



ENRI-East

Understanding identity formation of ethnic minorities

Identities are complex: One can feel simultaneously as a European, a citizen of one's country, a member of a cross-national ethnic group, a citizen of a town etc. ENRI-East investigated how such complex identities are constructed by ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe.

How identities are constructed does matter especially if they are potentially in conflict: If you are, for example, a Lithuanian living in Russia you might love the region where you live but you may still have some reservations about your "host" country because of the troubled history between Lithuania and Russia. You may also experience discrimination because of your "ethnic origin".

The project ENRI-East investigated how 12 minority groups in Central and Eastern Europe constructed and experienced such "mixed" identities: Russians in Latvia and Lithuania; Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland; Slovaks in Hungary; Hungarians in Slovakia and Ukraine; Poles in Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania; Belarusians in Lithuania; and Lithuanians in Russia. The project also included a case study in Germany, where the target groups were ethnic Germans and Jewish immigrants from the successor states of the Soviet Union.



ENRI-East meeting © ENRI-East



IMPACT

ENRI-East generated extensive data on ethnic minorities in Europe: 6800 completed questionnaires, 144 biographical interviews, expert interviews with governmental and non-governmental representatives. Results of the ENRI-East project are published as recommendations to NGOs and governments, as summarizing reports on each minority and more detailed analyses.

These results and data enable policy makers and NGOs to better understand the lives, attitudes and outlooks of ethnic minorities and, as a consequence, make their efforts to strengthen social cohesion more effective and efficient.

A database containing all quantitative, qualitative and expert interviews is being exploited further by members of the project and, three years after the end date of the project, will be made available to third parties royalty-free or to fair and reasonable conditions.

Members of ENRI-East presented their results during a workshop in Brussels in September 2011 and February 2012 where European policy makers participated as well as researchers and representatives of European NGOs. During several local workshops the results were widely disseminated.



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The younger people are, the less ethnicity counts

One of the main findings of the project is that younger generations of these ethnic minorities are less concerned about their ethnic origin than older generations. Generally, they feel more attached to their “host” country than to their “country of origin”. Accordingly, ENRI-East recommends to NGOs and European policy makers to concentrate on the young generation (under 30 years of age) in their efforts to promote integration and European values.

Data for decision-makers

The website of ENRI-East contains a lot of information about the project’s results as well as recommendations to policy makers. These recommendations include:

- Increase targeted support for inter-ethnic initiatives,
- Promote ‘Europeanness’ more by governments, civil societies and the media,
- Invest in student mobility at high school and university level, and,
- Concentrate efforts for integration on the young generation.

This and other information have been actively distributed to both governmental and non-governmental actors, and a database is available for further analysis (see ‘IMPACT’).

FACTS & FIGURES

Project Name	ENRI-East - Interplay of European, national and regional identities: nations between states along the new eastern borders of the European Union
Website	www.enri-east.net
Coordinating Institution	Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna
Number of Partners	11
Start Date - End Date	1.4.2008 - 30.9.2011
Duration	42 months
Project Funding	1.500.000 €
Funding scheme	Collaborative project - small and medium-scale focused research project
Activity - FP7	The citizen in the European Union - Activity 5
Read more	Summarizing and generalizing reports, as well as contextual and empirical reports on ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe at: www.enri-east.net/project-results/en



NET4SOCIETY is an FP7 project funded by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION. This publication reflects only the author’s views - the European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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