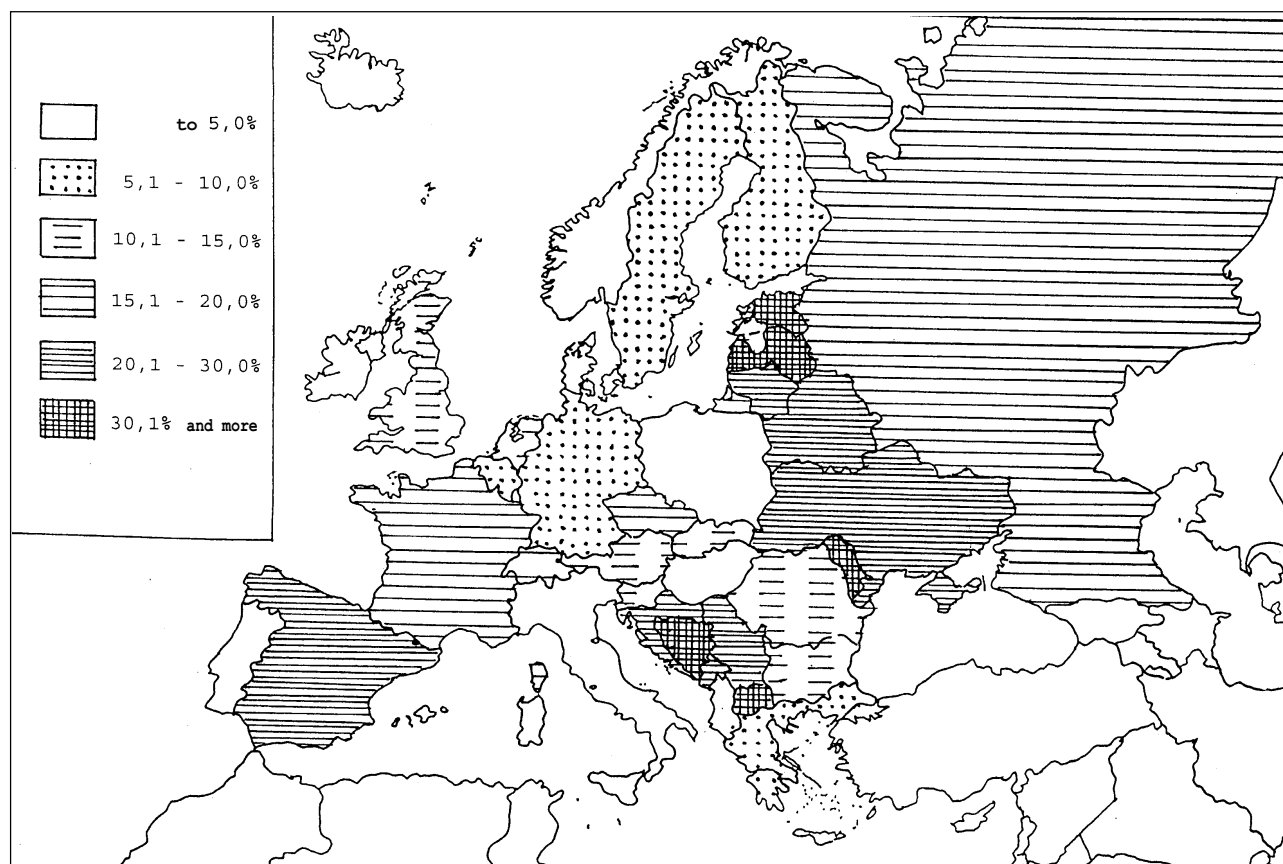
1. Lapps
 2. Faeroese
 3. Gaels
 4. Scotch
 5. Izhors
 6. Livonians
 7. Manx
 8. Welsh
 9. Frisians
 10. Cornish
 11. Lusatian Sorbs
 12. Bretons
 13. Moravians
 14. Ruthenians
 15. Gagauz
 16. Ladins
 17. Friulians
 18. Crimean Tatars
 19. Galicians
 20. Basques
 21. Provençals
 22. Catalans
 23. Corsicans
 24. Sardinians
- Greenlanders, Romanies
(not marked in the map)

Map 2 – Ethnic composition of the European part of the Russian Federation

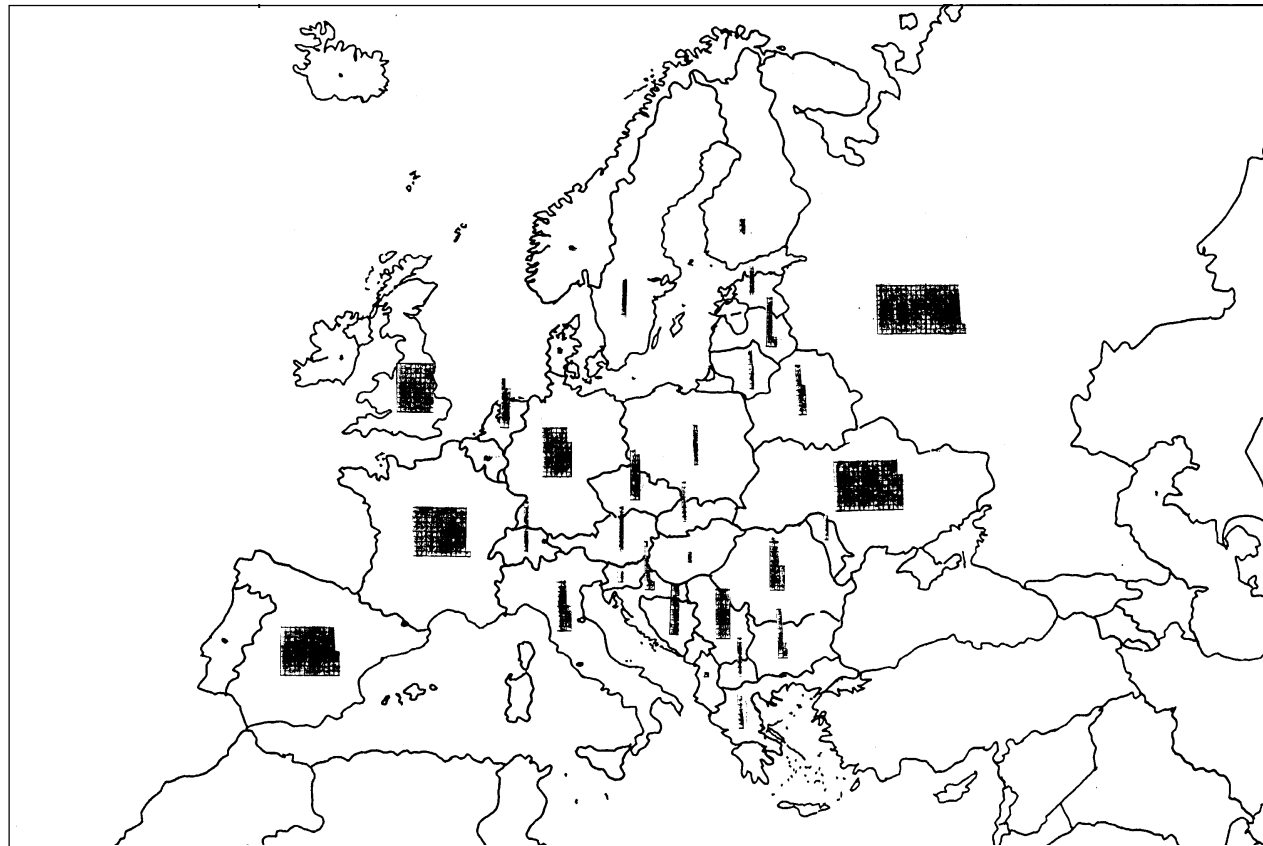


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|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Adygey | 11. Avar | 16. Kalmyk | 26. Udmurt |
| 2. Abaza | 12. Agul | 17. Lapp | 27. Bashkir |
| 3. Circassian | Cachur | 18. Karelian | 28. Komi-Permyak |
| 4. Karachay | Lezgin | 19. Veps | 29. Komi |
| 5. Balkar | Rutul | 20. Finnish | 30. Nenets |
| 6. Greek | Tabasaran | 21. Izhor | 31. Mansi |
| 7. Kabardin | 13. Kumyk | 22. Mordvin | 32. Khanty |
| 8. Ossetian | 14. Nogay | 23. Chuvash | Note: The map does not |
| 9. Ingush | 15. Dargin | 24. Mari | show nations of former |
| 10. Chechen | Lak | 25. Tatar | Soviet Union republics. |

Map 3 – Proportion of ethnic minorities to the population of the state



Map 4 – Number of ethnic minorities in the state



1 mm² = 100,000 inhabitants