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## **HUNGARY WANTS EU TO REVIEW UKRAINE TIES OVER MINORITY LANGUAGES LAW**

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EurActiv (11 October 2017)

Hungary will ask the European Union to review its ties with Ukraine over Kyiv's decision to scrap teaching subjects in languages of its ethnic minorities, including in Hungarian, from its secondary school curriculum.

Ukraine passed a law on 5 September obliging teachers to use only Ukrainian in secondary schools, saying it wanted to integrate minorities better and help them obtain public sector jobs.

The law has already drawn protest from its biggest neighbour, Russia, which said it was designed to hurt the interests of Ukrainians millions of Russian speakers. Romania also condemned the move.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó will raise the issue at an EU foreign ministers meeting next week, he said in a statement late on Monday.

The education law violates the association agreement sealed between the EU and Ukraine, therefore next Monday at a meeting of foreign ministers in Luxembourg I will propose that the association agreement be reviewed, Szijjártó said.

Ukraine is not an EU member, but entered into an association agreement with the bloc which more closely aligns their policies and which entered into force last month.

Szijjártó said Hungary expected the EU to act against the new law passed in Ukraine.

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko is due to address a session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg on Wednesday (11 October), which is expected to discuss the education law according to its agenda.

Ukraine's ambassador in Budapest, Ljubov Nepop, told website hvg.hu that the new law did not fully scrap teaching in Hungarian, only increased the number of subjects taught in Ukrainian. She also denied the law would be targeted against ethnic minorities, and said Ukraine was ready for negotiations about the law.

Budapest was previously a strong supporter of giving Ukrainian citizens visa-free travel to the EU.

Language is a highly sensitive topic across the region □ Ukrainian was sidelined in favour of Russian when it was under the sway of the Soviet Union.

More than 40% of Ukrainians still speak Russian at home, according to a 2016 survey by the Kyiv-based Razumkov Centre think-tank.

Other EU countries with minorities in Ukraine, including Bulgaria, are unhappy with the Ukrainian law, but keep a low profile in an effort not to make life even more difficult for the Ukrainian government.

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Kaynak/Source: