

# Metrolingualism in Berlin

Decline or Change in Heritage Languages?

Bruno Behling, Bastian Ilgner, Olga Olina

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# X-Tutorial

# Berlin University Alliance



Daniil-Konstantin Arbutov, Leoni Barz, Bruno Behling, Anna Bunina, Jesse Claude Caminer, Florian Deichsler, Alexandra Fosså, Joanna Göhring, Lena Haden, Leon Heblík, Arthur Heckmann, Virginia Hehlert, Denis Hill, Hannah Ida Hullmeine, Bastian Igner, Lisa Koerber, Maria Ines Kuehn, Kierán Meinhardt, Tatiana Mnukova, Simon Moll, Olga Olina, Zacharias van Stek, Emilia Rosalie Strom, Vitale Victoria Vaugin, Beatrice Yefimov, Felix Wohlatz



# Endangered Languages

- 7000+ languages worldwide
- Up to 50% could be extinct by 2100
- Programs to support endangered languages worldwide



2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF

**Indigenous Languages**

## A Scientific Upheaval

- 1990s scientific initiatives
- Language endangerment models
- Urbanization and globalization are key factors



Glottolog: *Agglomerated Endangerment Scale*

UNESCO: *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*

Ethnologue: *Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale*

Catalogue of Endangered Languages: *The Language Endangerment Index*

# ...what about urban contexts?

ཀུར་ཏོག་བ་ལ་མ་

Kurtöp

& Sunnyside

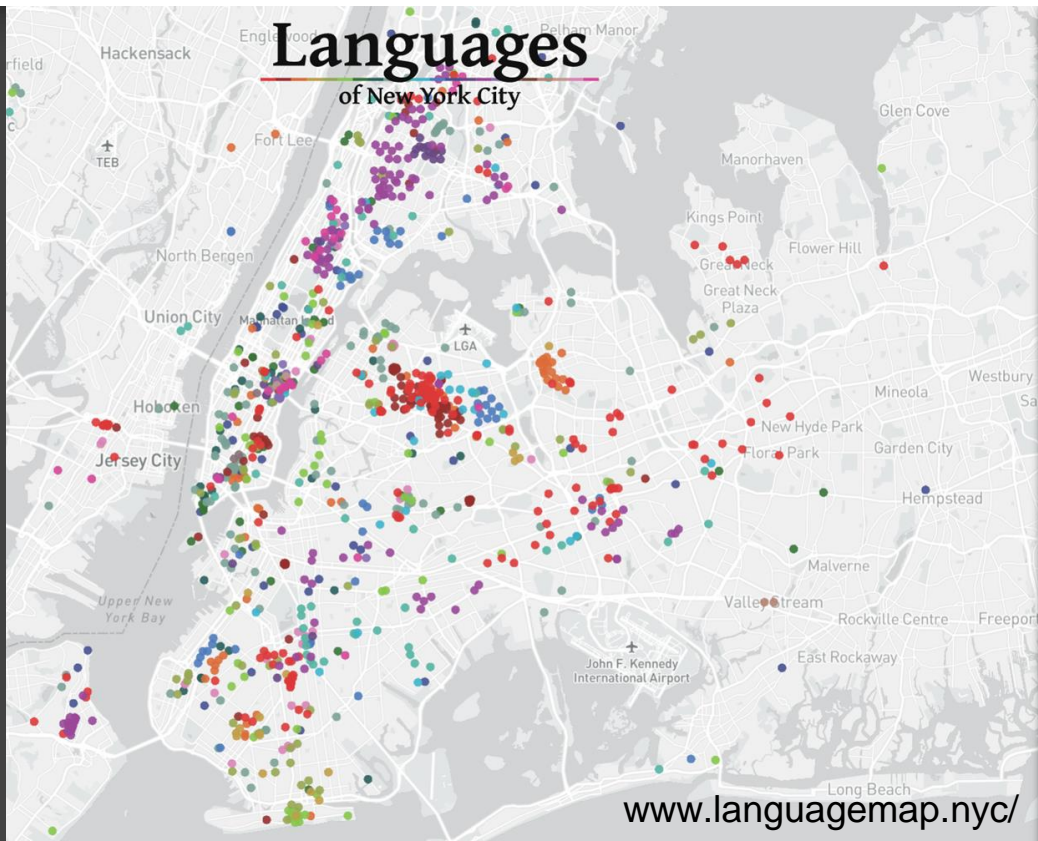
Southern Asia Bhutan Himalayan

Video Audio De-select Share

**Community Profile:** Encompassing Nepal, northern India, Bhutan, and Tibet, the greater Himalayan region is a nexus of cultural and linguistic diversity. In recent decades, tens of thousands people from various parts of the region have settled in Queens and Brooklyn, making New York into a new microcosm of Himalayan diversity. Central Tibetan or Nepali may serve as a lingua franca, and Himalayan New Yorkers are generally united by their connection to Tibetan culture, written language, tradition, and religion, including for some the Classical Tibetan language, but the diversity of their own languages and cultures is also substantial.

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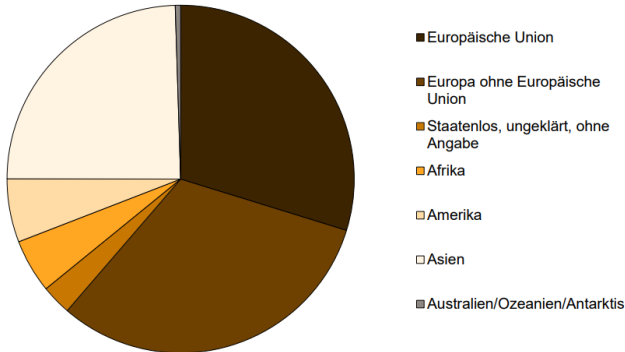
One community member estimates that as many as 1,000 people from Bhutan are now in the city, though it is unclear whether or not this includes the Nepali-speaking Lhotsampa people who have fled Bhutan as refugees and may not be Dzongkha speakers. Besides Dzongkha, the national language, the most widely spoken language among non-Lhotsampa Bhutanese is Sharchop, but there are also a small number of speakers of Bumthang, Kurtöp, Chocha-ngacha, and probably other languages of Bhutan. The largest concentration is in Sunnyside as well as Astoria and Elmhurst, near other Himalayans, but a small percentage are in Brooklyn and scattered individuals in the Bronx and Westchester and likely elsewhere.



# Problem

- 923 789 foreign residents in Berlin
- 23,9% of total population
- But which languages do they speak?

1 Ausländische Einwohnerinnen und Einwohner in Berlin am 30. Juni 2023 nach Kontinenten in Prozent  
Insgesamt: 923 789 Personen

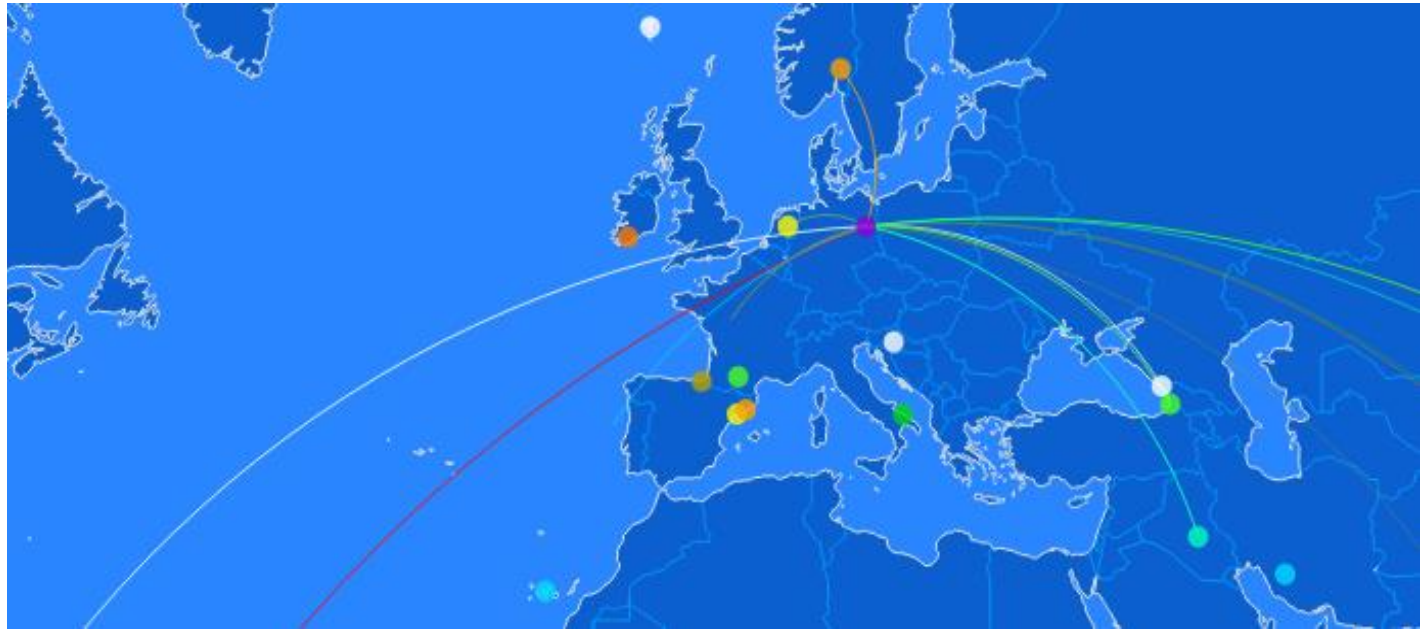


10 Ausländische Einwohnerinnen und Einwohner<sup>1</sup> in Berlin am 30. Juni 2023 nach Land der Staatsangehörigkeit, Geschlecht und Altersgruppen

Land der Staatsangehörigkeit	Insgesamt					Darunter weiblich				
	insgesamt	davon im Alter von ... bis unter ... Jahren				zusammen	davon im Alter von ... bis unter ... Jahren			
		unter 15	15 - 45	45 - 65	65 und mehr		unter 15	15 - 45	45 - 65	65 und mehr
<b>Afrika</b>										
Südliches Afrika										
Angola	629	47	343	209	30	283	24	159	88	12
Lesotho	12	3	9	–	–	6	–	6	–	–
Malawi	42	3	33	6	–	21	–	21	–	–
Mosambik	410	16	153	235	6	168	13	90	65	–
Namibia	87	7	70	10	–	52	4	41	7	–
Sambia	100	10	65	22	3	45	6	26	13	–
Simbabwe	286	21	238	27	–	159	6	140	13	–
Südafrika	1 234	65	885	243	41	602	21	454	98	29
Zusammen	2 800	172	1 796	752	80	1 336	74	937	284	41
Sonstiges Afrika*										
Zusammen	54	–	36	15	3	30	–	21	6	3
<b>Afrika zusammen</b>	<b>45 732</b>	<b>6 442</b>	<b>30 588</b>	<b>7 578</b>	<b>1 124</b>	<b>18 537</b>	<b>3 083</b>	<b>12 312</b>	<b>2 751</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Amerika</b>										
Nordamerika										
Kanada	4 119	156	3 010	767	186	2 059	75	1 592	329	63
Vereinigte Staaten / USA	21 378	979	13 306	5 225	1 868	10 172	494	6 837	2 077	764
Zusammen	25 497	1 135	16 316	5 992	2 054	12 231	569	8 429	2 406	827
Mittelamerika und Karibik										
Barbados	25	–	9	6	10	12	–	6	3	3
Costa Rica	341	13	310	18	–	147	3	129	15	–
Dominica	37	–	31	6	–	18	–	15	3	–
Dominikanische Republik	534	40	348	133	13	308	28	173	97	10
El Salvador	202	6	180	12	4	101	3	91	3	4
Guatemala	213	17	165	27	4	110	14	81	15	–
Haiti	50	–	29	18	3	16	–	10	3	3
Honduras	286	–	261	25	–	147	–	128	19	–
Jamaika	152	10	78	55	9	69	7	32	24	6
Kuba	1 145	28	529	541	47	535	10	266	247	12
Mexiko	3 470	75	2 976	345	74	1 764	32	1 489	190	53
Nicaragua	171	8	122	32	9	85	4	57	18	6
Panama	83	–	71	12	–	46	–	40	6	–
St. Lucia	9	–	6	3	–	3	–	3	–	–
Trinidad und Tobago	68	3	35	27	3	33	3	15	12	3
Zusammen	6 786	200	5 150	1 260	176	3 394	104	2 535	655	100
Südamerika										
Argentinien	2 915	70	2 562	215	68	1 401	43	1 237	94	27
Bolivien, Plurinationaler Staat	346	4	260	72	10	178	4	134	37	3
Brasilien	8 984	620	7 070	1 148	146	4 735	302	3 599	731	103
Chile	2 720	62	2 230	348	80	1 263	40	1 016	176	31
Ecuador	673	12	554	94	13	341	6	270	56	9
Kolumbien	3 516	109	2 961	390	56	1 833	47	1 516	241	29
Paraguay	110	4	84	22	–	68	4	45	19	–
Peru	1 715	64	998	533	120	958	38	579	286	55
Uruguay	300	3	262	32	3	150	3	122	22	3
Venezuela, Bolivarische Republik	1 287	107	918	210	52	635	54	440	110	31
Zusammen	22 566	1 055	17 899	3 064	548	11 562	541	8 958	1 772	291
Sonstiges Amerika*										
Zusammen	74	3	40	18	13	15	–	15	–	–
<b>Amerika zusammen</b>	<b>54 923</b>	<b>2 393</b>	<b>39 405</b>	<b>10 334</b>	<b>2 791</b>	<b>27 202</b>	<b>1 214</b>	<b>19 937</b>	<b>4 833</b>	<b>1 218</b>

# Aim 1

- Documentation of languages
- Cooperation with *Berlin spricht!*



## Aim 2

- Interviews
- 27 speakers
- 33 languages
- Qualitative data





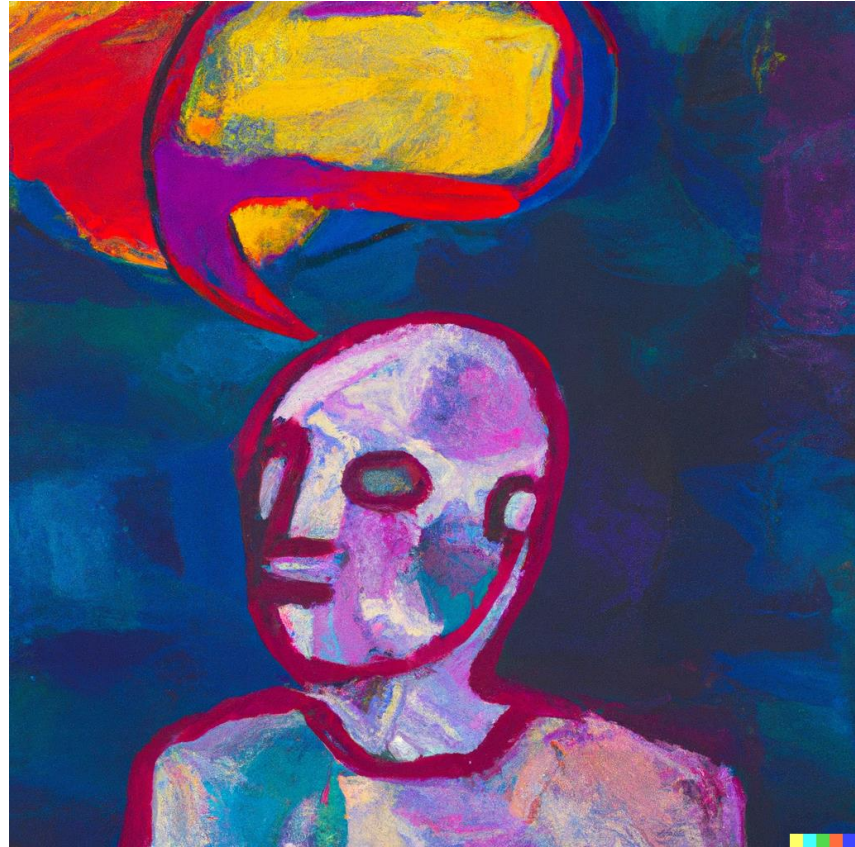


# Intergenerational Transmission

## Odia

*It sounds pathetic when I say that I can read a German text better than I can read my mother tongue. It just sounds horrible. And I don't want to impart that to my children.*

*So what exactly do I teach the next generation? Do I teach a language that is mine, spoken by my parents, or do I teach a language which is spoken by the country and which you can consume media in? It's going to be a tough decision.*



# What's missing? Community Spaces...

## Bangla

*It's very pathetic that most of the children here don't know their father language.*

*Open a school to teach Bangla!*

## Thai

*[When] I meet Thai friends, most of the time, they are [with] friends from other nations.*

*So, we always need to speak English.*



# Community Network

## Lithuanian

*There's no one to speak to.*

## Southern Luri

*Mit [meinen Eltern] rede ich natürlich immer Luri [...], aber nicht mit meinen Freunden.*

*In Berlin habe ich auch Verwandtschaft, also sehr entfernte Verwandtschaft. [...] Mit denen rede ich auch [Luri].*

## Timne

*I think, we are just not too much together. [...] We are not able to build ourselves strong.*



# Positive Language Attitudes

## Uzbek

*Inside me, I had this really happy feeling. I was really happy that I could hear an Uzbek voice in a circle of total strangers.*

## Indonesian

*Ich bin stolz auf meine Sprache. Indonesisch ist so einfach, verspielt, praktisch, bildhaft, und klingt romantisch im Vergleich zu Deutsch.*



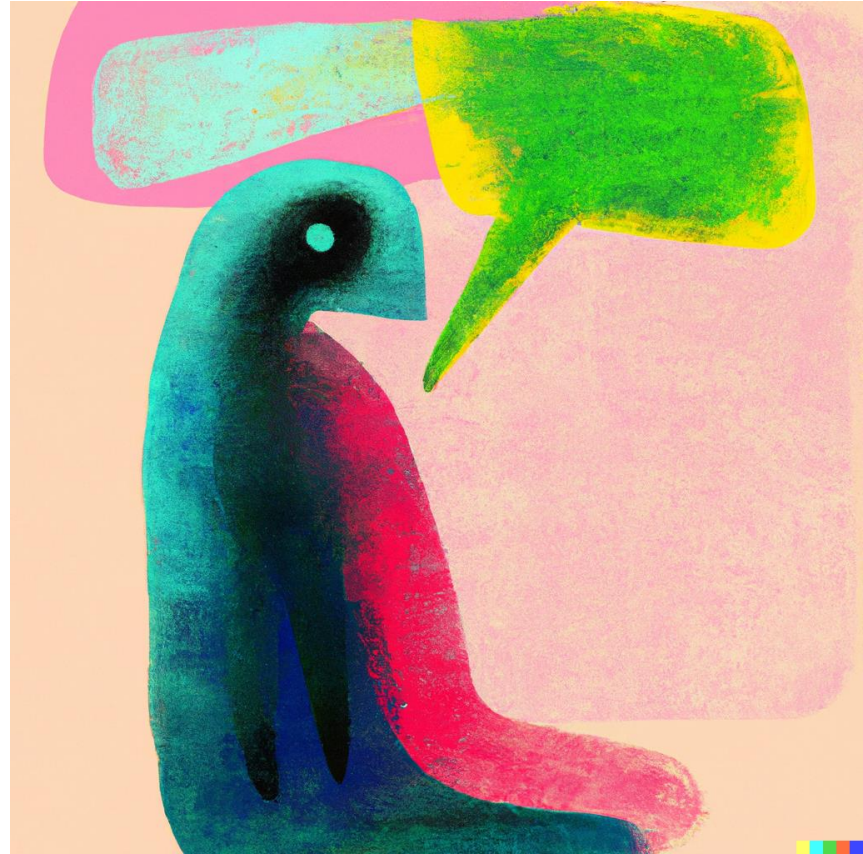
# Negative Language Attitudes

## Timne

*If I say, I'd do something for the Timne, it sounds tribalistic.*

## Panjabi

*My parents told us, that we were not supposed to speak Punjabi.*



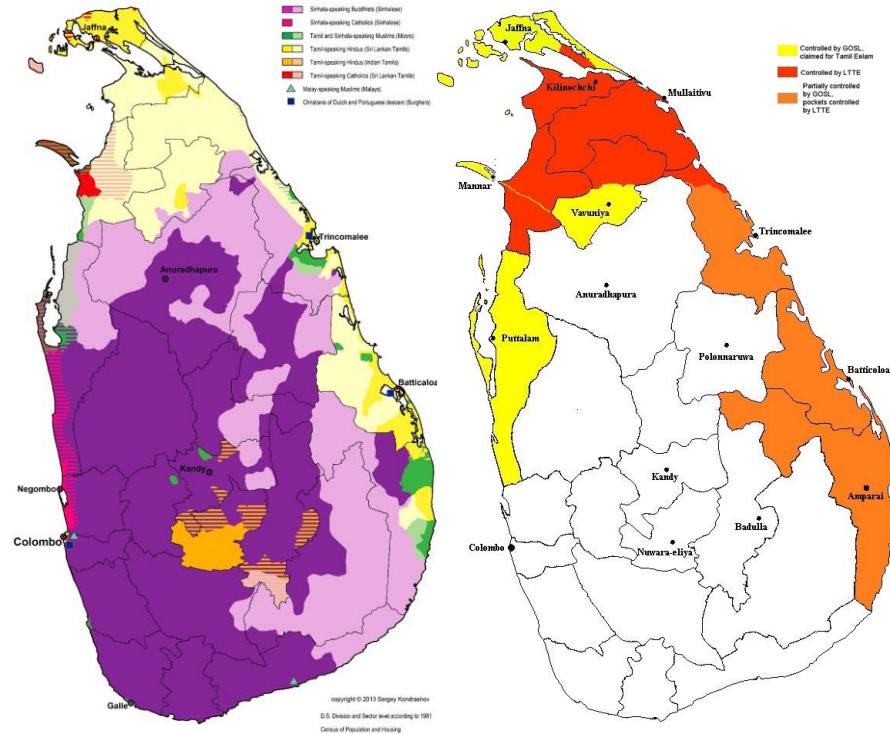
# Which Languages to Support?

- National languages, regional lingua francas, indigenous languages
- Historical and cultural background

## Sinhala

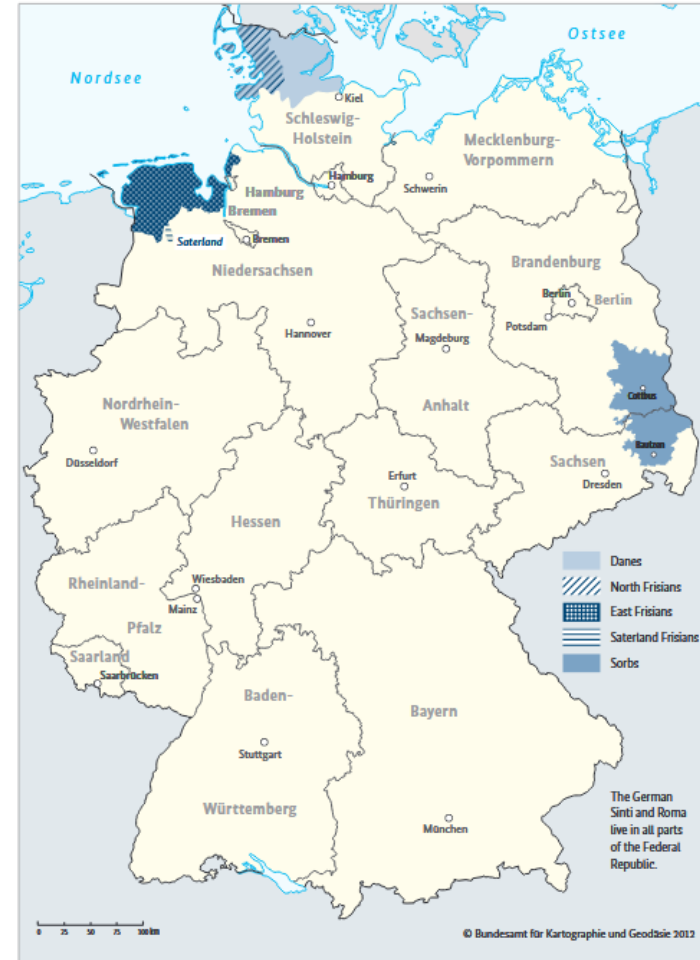
*Mittlerweile sind in Sri Lanka die Beziehungen zwischen Sri Lankanern und Tamilen nicht mehr problematisch.*

*Aber in Berlin ist das Problem, dass viele Tamilen damals während des Krieges als Geflüchtete hierhergekommen sind.*



# Grant languages recognition!

- Minority languages in Germany:
  - Danish, Northern Frisian, Saterland Frisian, Romani, Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian, Low German
  - ~~Arabic, Kurdish, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Vietnamese~~
- No recognition = no funding





# The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

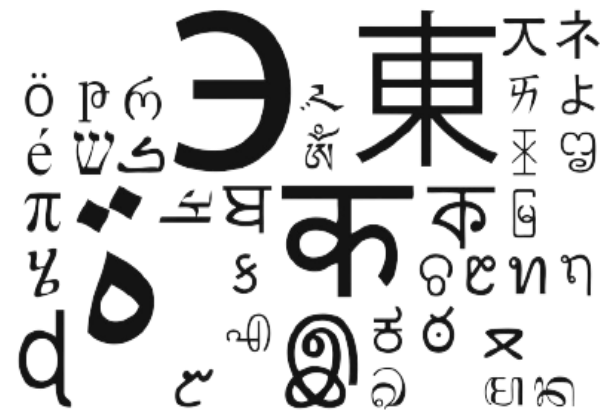


D. Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers .....	30
I. Recommendation 1: General Equal Treatment Act .....	30
II. Recommendation 2: The status of German Sinti and Roma in society .....	37
III. Recommendation 3: Combating racism and intolerance .....	47
IV. Recommendation 4 - Equality data collection and evaluation .....	73
V. Recommendation 5 - Preservation of cultural heritage .....	74
VI. Recommendation 6 - Targeted improvement of police structures .....	81
VII. Recommendation 7 - Minority languages in the media .....	90
VIII. Recommendation 8 - Minority languages in public life .....	96
IX. Recommendation 9 - Knowledge of national minorities in schools .....	103
X. Recommendation 10 - Education .....	119
XI. Recommendation 11 - Promote the effective participation of the German Sinti and Roma .....	126

# Institutional support

- Embassy involvement
- Multilingual documents
- Multilingual education (kindergarten, schools)
- Multilingual exhibitions

## Aramaic



*Es geht nicht, das alleine den Trägern zu überlassen.*

*Die Sprache erodiert zunehmend und dann bleibt sie nur bei einigen wenigen Liebhabern bestehen.*

# Community-driven action

- Community meetings
- Community spaces
- Language cafés
- Newsletters
- Annual festivities
- Sports tournaments
- Music festivals
- Film festivals
- Cooking and eating events
- Telegram groups



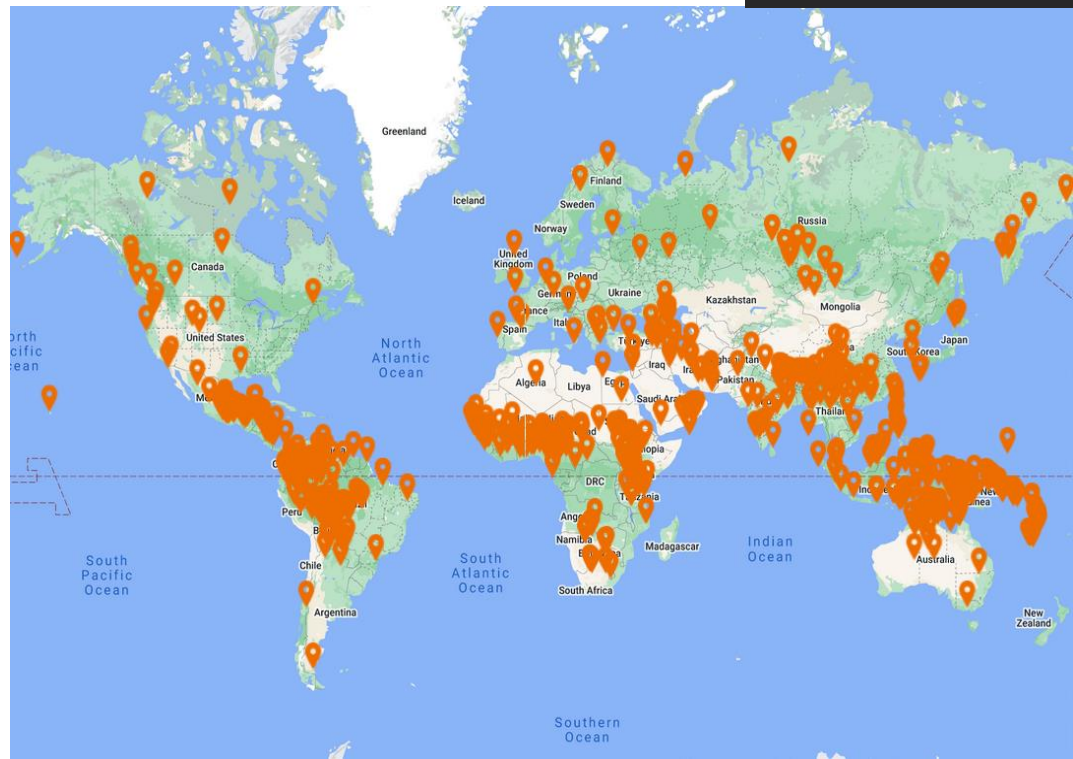
# Language Documentation



Endangered Languages  
Documentation Programme

Endangered  
Languages  
Archive

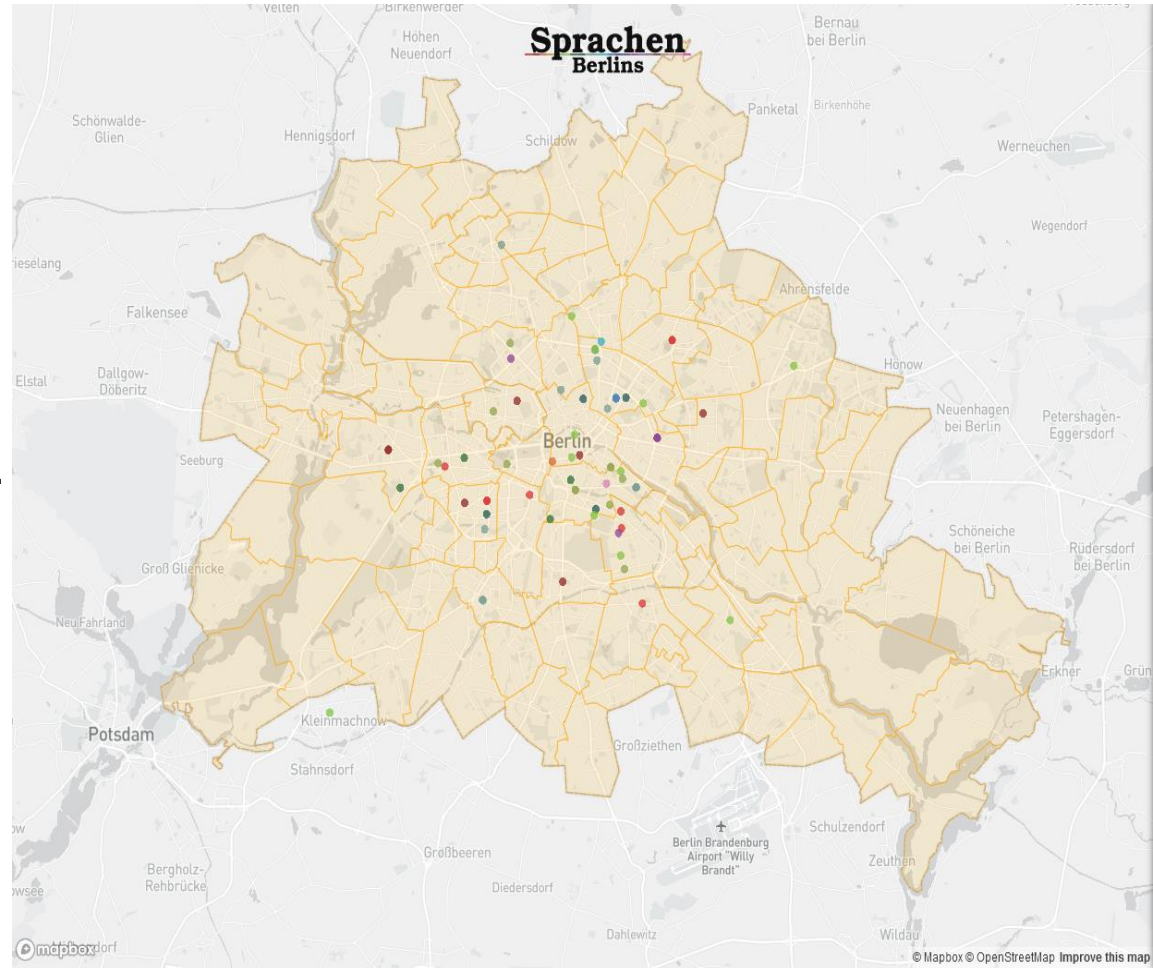
- Endangered Languages Documentation Program (ELDP)
- Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)



# *Sprachen Berlins*

A project based at Humboldt-University of Berlin aimed at promoting contacts between language communities.

<https://berlin-spricht.org/karte>



# What else can be done?

*If you would be mayor for one day and had unlimited budget, what would you do to help your community in Berlin?*

## **Chavacano**

*I would spend most of my budget on cultural integration for the Germans to understand how the communities work.*

*[...] because integration should be two ways.*

