

The main aim of the study is to analyse whether the right to recognition (a collective right) and the right to self-identification (an individual right) is present in international law and legal systems of selected states: France, Greece, Spain, Poland and Bulgaria. The study also analyses whether we can distinguish the system of protection of collective and individual identity in selected EU states. The study focuses on ethnic identity which includes many possible dimensions such as religion, nationality, language, and common origin.

The object of analysis is the legal system of the European Union, as well as the legal systems and practices of selected states. This decision is based on the fact that EU regulations towards minorities have to be applied before entering the structure, in the pre-accession period. Each case is characterized by some specific features. The time framework of the thesis covers the years 1945 to 2021.

There are several methods used in the research. The analysis of legal acts regarding national minorities, adopted and created at the international, national, and regional level is one of them. Particular attention will be paid to the European regulations and the state's Constitutions. The analysis concerns also international laws created by such institutions as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Those institutions play an important role in creating reports and guidelines that were also a part of the research. Another important sources are documents created at international, national, and regional level by different bodies and entities. The analysed documents are reports prepared by the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, reports prepared by Minority Rights Group International, an NGOs and reports published by UNHCR like reports prepared by Human Rights Watch.

To analyse if European minorities are guaranteed the right to self-identification, data from all national censuses that took place in European Union in 2011 is analysed to see if there were questions about identity. And if yes, what were the possible answers. The research is a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis. My analysis regards legal solutions protecting national and ethnic minorities in different EU states. The study present and analyse the laws that protect minorities and their implementation. But it also answers next questions: how many solutions, concerning this problem exist? On what levels? Did selected to research states decided to implement minorities protection rule in their constitutions and why?