

This master thesis deals with the application of language law and language policy in the protection of minorities in Germany. In the conclusive case study the dispute of the Wendish Municipalities Crostwitz and Radibor with the State Saxony between 2001 - 2006 is analysed. The minority language protection in Germany cannot be understood properly without setting it in the broader international and European minority protection framework. International treaties and soft law of UNO, OSCE, Council of Europe and European Union create a complex system of protection. Particularly the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages by Council of Europe meant a breakthrough in minority protection. The Federal Republic of Germany recognises as minority languages on its territory Danish, Frisian, Romani, Sorbian, and Low German as a regional language. The thesis analyses the legal and institutional anchorage of the minority language rights in Germany. Essential for the vitality of a language is the socio - economic situation of its speakers. Many minority languages are used in economically weak regions and are threatened by a reflux of the speakers. The third pillar is the representation of the minority and regional languages in the culture and education, which enables and assures its transfer to future generations. This transfer is particularly threatened in the case of Sorbian by the closing of a substantial part of the Sorbian school network as described in the case study. The case study shows the discrepancy of the law in books and the actual law in action.