



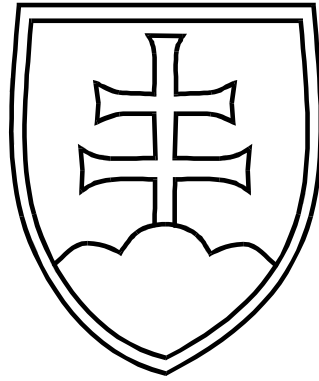
Strasbourg, 28 January 2014

ACFC/SR/IV(2014)001

**FOURTH REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 25, PARAGRAPH 2  
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR  
THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

Received on 28 January 2014





**Fourth report on the implementation  
of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities  
in the Slovak Republic**

**Bratislava, December 2013**

*Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic was approved by the Slovak Government by its Resolution No. 718 on 18 December 2013.*

## **Contents**

- I. Introduction
- II. General information on the legislative and practical arrangements in the field of the protection of national minorities
- III. Information on measures taken to address the issues for immediate action
- VI. Information on relevant development on an article by article basis
- V. Annexes

## I. Introduction

1. The Slovak Republic is an active party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the “Framework Convention”). It participated in its drafting and was the third Council of Europe Member State to ratify the Framework Convention on 14 September 1995.

2. The fourth report on the implementation of the Framework Convention was drawn up in conformity with Resolution (97)10 of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers setting a five-year periodical basis for submitting State reports, and with the Outline for State reports to be submitted under the fourth monitoring cycle.

3. The report was elaborated, *inter alia*, on the basis of the Committee of Ministers’ Resolution ResCMN(2011)15 on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Slovak Republic and of the Opinion of Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the “Advisory Committee”) on the third State report.

4. The Government of the Slovak Republic discussed the outcomes of the third cycle of monitoring (completed in July 2011) as a public document on 30 November 2011. Information on the third monitoring cycle and its outcomes was part of the document. It contains substantial information about the Framework Convention, its control mechanism and up-to-date rounds of monitoring. Third opinion of the Advisory Committee, Comments of the Slovak Republic on the Opinion and Resolution of the Committee of Ministers form annexes to the document. The Government of the Slovak Republic tasked the relevant members of the Government and the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities to become familiar with outcomes of the third monitoring cycle, to consider their implementation and inform about any measures taken during the preparation of the fourth State report. Prior to the discussion of the Government of the Slovak Republic, the document was discussed in the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality at its session on 14 November 2011.

5. All documents related to monitoring the implementation of the Framework Convention are published in both the Slovak and English languages on the websites of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

6. Slovakia continued its dialogue with the Advisory Committee at a follow-up seminar on the implementation of the outcomes of the third monitoring cycle of Framework Convention. The seminar was held in Bratislava on 22 and 23 February 2012 under the auspices of the then Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities, Rudolf Chmel. Representatives of national minorities living in Slovakia, representatives of state administration, civil society and foreign guests participated in the seminar. The seminar had been prepared in cooperation with the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and its members actively participated in the preparation of the seminar. The seminar focused on these topics:

- legislative and other measures in the field of the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities;

- culture, language and identity of national minorities in education;
- principles of supporting the continuing development of the culture of national minorities in the Slovak Republic;
- programmes and strategies to improve the situation of the Roma.

7. The Slovak Republic welcomes this form of dialogue with the Advisory Committee which, thanks to its experience, knowledge and expertise of its members, significantly assists the contracting parties of the Convention in the efficient implementation of the Convention in practice. Therefore it plans to organise a follow-up seminar also after the fourth monitoring cycle.

8. The fourth State report mainly outlines the developments in legislation and practical arrangements regarding the protection of national minorities, i.e. the preservation of their national awareness and support for their spiritual, cultural and linguistic identity, and the prevention and fight against persisting manifestations of discrimination of persons belonging to national minorities on ethnic grounds in the period from 2009 until February 2014. The persons belonging to national minorities were involved in the process of the preparation of the State report through their delegated representatives in the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. The fourth State report was discussed at the meeting of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups held on 12 November 2013 and the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality on 20 November 2013.

## **II. General information on the legislative and practical arrangements in the field of the protection of national minorities**

9. The Government of the Slovak Republic, which was formed based on the Parliamentary Elections held on 10 March 2012, declares in its manifesto of May 2012 that national minorities represent an important part of modern Slovak society with its extensive cultural wealth and important historical heritage. The Government considers the protection and support of the development of national minorities to be an inherent role in shaping a modern Slovakia. The Government will create conditions for the development of national minorities in terms of preserving and developing their identity, language, culture and traditions, which promote the general development of entire society. The Government guarantees decent conditions for the development of every national minority, bearing in mind the spirit of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international treaties and conventions, while preserving the status quo, balanced relationship of the majority nation with national minorities through a tolerant dialogue of the Slovak society. The Government will establish the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities and Civil Society with corresponding coordination and decision-making powers.

10. The institutional framework of the agenda of human rights in Slovakia underwent significant changes during the period under review. In 2010 the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as the "Council") was established as a new permanent advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic. The Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities continued to perform his tasks and activities within the Government of the Slovak Republic. The advisory bodies of the Government of the Slovak Republic active until then in the field of human rights, discrimination and development of civil society have been included in the newly-established Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. The Council has transformed these bodies into its permanent committees:

- Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups;
- Committee for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations;
- Committee for Seniors;
- Committee for Persons with Disabilities;
- Committee for Gender Equality;
- Committee for Children and Youth.

At the same time two new committees have been established: the Committee for Research, Education and Upbringing in Relation to Human Rights and Developmental Education and the Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and other Forms of Intolerance. The Committee for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations has been transformed into the Council of the Government for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 397 of 1 August 2013. The Committee for the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual Persons was established by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 516 of 3 October 2012.

11. The aim of the changes in the structure of advisory bodies of the Government of the Slovak Republic was to rationalize and increase the efficiency of the activity of institutional mechanisms of the protection and promotion of human rights, and to create space for the efficient participation of the citizens in the administration of public issues. The transformation

process included discussions, round tables, open discussions with representatives of state administration, representatives of national minorities, civil society, academia, as well as other relevant entities on the proposed competence and practical activity of the Council and its composition for the purpose of taking into account the existing obligations and their joining into a functional system. Work meetings and preparatory works on constituting the committees of the Council, including framing their statutes, were running in parallel, bearing in mind the principles of representative nature, participation, functionality and professionalism. The purpose was to achieve the more efficient participation of target groups in decision-making processes and to increase the profile of the protection of all target groups.

12. The Council works on a permanent basis. The Council acts as a permanent expert, advisory, coordination and consultation body of the Government of the Slovak Republic in the field of the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, political and civil rights, rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, rights related to the protection of environment and cultural heritage, rights of the child focusing on the principle of the best interests of the child, rights of persons with disabilities and rights of older persons, while implementing the principle of equal treatment, equal opportunities and gender equality.

13. Within its field of responsibilities the Council monitors compliance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms to which the Slovak Republic is a state party, legally binding acts of the European Union, and other legal regulations on the protection and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Council acts in order to raise general awareness on human rights, state of implementation and on measures adopted in order to improve the human rights protection. The Council puts emphasis on recommendations of independent institutions acting in the field of human rights, expert bodies and institutions of the UN, Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE. It also follows developments and new trends in the field of human rights.

14. The Council also adopts positions on implementation of international obligations by the Slovak Republic related to the protection of human rights, in particular the obligations resulting from international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms to which the Slovak Republic is a state party and reports on their implementation are discussed by the Council.

15. The Council has an indispensable place in human rights policy of the Government of the Slovak Republic. It is not only a formal forum where representatives of civil society and public administration meet in order to jointly look for the best solutions of problems which may occur in relation to human rights, but it represents a platform where critical discussion is held, and ideas, stimuli or recommendations are formed with the aim to increase the level of protection of human rights.

16. The representatives of public administration bodies and institutions, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, independent institutions and expert community are equally represented in the Council. The Council has its own internal structure, formed by eight committees – the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, the Committee for Seniors, the Committee for Persons with Disabilities, the Committee for Gender Equality, the Committee for Children and Youth, the Committee for Research, Education and Upbringing in Relation to Human Rights and Developmental Education, the



Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and other forms of Intolerance, and the Committee for the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual Persons. One of the main tasks of the Council is to foster a cross-cut approach in the implementation of human rights standards and in adopting human rights principles in the activity of public authorities.

17. In 2012, the competencies of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic were strengthened in relation to human rights. The shift of responsibilities was a response to the vacant position of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities in the current Government. Coordination and management of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality have been moved to the portfolio of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The implementation of these policies is under the responsibility of individual ministries. This approach fully reflects mainstreaming of human rights.

18. Permanent dialogue with civil society is an indispensable part of national human rights policy. In relation to the above-mentioned institutional changes, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs also manages two subsidy human rights schemes: 1. promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms; and 2. prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. Subsidies represent basic tools of promotion of the human rights agenda, and one form of the dialogue with civil society in this field. In January 2013 the first call 'Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms' LP/2013 was issued, under the responsibility of the Ministry. Available resources in the amount of EUR 900,000 have been allocated among 58 subsidized projects.

19. For the sake of continuity, the Council continued in the same structure also after the elections in 2012. Tasks from the previous period have remained as well, in particular the elaboration of the National Strategy for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic. The Government has identified itself with this idea and, similarly to the previous Government, it feels an urgent need to adopt such binding document as a framework or ideological concept, on the one hand for a more comprehensive review of the current human rights policy, but mainly to build an integral system of promotion and protection of human rights in the Slovak Republic, including a more efficient and flexible functioning of all necessary institutions and mechanisms as parts of this system, with the aim to identify the possibilities to improve the national promotion and protection of human rights. All information about the activity of the Council performed until now, including the resolutions adopted, is available for the public on the web site of the Council.

20. In July 2012, the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, an advisory body of the Government for national minority issues was established. The Plenipotentiary performs tasks in the area of preserving, developing and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and it carries out systemic measures to improve the situation of national minorities. The Plenipotentiary submits to the Government an annual "Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities"; the first one was submitted in October 2013. The Plenipotentiary is the Chairman of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, an expert body of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality in the field of national minority protection and for the implementation of two legally binding conventions related to national

minorities, i.e. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages More information on the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Group is included in the information related to Article 15.

21. The Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities continues his activities. Improvement of the situation of the Roma in all areas of life remains one of the priorities of the Government of the Slovak Republic. In January 2012, the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 was approved by the Government as a comprehensive policy document that addresses challenges of social inclusion of Roma communities also at the EU level. Principles of the Strategy are intended to provide basis for policies related to unfavourable situation of Roma for the period up to 2020, in particular in the field of education, employment, housing and healthcare, and also for the programming period of 2014-2020 for purpose of using structural funds. Focus of policies on majority population is also an important element of the Strategy. The Strategy is based on three basic principles – de-stigmatization, desegregation, de-ghettoizing, and defines the priority policies in seven main areas of inclusion. In addition to the four basic ones (education, employment, housing and health), the Strategy has also outlined other priority topics such as financial inclusion, non-discrimination and attitudes to the majority population. For each of these areas the Government will or has adopted an action plan, and a structured monitoring report will be drawn up regularly – annually – in which the fulfilment of particular measures will be assessed. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities is the National Contact Point for the implementation of the Strategy. It also participates in the meetings of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion. During the drafting of the Strategy, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities also cooperated with NGOs, experts and activists; the expertise of UNDP was also used as well as the organizational capacities of the Open Society Foundation (OSF).

22. The National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights is currently under preparation. A comprehensive document intended to improve national protection and promotion of human rights is being prepared for the first time. At the moment several concepts and action plans for individual vulnerable groups have been adopted; however, a comprehensive document is missing which would unify and define priorities in areas which are inseparably connected to human rights values and standards. Taking into account the importance of the document, a decision has been made to prepare the material in a participative dialogue so that all persons involved in the human rights agenda, public administration, independent institutions, academia and civil society could be involved in the preparation process. The preparation is being carried out under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs being also the Chairman of the Council of the Government for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality and in cooperation with the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Civil Society. The editing team for the Strategy has prepared a background document for discussion with representatives of civil society which was held in June and July 2013 in Košice, Banská Bystrica and Bratislava. The Strategy should represent a comprehensive document reflecting the modern understanding of human rights taking into account international legal obligations of the Slovak Republic as a member of the UN, Council of Europe, EU and other international organizations. It is expected to be submitted in June 2014.

23. In 2010 and 2011 there was a comprehensive review of national legislation on the use of languages of national minorities in order to ensure the widest application and use of minority languages possible in the area of public communication.

24. In April 2013 an amendment of Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended (Antidiscrimination Act) was adopted. The amendment has extended the definition of indirect discrimination to include, in harmony with EU Regulations, also the threat of discrimination. In addition, a definition of affirmative action was modified so that it includes an explicit reference to the elimination of disadvantages resulting from discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, affiliation to national minority or ethnic group. By this amendment the possibility to take affirmative action was extended to local authorities and private legal entities with a view to promoting its application.

25. More detailed information related to certain above-mentioned paragraphs is included in the information on relevant development on an article-by-article basis in part IV of the Report.

### **III. Information on measures taken to address the issues for immediate action**

*Take adequate legislative steps to adopt more comprehensive legislation on minority languages in order to ensure an appropriate balance between the legitimate promotion of the state language and the rights to use minority languages, as provided in the Framework Convention; favour a policy of incentives over a punitive approach in relation to the implementation of the 2009 State Language Law, both in the public and private sphere.*

26. In 2010 and 2011 there was a comprehensive review of national legislation on the use of languages of national minorities in order to ensure the widest application and use of minority languages possible in the area of public communication. Approval of the amendment of Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the State Language of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and the amendment of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, as amended, meant the completion of the legislative framework in the area of language rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and thus comprehensive legislation was formed which ensures an appropriate balance between the promotion of the state language and the right to use minority languages as protected by the Framework Convention.

27. The amendment of the Act on the State Language in 2011 helped *inter alia* ensure the necessary harmony between the Act on the State Language and the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities and clearly define their mutual relation. Currently the valid wordings of both Acts are consistently interconnected and complement each other in several areas, which have efficiently helped prevent any disputes or contradictory interpretations of their individual provisions, which would be incompatible with the democratic legal system of the Slovak Republic. Both Acts jointly and in line with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic reflect the legal position of the state language and the languages of national minorities and in harmony with international principles they specify the rules of use of these languages in basic areas of public communication in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

28. In all areas where the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities brings a detailed regulation of the use of minority languages, the relevant provision of the Act on the State Language contains a reference to the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities as a special regulation which prevails over the Act on the State Language in the given area. Thus the current legal status enables a clear interpretation of the provisions of both Acts and ensures their flawless mutual functioning in harmony with human rights principles based on international conventions binding for the Slovak Republic.

29. The 2011 amendment also reduced the possibility of sanctioning for the violation of obligations to only a narrow area of public communication, while natural persons and legal entities who are not public administration authorities have been fully excluded from the possibility of being sanctioned. Since the introduction of the sanction mechanism in the Act on the State Language, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic has not imposed a single fine for violation of the Act on the State Language. The Ministry of Culture, as a central state administration authority performing supervision over the Act on the State Language, consistently applies the policy of positive incentives over the repressive measures

and ensures that promotion of the use of the state language is achieved in the form of a constructive dialogue with all parties involved. In this connection it is necessary to emphasize that the Act on the State Language does not enable to impose a fine in relation to using a minority language in any case. The Ministry of Culture could impose a potential fine only for a failure to use the state language in any information for the public. However, imposition of the fine must be preceded by a discussion with the subject and by issuing a written notice.

30. Detailed information on the amendment of the Act on the State Language was provided by the Slovak Republic in its Comments on the Third Opinion of the Advisory Committee in January 2011.

31. The amendment of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, as amended, became effective on 1 July 2011. The current wording of the Act is included in Annex 6. Other legal regulations relevant to the use of languages of national minorities has also been amended and supplemented:

- Act No. 71/1967 Coll. on Administrative Proceedings (Administrative Code), as amended;
- Act No. 346/1990 Coll. on Municipal elections , as amended;
- Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Administration, as amended;
- Act No. 564/1992 Coll. on the Referendum, as amended;
- Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on the Name and Surname, as amended;
- Act No. 154/1994 Coll. on Registers, as amended;
- Act No. 215/1995 Coll. on Geodesy and Cartography, as amended;
- Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the State Language of the Slovak Republic, as amended;
- Act No. 46/1999 Coll. on the Method of electing the President of the Slovak Republic, on Popular Election, on the Recall of the President and on the supplementing of certain other acts, as amended;
- Act No. 211/2000 Coll. on Free Access to Information and on amendments and supplements to certain laws (Act on the Freedom of Information), as amended;
- Act No. 303/2001 Coll. on Election to the Bodies of Self-Governing Regions and on amendment to the Civil Court Rule, as amended;
- Act No. 331/2003 Coll. on Elections to the European Parliament, as amended;
- Act No. 333/2004 Coll. on Elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, as amended;
- Act No. 220/2007 Coll. on digital broadcasting of programme services and on provision of other content services through digital transmission and on amendments to certain acts (the Digital Broadcasting Act), as amended.

32. The amendment strengthened the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities, extended the possibilities for using languages in public and official communication, including several new areas in which the legal regulation valid until then had not allowed the use of minority languages. The practical application of these rights is guaranteed by stipulation of several obligations for public administration authorities to use the languages of national minorities according to the amended Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.

33. The amended Act defines the notion of the language of a national minority and lists the languages of national minorities for the purposes of the Act. A minority language is a codified or standardized language traditionally used in the territory of the Slovak Republic by its citizens belonging to a national minority, which is different from the state language; the

minority languages are the Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages.

34. The amended Act lays down the rules for using minority languages in official communication and in certain areas specified by law. The rules for specifying the municipalities in which the languages of national minorities are used in official communication have changed, taking into consideration the decreasing tendency in the number of persons belonging to national minorities in certain municipalities. According to the Act, the persons belonging to national minority should constitute at least 15 % of the total population of the municipality in two subsequent population censuses for using the minority language in official communication. The list of such municipalities is laid down in a Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

35. A new provision of Article 7c (2) also ensures that all language rights laid down in the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities may continue to be enjoyed in all municipalities in which it was also possible until now even though the number of persons belonging to national minorities has dropped under the 20% threshold. No single municipality has been left out from the list of municipalities in which the number of persons belonging to national minorities reached 20% threshold in 1991. The lowering of the 20% threshold to 15% enabled to keep the municipalities in the list which otherwise the Act would not apply to. The right to use the national minority language will cease to apply in these municipalities if, according to the outcomes of three subsequent population censuses conducted after 1 July 2011, the number of citizens belonging to a national minority is lower than 15% of the citizens. Thus today the Act applies in its full extent also to such municipalities in which, according to the last population census of 2011, the share of the persons belonging to a national minority is only 9%, for example.

36. At the same time, the amendment of the Act in the new Article 2 (8) allows oral communication in minority languages in official communication in any municipality regardless of the percentage share of the number of persons belonging to national minorities, if the employee of the public administration authority and persons involved in the proceedings so agree.

37. In the written official communication, the amendment introduced a possibility for citizens belonging to national minorities to ask for issuing a defined group of bilingual public documents and official forms. It is also allowed to keep the official records of public administration authorities bilingually. As for public communication, the possibility was introduced to also use customary and commonly used designations of geographic objects in the languages of national minorities, along with the standardized geographical names, in expert publications, press and other mass media, and in official activities of public administration authorities, if a minority language is used in them.

38. The amended Act confers powers to the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities (currently these powers are conferred to the Government Office of the Slovak Republic), namely to provide expert and methodological assistance to public administration authorities and the organizational units of security and rescue corps when applying the Act. It lays down the obligation to submit a report on the status of use of languages of national minorities to the Government of the Slovak Republic every two years, and to deal with administrative offences related to the use of languages of national minorities.

39. Administrative offences for violation of the Act were introduced by this amendment. An offence may be committed by a public administration authority, legal entity or a self-employed natural person. If any violation of the Act has been identified, the relevant entity will be advised and asked to eliminate the illegal condition, and if there has been no remedy even after the notification, a fine ranging from EUR 50 to 2,500 may be imposed. When imposing a fine the severity of the administrative offence, its consequences and the circumstances under which it has been committed, and the duration and repetition of the illegal action will be considered. The fine may be imposed in a one-year period from the date when the Office learnt of the administrative offence; however, not later than two years from the date it was committed.

40. The review of the legislation in the field of the use of languages of national minorities was completed by the issuing a new official list of designations of municipalities in the languages of national minorities. Adoption of Government Regulation No. 534/2011 Coll., amending and supplementing Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll., issuing the list of municipalities in which the citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to national minorities form at least 20% of the population, has amended the annexes in such a way that the names of municipalities were supplemented by their designations in the languages of national minorities. An expert working group was established to draw up a list of designations in the languages of national minorities, composed of historians and linguists speaking the languages of the relevant national minorities. During the preparation, they also took into consideration the designations specified in the annex to Act No. 191/1994 Coll. on the Designation of Municipalities in the Languages of National Minorities which was repealed on 1 July 2011, but also linguistic and social aspects. In 2011 Government Regulation No. 535/2011 Coll. was adopted as well, which regulates certain details in the application of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in connection to the provision of information of public administration authorities about the possibility to use languages of national minorities in official communication, as well as in connection to the form of bilingual official documents.

41. Based on the information obtained from relevant central state administration authorities, since 2011 the Government Office has been looking after expert terminology in the languages of national minorities. The languages of national minorities may be fully applied in official communication only if they have an appropriate expert terminology. The aim of the elaboration of expert terminology was to unify the use of expert terminology in the languages of national minorities in the whole territory of the Slovak Republic, and to make it available to employees of relevant public administration authorities as well as to the persons belonging to national minorities. The expert terminology forms the basis for the elaboration of bilingual documents according to the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. Three terminological dictionaries have been published on the web sites of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities since July 2011: Slovak-Hungarian, Slovak-Roma and Slovak-Ruthenian. The dictionaries may be considered to be the basis of the care for expert terminology in minority languages, which should be continued in order to ensure advantageous conditions for the use of minority languages in Slovakia.

42. In relation to changes in the competencies of individual ministries after elections in 2012, the powers of the former Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities resulting from the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities were transferred to the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. The Government Office of the Slovak Republic has established an expert committee for the application of the Act. Members of the Committee are appointed by the Head of the Civil Servant's Office of the Government

Office of the Slovak Republic. The Committee elaborates methodological guidance in relation to providing expert and methodological assistance to public administration authorities and organizational units of security and rescue corps when executing the Act. The aim is to ensure a uniform application and elaboration of opinions on the motions filed in accordance with Article 7b of the Act (administrative offences related to the use of languages of national minorities).

43. In order to create a comprehensive picture of the application of the Act at the level of authorities of local state administration, the Government Office of the Slovak Republic carried out a questionnaire survey in November 2012 focused on the use of languages of national minorities in official communication. The outcomes of the survey were used in the first Report on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic, discussed by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 19 December 2012.

44. When applying the Act on the State Language, the Slovak Republic, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, prefers the policy of positive incentives over a repressive approach. Since 1 March 2011 the possibility to impose a sanction has been limited only to public administration authorities. It is not possible to impose a sanction based on the Act on the State Language to other legal entity or natural person, not even in cases when the provisions of the Act have been violated. The only exception is a failure to disclose important information related to any threat to the life, safety or property of the citizens in the state language. In relation to public administration authorities which are now the only entities subject to sanctions, the possibility of imposing a sanction has also been reduced to only the violation of one of the areas related to the activities of the public administration authority. This is the case when a public administration authority fails to disclose information intended for the public in the state language, and refuses to respect a notification of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic to disclose the necessary information concerning all citizens also in the state language. The amendment in 2011 also brought a change in the fact that the Ministry of Culture is not obliged to impose a sanction on a public administration authority in the above-stated limited cases, as this obligation has changed into an option. At the same time the amount of potential sanction has changed, as well in the way that the top and bottom limit has decreased to half the original amount.

45. In the process of amending the language legislation in 2010 and 2011, any proposals and amendments were carefully and repeatedly consulted with representatives of national minorities. Representatives of national minorities, several minority associations and organizations and mainly political representatives of the Hungarian national minority, who at that time held positions in the government coalition, participated actively in the preparation of the amendment of the Act on the State Language. Changes in the Act on the State Language, prepared together with the representatives of the Hungarian national minority in 2010 and 2011, significantly strengthened the legal security of persons belonging to national minorities, and were appreciated and supported by all political representatives of the Hungarian national minority represented in the Government of the Slovak Republic, as well as in Parliament where these representatives unanimously approved this amendment.

46. Amendments to both the above-mentioned Acts helped remove the last remaining ambiguities related to application in practice. A mutual careful connection through a conventional legislative technique ensured the flawless application of both legal regulations in those territorial locations of the Slovak Republic where the Act on the State Language and the Act on the Languages of Minorities apply simultaneously. It is exactly thanks to the clearly



and expressly defined relation between both Acts, which deal with the use of languages in usually the same areas of public communication, that their organic inclusion in a uniform Slovak legal order was achieved, in which both Acts apply in mutual harmony as well as in harmony with other generally binding regulations of the Slovak Republic. Adopting these amendments helped ensure the increased protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic, and introduced a balance between the protection of the state language and promotion of languages of national minorities. In this way the Act on the State Language does not currently create any obstacles for the application of a wide range of language rights of persons belonging to national minorities living in Slovakia.

*Take more resolute measures to combat intolerance based on ethnic origin and take further steps to promote mutual understanding and respect between persons belonging to various groups; increase efforts to fight against and effectively sanction discrimination and take resolute steps to design and implement positive measures, accompanied by adequate awareness-raising.*

47. On 1 April 2013 the amendment of the Antidiscrimination Act – Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended, became effective. The amendment extended the definition of indirect discrimination to include, in line with the transposed directives of the European Union, also the threat of discrimination. Indirect discrimination is an apparently neutral regulation, decision, instruction or practice which disadvantages or could disadvantage a person in comparison with another person. Indirect discrimination is not if such regulation, decision, instruction or practice are objectively substantiated by pursuing an eligible interest and are appropriate and necessary to achieve such interest.

48. At the same time the definition of affirmative action has been modified to expressly include the elimination of disadvantages resulting from the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, affiliation to a national minority or ethnic group. Thus according to the new wording of Article 8a, the adoption of affirmative action by public administration authorities or other legal entities aimed at the elimination of disadvantages resulting from the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, affiliation to a national minority or ethnic group, gender or sex, age or disablement, the purpose of which is to ensure equal opportunities in practice, are not considered to be discrimination. The amendment has also extended the group of entities which may adopt affirmative action to include all public administration authorities or other legal entities; initially only state administration authorities had this option.

49. Affirmative action are mainly measures

- focused on the elimination of social or economic disadvantage by which members of the disadvantaged groups are affected excessively;
- consisting in promoting the interests of members of disadvantaged groups in employment, education, culture, healthcare and services;
- aimed at the creation of equality in access to employment, education, healthcare and housing, mainly through targeted preparatory programmes for members of disadvantaged groups or through spreading information on these programmes, or on possibilities to apply for work or for jobs in the education system.

50. The expert consultation activity in deciding if to adopt an affirmative action, what principles to apply in it, and if the proposed affirmative action does not exceed the area of relations not governed by the Antidiscrimination Act, is performed by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights. The Centre also performs educating activities and participates in information campaigns with the aim to increase the tolerance of society. Educational activities in the area of human rights, including the rights of the child and principles of equal treatment, are performed by the Centre in five common topics – Human rights, Non-discrimination, Gender equality, Holocaust, and Children's rights, mainly for classes 5-9 of elementary schools and secondary schools. The Centre can also provide education in other topics and for other target groups. 1,986 participants participated in educational activities in 2012.

51. In June 2013 the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the legislative plan of the re-codification of the Civil Procedure Act. It provides legal framework for the elaboration of new legal regulations in the civil procedure, which will replace the currently effective Code of Civil Procedure. The objective of the proposed change is to improve law enforcement, inter alia, by enhancing the enforceability of law, shortening the length and eliminating delays in court proceedings, and building space for improvement of quality of court rulings and thus create prerequisites for increasing trust and confidence in justice and courts. A special regulation of disputes with the protection of the weaker party is expected. It will introduce certain exceptions from general legal regulations of dispute proceedings in labour and related issues, consumer or anti-discrimination issues.

52. The Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration up to 2020 covers among the priority areas also approaches towards the majority population – Initiative of Roma Integration through Communication. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities is preparing an action plan for this area. It shall include comprehensive tools to eliminate prejudice towards the persons belonging to the Roma national minority and the creation of a common pro-integration platform. The aim is, for example, to improve the correctness of displaying the Roma, Roma communities and the wider context of Roma marginalization in the media, to improve responsible informing by state administration, education in the area of media and education of journalists, with an impact on public media, support for the creation of correct media contents, presentation of public policies and action plans. The main entities involved in the pro-integration platform will be the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, relevant Ministries (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ministry of Economy), territorial self-governing bodies and Police Corps. Other decisive entities involved will be organizations of civil society which can mediate high-quality and quick feedback, and will share the values of the campaign.

53. Racial violence, including incitement to racial hatred, is a criminal act in the Slovak Republic. The Criminal Code punishes criminal acts related to extremism. In 2009 a definition of an extremist group and extremist document was included in the Criminal Code, a special motive was supplemented by committing a criminal act with the intention to publicly incite to violence or hatred towards a group of persons or an individual for their affiliation to a certain race, nation, nationality, colour of skin, ethnic group, origin, or their religion; the definition of criminal acts of extremism and new criminal acts of extremism were introduced – producing, spreading and keeping extremist materials; inciting, defamation and threatening persons for their affiliation to a certain race, nation, nationality, colour of skin, ethnic group or origin. In 2011, a new crime was introduced in the Criminal Code that punishes denying, challenging, approving or any attempts to justify the holocaust or crimes based on Fascist and Communist ideology. Based on the amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure effective from 1 August 2013, an investigation of crimes related to extremism is obligatory conducted by investigators of the police force (until now members of the police force).

54. In June 2011, the Government approved the Concept of Combating Extremism for 2011-2014 (hereinafter referred to as the "Concept"). The Concept is a complex policy document of the Government of the Slovak Republic focusing on both preventive and repressive measures in the field of the fight against extremism. It has been adopted as a follow-up to the Concept adopted for the previous four-year period (2006-2010). It reflects current developments in extremism, and it identifies basic objectives for combating this

phenomenon, including concrete steps to achieve them. An institutional framework for combating extremism with an element of cooperation among relevant ministries is part of the Concept as well. Depending on current circumstances, measures of the Concept may be subject to annual update.

55. The Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance established in March 2011 represents a significant step in combating hate crimes by providing a platform for the coordination of activities, and identifying priorities of public policies focused on the prevention and elimination of racism, xenophobia and extremism. Chaired by the Minister of Interior, the Committee serves as a tool for the exchange of information among state authorities, municipalities and civil society. The Committee and its working groups may submit analyses or studies and engage in the preparation of educational programmes and trainings for stakeholders involved in the fight against these phenomena. The Committee may also monitor serious cases related to its mandate and obtain information in this regard. An inter-ministerial expert group was also established to further develop legislation in this area, and from the long-term perspective make legal order in the field of extremisms more compendious.

56. Due attention is paid to the fight against incitement to discrimination and racial violence against minorities and migrants. The possibility to use an agent as well as the possibility to tap and record telecommunication and legal interception for the purpose of the fight against extremism was introduced into law with a view to step up efforts in this area. Another step foreseen for the future is to introduce extremist offences that would also punish expressions of racial violence against minorities and migrants.

57. With the aim to intensify the effort to prevent racially motivated criminal acts, the Ministry of Interior carries out projects and activities for students of primary and secondary schools focused on awareness-raising to combat extremism, racism and various forms of discrimination (e.g. the project Behave normally, Everybody is different!, Extremism as foppery, Teachers, learn!, and: Do not tolerate violence and extremism) at the national or regional level. Prevention of racially motivated crimes has been part of the preventive projects and activities performed by the police force for a long time. Their continued performance is also planned for the future. The Slovak Republic pays due attention to human rights education for prosecutors as well. A workshop for prosecutors on human rights protection in preparatory proceedings was held in October 2013. An educational activity called Victims of crimes, violence against women and children and other subjects of criminal acts is scheduled to be included in the curricula of the Academy of Justice. It focuses on crimes committed in couples, custody, abuse of children as a tool to blackmail a partner, forms of legal assistance to tortured women, rights of victims of criminal acts in criminal proceedings of EU member states, and assistance to victims of violence.

58. The Slovak Republic participated in the European-wide campaign of the Council of Europe "no hate speech movement", responding to the increase of expressions of hate on the Internet. The national campaign as well as the web page [www.beznenavisti.sk](http://www.beznenavisti.sk) ("no violence") was launched in May 2013. The aim of the campaign is to inform, eliminate prejudice and myths, raise awareness about this problem, and provide tools mainly to young people on how to actively face expressions of hatred in the online environment.

Table 1

Number of persons sentenced for selected criminal acts in relation to which racial hatred was stated as a special reason for committing the criminal act

2010				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 359	0	x	x	x
§ 364	1	0	1	0
§ 144 (2) (e) + § 145 (2) (d)	0	x	x	x
§ 156 (2) (b)	0	x	x	x
§ 155 (2) (c)	0	x	x	x
§ 182 (2) (a)	0	x	x	x
§ 194 (2) (d)	0	x	x	x
§ 183(2) (b)	0	x	x	x

2011				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 359	0	x	x	x
§ 364	1	0	1	0
§ 144 (2) (e) + § 145 (2) (d)	0	x	x	x
§ 156 (2) (b)	1	0	1	0
§ 155 (2) (c)	0	x	x	x
§ 182 (2) (a)	x	x	x	x
§ 194 (2) (d)	x	x	x	x
§ 183(2) (b)	0	x	x	x

2012				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 359	0	x	x	x
§ 364	6	0	6	0
§ 144 (2) (e) + § 145 (2) (d)	0	x	x	x
§ 156 (2) (b)	0	x	x	x
§ 155 (2) (c)	0	x	x	x
§ 182 (2) (a)	0	x	x	x
§ 194 (2) (d)	0	x	x	x
§ 183(2) (b)	0	x	x	x

Source: Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic

Explanations:

§ 359 – Violence against a group of people

§ 364 – Riotous conduct

§ 144 (2) (e) – wilful murder

- § 145 (2) (d) – murder
- § 156 (2) (b) – bodily harm
- § 155 (2) (c) – bodily harm
- § 182 (2) (a) – deprivation of personal liberty
- § 194 (2) (d) – violation of domicile
- § 183 (2) (b) – limitation of personal liberty

**Table 2**  
 Number of persons convicted for selected criminal acts against humanity, terrorism and extremism

<b>2010</b>				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 421, 422	31	3	23	5
§ 422a	0	x	x	x
§ 422b	0	x	x	x
§ 422c	0	x	x	x
§ 423	6	2	1	2
§ 424	5	0	4	1
§ 424a	0	x	x	x

<b>2011</b>				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 421, 422	38	2	24	12
§ 422a	0	x	x	x
§ 422b	2	0	1	1
§ 422c	1	0	0	1
§ 423	2	0	2	0
§ 424	7	2	5	0
§ 424a	0	x	x	x

<b>2012</b>				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
§ 421, 422	32	1	19	12
§ 422a	0	x	x	x
§ 422b	2	0	2	0
§ 422c	1	1	0	0
§ 423	1	0	1	0
§ 424	3	0	3	0
§ 424a	0	x	x	x

Source: Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic

Explanations:

§ 421, 422 – support and promotion of groups aimed at suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms

§ 422a – production of extremist materials

§422b – spreading extremist materials

§ 422c – keeping extremist materials

§ 423 – defamation of a nation, race and conviction

§ 424 – inciting to national, racial and ethnic hatred

§424a – inciting, defaming and threatening to persons on the grounds of their affiliation to a certain race, nation, nationality, skin colour, ethnic group or origin

Table 3

Number of persons convicted for committing criminal acts for a special motive

2010				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
Special motive § 140 (d)	2	0	2	0
Special motive § 140 (f)	8	0	6	2

2011				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
Special motive § 140 (d)	5	0	1	4
Special motive § 140 (f)	11	3	6	2

2012				
Provision of the Criminal Code	Number of lawfully convicted persons	Punishment imposed		
		Not suspended	Suspended	other
Special motive § 140 (d)	8	0	5	3
Special motive § 140 (f)	8	1	5	2

Source: Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic

Explanations:

§ 140 (d) – committing a criminal act with the intention to publicly incite to violence or hatred towards a group of persons or an individual on the grounds of their affiliation to a certain race, nation, nationality, skin colour, ethnic group, origin or their religion, if it is a pretext for threatening on the above-stated grounds

§ 140 (f) – committing a criminal act of a national, ethnic or racial hatred, hatred on the grounds of skin colour, hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation.



*Take resolute measures to put an end, without further delay, to the continuing segregation of Roma children at school and their unjustified assignment to "special" schools. Pursue and strengthen efforts to ensure adequate inclusion of Roma children into mainstream education.*

59. Access to education in the Slovak Republic is ensured systematically from both the financial and institutional point of view. It includes free pre-school education from the fifth year of age, zero class at primary schools, specialized classes at primary schools with compensation and development programme (4-8 children per class), teacher's assistant, contribution for socially disadvantaged children, food subsidies and school things assistance for children whose parents are in material need, social assistance benefit to ensure basic living conditions of the child, support of schools within projects, and development and standardization of relevant diagnostic tools. Measures are adopted on a conceptual basis, addressing the causes of school failure of Roma children from the socially disadvantaged environment at elementary schools as well. The School Act (Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Upbringing and Education, as amended) prohibits all forms of discrimination and in particular segregation and no measures in the School Act lead to the exclusion of Roma children from the mainstream school system or their placement in special schools and thus prevent continued segregation. Children are enrolled in primary schools subject to their permanent residence, unless a child's parents select a different primary school. A legal representative has the right to choose a school for his/her child that corresponds to the abilities, health condition and interests and hobbies of the child, religion, philosophy of life, nationality and ethnicity. It applies to all children regardless of their nationality, gender, race, religion, etc. The rights laid down in the School Act are guaranteed equally to everyone in line with the principle of equal treatment in education as stipulated by the Antidiscrimination Act. Roma children and pupils in the school education system of the Slovak Republic have equal position with the same guaranteed rights and obligations as all children and pupils.

60. The Ministry of School, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic clearly expresses its attitude to segregation also in the pedagogic-organizational instructions for the relevant school year. In the Pedagogic-Organizational Instructions for the school year 2013/2014, particular recommendations for schools are included: "To consistently apply a ban on all forms of discrimination and segregation at schools and school establishments. To eliminate any undesirable phenomena such as the spatial, organizational, physical and symbolical exclusion or separation of Roma pupils as a result of their ethnic affiliation (often in combination with social disadvantage) from other pupils. To consistently address the problems of children and pupils from marginalized groups which complicate the process of their enrolment in common schools and school establishments, their placement in common classes and the following educational process. To create suitable conditions for their education in schools and classes together with the majority population. It is not recommended to create separate classes for children and pupils from the socially disadvantage environment (with the exception of the zero class)."

61. The legal order does not allow the schoolmaster to enrol a pupil to a special school or special class (i.e. a school or a class for disabled pupils) without a certificate issued by a counselling service proving the disability of the child and stating the diagnosis which has

resulted from expert examinations. The State School Inspection reviews the justification of enrolment of children to special schools and special classes or according to the educational programme for disabled pupils in school integration. Since 2004, counselling diagnostic services that perform diagnostics of children with delayed development have used tests developed for children from socially and linguistically disadvantaged environment which enable the identification of reasons for children's lagging behind, if the reason for their failure to be educated at the start of obligatory schooling according to the educational programme for elementary school students is other than a mental disability. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport issued a guideline which excludes children without a medically diagnosed disability from a socially disadvantaged environment being examined by psycho-pedagogical counselling services for children with disability. Another practical measure to avoid the unjustified enrolment of children to special schools is re-diagnostics after the first year of school attendance.

62. Enrolment of children to special schools is subject to regular monitoring. The State School Inspection reviewed the situation in 37 special primary schools (in 9 schools for pupils with standard intellect and in 28 schools for pupils with decreased intellect). According to the findings of the inspection, the enrolment of children to special schools complied with the relevant laws with the exception of one primary school which did not justify the disability of children. The level of school integration is regularly reviewed as well. As a result of follow-up inspections at schools and in psycho-pedagogical counselling centres, most of the shortcomings were remedied. Respect for the equality of access to education for all children and the identification of hidden forms of racism and segregation of children is supervised as well. Some of the significantly positive findings include e.g. the emphatic attitude of teachers, the effort of schools to ensure regular school attendance, efficient and purposeful cooperation with counselling establishments, creation of conditions for extra-curricular activities of children, involvement of schools in different projects (environmental projects, awareness-raising projects, etc.). Several areas have been identified which should be further addressed, including the need to establish classes with a compensation or development programme, modification of curricula for children from socially disadvantaged environment, adoption of systemic measures to improve school attendance and school results in upper classes, minimization of the language barrier in a nationally mixed territory, and the improvement of the preparation of children at home. One of the tasks of the State School Inspection is to monitor at schools that have a higher number of pupils from the socially disadvantaged environment how the principle of non-discrimination with a focus on Roma children from the socially disadvantaged environment is respected, and monitor the potential events that could be evaluated as segregation in education based on ethnic origin, including follow-up steps with a view to their prevention.

63. Financial contribution represents one of the tools to improve the conditions for the education of children from the socially disadvantaged environment. The amount of the contribution for pupils from the socially disadvantaged environment is determined by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. In 2012, EUR 6,546,000 was allocated to 65,460 children from the socially disadvantaged environment.

64. Schools which wish to teach Roma language and literature may include the elective subject 'Roma language and literature and Roma history and culture' in their educational programme. Publications and teaching texts in the Roma and in the Slovak language are

available. A school leaving examination can be taken in the subject 'Roma language and literature'.

65. The Methodology and Pedagogical Centre is currently carrying out two national projects on inclusive education and the improvement of access of Roma children and pupils to pre-primary and primary education.

66. From January 2013 until the end of 2014 the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, in cooperation with the Institute for Well Governed Society, the Roma Educational Fund and the World Bank, are carrying out the project named "Investment in early childhood – social innovation and integration of the Roma (Progress)". The project is focused on work with mothers so that their children regularly attend kindergartens, and regularly prepare their children for starting at elementary schools. 315 Roma mothers and 525 children aged 3-6, attending pre-primary care establishments in 21 localities in Slovakia, are involved in the project. The total costs of the project represent approximately EUR 933,000. 10 working positions have been created as part of the project.

67. The decision of the District and Regional Court in Prešov on the violation of the principle of equal treatment and discrimination of Roma children due to their ethnic affiliation by an elementary school with kindergarten in Šarišské Michal'any, was a signal for the Ministry of Education that schools need greater assistance in these issues. Therefore in 2012 and 2013 it announced two calls for the submission of applications for funding development projects aimed at desegregation. In 2012 it was the call "Promoting the creation of a positive social climate and motivation in multicultural classes of elementary schools 2012", while 40 projects were submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The total amount of funds required was EUR 98,904 within the obligatory 5% co-funding by the establishers, including other resources in the amount of EUR 14,786. The Ministry of Education has earmarked EUR 60,500 for this project, while the maximum subsidy for one project was EUR 3,025. Of the submitted projects, the committee for the selection and evaluation of projects has selected 23 projects. In March 2013 the Ministry of Education organized a work meeting with parties performing the projects in order to obtain knowledge, experience and problems in creating multicultural classes.

68. In 2013 a call was issued named "Promoting the education and upbringing of pupils from socially disadvantaged environment at elementary schools 2013", while 58 projects were submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, of that 7 unauthorized, since they concerned special elementary schools. The Ministry has earmarked EUR 52,500 for this development project, while the maximum subsidy for one project can be EUR 3,500. The total requested funds amounted to EUR 184,298 within the obligatory 5% participation of the establishers in the total costs of the project, including other resources in the amount of EUR 17,170. Of the submitted projects the committee for the selection and evaluation of projects has selected 16 projects. The priority area of support were activities contributing to compensating the social disadvantage of pupils and ensuring equal opportunities in practice, consisting in supporting the interests of pupils from disadvantaged environment in education, then the application of new forms and methods of education, in particular towards supporting reading literacy in the educational process, innovation of methods of education with the focus on using ICT in the teaching process, activities supporting the intercultural environment and activities developing cooperation with parents.

69. As a part of the performance of the national project named "Through educating pedagogical staff on the inclusion of marginalized Roma communities" 1,502 teachers out of the total number of 2,724 persons registered are involved in education, and 15,791 pupils are involved in the daily educational system. 8 educational programmes have been accredited:

- Multicultural education in inclusive education
- Pedagogic assistants in inclusive school and their work with pupils from marginalized Roma communities
- By developing communication skills to include pupils from marginalized Roma communities
- Cooperation of families from marginalized Roma communities and schools in the educational process
- Current attitudes and innovation of instruction of pupils from marginalized Roma communities
- Cooperation of expert employees with families of pupils from marginalized Roma communities
- Teacher – creator of learning resources for pupils from marginalized Roma communities
- Information-communication technologies in the daily educational system

70. As a part of the performance of the national project "Inclusive model of education at the pre-primary level of school system", a seminar of public opponency of the document named "Analysis of educational needs of pedagogical staff and expert staff in pre-primary education of children from marginalized Roma communities" was held in June 2013. The Analysis addresses the educational needs of pedagogic and expert staff taking into account the education and upbringing of these children in common kindergarten conditions, bearing in mind the specific features in the area of development of these children. Two opponency opinions have been drawn up for the document which stated the fulfilment of the objectives determined by the "Analysis", and thus a full capability to implement its findings in the elaboration of the content of continuous-education programmes. Preparation for the accreditation of the mentioned two programmes of continuous education for both pedagogic and expert staff with pro-inclusive focus is currently in its final stage. 500 pedagogical staff will be educated, of them 110 assistants and 50 expert employees.

71. In September 2013 a public opponency was held for the document named "Inclusive model of education at the pre-primary level of school system", which will be implemented in 110 selected kindergartens starting from 1 September 2013. After the creation of continuous-education programmes, four teaching resources will be created. Other 220 teaching resources will be created directly by teachers of kindergartens for school educational programmes. 110 assistants speaking the language of the community will work in kindergartens. 110 kindergartens are involved in the project in the regions of Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice.

72. In August 2013 the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic issued a ministerial guidance named "The procedure of centres of pedagogical and psychological counselling and prevention in assessing the school abilities of children from a socially disadvantaged environment and in their inclusion in elementary schools".

73. In 2013 intensive discussions were held related to addressing topical problems in the area of education of Roma with the focus on Roma children in special schools for children with mental disabilities in relation to the preparation of a new programming period of 2014 –

2020, operational programme Human Resources co-funded from the European Social Fund. It has resulted from the discussions held so far that the problem concerns, as estimated, not more than 30% of pupils from marginalized Roma communities, it cannot be addressed at the nation-wide level, but through experimental testing in areas with the highest concentration of pupils from marginalized Roma communities with a necessary requirement to increase funds in the programming period 2014-2020. Elementary schools are not prepared, and it is necessary to create the personnel, material and other conditions. It requires the teamwork of experts – psychologists, special pedagogues, assistants, social pedagogues, etc. as a necessary condition of services for pedagogues. In the future period it is necessary to increase the quality of diagnostics while the option to choose a school – educational path for disabled pupils - should be maintained. This issue has been included among the priorities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, and the proposed solution should be funded from funds of the priority axis for marginalized Roma communities. A team of experts for the preparation – creation of a pilot project (experimental verification) is expected to be created with the aim to determine the content, time schedule of performance and financial coverage. The pilot project should be focused on areas with a high concentration of pupils from marginalized Roma communities in the regions of Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica.

#### **IV. Information on relevant development on an article by article basis**

##### *Article 3*

*1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.*

*2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.*

74. According to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, every person has the right to decide freely on her/his nationality. The Constitution prohibits any forms of influence of this decision and of any pressure leading to denationalization.

75. In 2011 a census of population, houses and flats was carried out, which is the main source of data about the number of persons belonging to national minorities in the Slovak Republic. The data being sought included data on nationality, mother tongue and the most frequently used language. Nationality was understood as affiliation to a nation or an ethnic group. Mother tongue was understood as the language which parents use/used to speak with the parents. The inhabitants could mark or write only one mother tongue based on their own decision. The mother tongue did not have to correspond to nationality. The language most frequently used in the public was defined as the language which the inhabitant currently uses more frequently in her/his job or school, regardless of whether she/he works or studies in Slovakia or abroad. The language most frequently used in private communication was the language that the inhabitant currently uses at home most frequently. The most frequently used language was being sought for the first time in the 2011 census.

76. Rights of persons belonging to national minorities were taken into account in the census. In accordance with law, the census forms were also made in the Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages in addition to the state language, in both paper and electronic form, and in English in electronic form. The number of forms made in paper form in these languages was based on statistical data about the number of citizens belonging to national minorities obtained from the census of population, houses and flats in 2001.

77. The census forms in the languages of national minorities were available in all municipalities where, according to the data of the census of population, houses and flats carried out in 2001, persons belonging to national minorities live, regardless of whether it is a municipality according to the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, i.e. a municipality where at least 20% population are citizens belonging to a national minority.

Table 4

Population of the Slovak Republic by nationality according to the censuses 1991, 2001, 2011

Population total	2011		2001		1991	
	abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %
	5 397 036	100.0	5 379 455	100.0	5 274 335	100.0
Nationality						
Slovak	4 352 775	80.7	4 614 854	85.8	4 519 328	85.7
Hungarian	458 467	8.5	520 528	9.7	567 296	10.8
Roma	105 738	2.0	89 920	1.7	75 802	1.4
Czech	30 367	0.6	44 620	0.8	52 884	1.0
Ruthenian	33 482	0.6	24 201	0.4	17 197	0.3
Ukrainian	7 430	0.1	10 814	0.2	13 281	0.3
German	4 690	0.1	5 405	0.1	5 414	0.1
Polish	3 084	0.1	2 602	0.0	2 659	0.1
Croatian	1 022	0.0	890	0.0	X	x
Serbian	698	0.0	434	0.0	X	x
Russian	1 997	0.0	1 590	0.0	1 389	0.0
Jewish	631	0.0	218	0.0	134	0.0
Moravian	3 286	0.1	2 348	0.0	6 037	0.1
Bulgarian	1 051	0.0	1 179	0.0	1 400	0.0
other	9 825	0.2	5 350	0.1	2 732	0.1
not specified	382 493	7.0	54 502	1.0	8 782	0.2

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Notes:

x – not evaluated

Table 5

Population of the Slovak Republic by the mother tongue

Population of the Slovak Republic by the mother tongue – census 2011, 2001				
Population	2011		2001	
	abs.	in %	abs.	in %
total	5 397 036	100.0	5 379 455	100.0
Mother tongue				
Slovak	4 240 453	78.6	4 512 217	83.9
Hungarian	508 714	9.4	572 929	10.7
Roma	122 518	2.3	99 448	1.8
Ruthenian	55 469	1.0	54 907	1.0
Ukrainian	5 689	0.1	7 879	0.2
Czech	35 216	0.7	48 201	0.9
German	5 186	0.1	6 343	0.1
Polish	3 119	0.1	2 731	0.1
Croatian	1 234	0.0	988	0.0
Yiddish	460	0.0	17	0.0
Bulgarian	132	0.0	1 004	0.0
other	13 585	0.3	6 735	0.1

not specified	405 261	7.5	66 056	1.2
---------------	---------	-----	--------	-----

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Table 6

Population of the Slovak Republic by the most frequently used language in public

Population of the Slovak Republic by the most frequently used language in public – census 2011		
	abs.	in %
Population total	5 397 036	100.0
The most frequently used language in public		
Slovak	4 337 695	80.4
Hungarian	391 577	7.3
Roma	36 660	0.7
Ruthenian	24 524	0.5
Ukrainian	1 100	0.0
Czech	18 747	0.3
German	11 474	0.2
Polish	723	0.0
Croatian	383	0.0
Yiddish	159	0.0
Bulgarian	68	0.0
other	58 614	1.1
not specified	515 312	9.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Table 7

Population of the Slovak Republic by the most frequently used language at home

Population of Slovakia by the most frequently used language at home - census 2011		
Population	abs.	in %
total	5 397 036	100.0
Most frequently used language at home		
Slovak	3 954 149	73.3
Hungarian	472 212	8.7
Roma	128 242	2.4
Ruthenian	49 860	0.9
Ukrainian	2 775	0.1
Czech	17 148	0.3
German	6 173	0.1
Polish	1 316	0.0
Croatian	932	0.0
Yiddish	203	0.0
Bulgarian	124	0.0
other	34 992	0.7
not specified	728 910	13.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic



78. Annex 1 contains information on the religious structure of national minorities in Slovakia based on the census carried out in 2011.

79. In September 2013 the first outcomes of the sociological survey were published in the Atlas of the Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013, carried out by the Regional UNDP Centre in cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities in Slovakia, the University of Prešov in Prešov and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities. According to the Atlas, there are 402 840 Roma living in Slovakia – persons considered to be Roma by the community, representing 7.45% of the population of the Slovak Republic. Of these, 187 285 live dispersed in the majority community, representing 46.5% of the Roma.

#### *Article 4*

- 1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.*
- 2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.*
- 3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.*

80. The amendment of Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection against Discrimination and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended (Antidiscrimination Act) extended the definition of indirect discrimination, so that it also includes the threat of discrimination. The definition of affirmative action was also modified in a way which expressly includes the elimination of disadvantages resulting from discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, or affiliation to a national minority or ethnic group. In addition to state authorities, the possibility to use affirmative action was extended to local authorities and private legal entities with a view to its promotion.

81. In order to increase the dissemination of information about antidiscrimination legislation in relation to Police officers, these tasks are being conducted as a part of the tasks resulting from the Concept of Combating Extremism for 2011-2014:

- to ensure study areas focused on respecting human rights, extremism, racial criminal activity and other forms of discrimination in study documents for the studies of Police Corps members;
- to ensure the education of members of basic units of the Police Corps in police education courses in the area of respecting human rights, extremism, racial criminal activity and other forms of discrimination.

In particular the Police Corps, Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Police Academy and secondary police schools participate in performing the tasks, depending on their type.

82. The protection of national minorities is also the subject of interest of the public defender of rights who is, according to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, an independent body which, in the extent and in the form stipulated by law, defends the basic rights and freedoms of natural persons and legal entities in proceedings before public administration authorities and other public authority bodies, if their action, decision-making or inaction are contrary to the legal order. The public defender of rights acts based on complaint or his/her own initiative. Since 28 March 2012 the new public defender of rights has been JUDr. Jana Dubovcová, whose priorities for 2013 include also two topics related to the protection of national minorities, namely 1. Applying and exercising the right to education of the Roma and Ruthenian national minorities, focused on access to education and the

inclusion of children in pre-school preparation and schooling and on education in the mother tongue of the Ruthenian national minority; and 2. Survey of the procedure of public administration authorities, local administration and public authority in forced eviction. The public defender of rights also addressed the issue of national minorities in open discussions organized in 2012 and 2013, focusing on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, the education of Roma and minorities, and public governance. The office of the public defender of rights has also performed several activities focused on the issue of discrimination and intolerance in society. It provides information about its activity in several languages, it organizes thematically focused discussions and meetings with the public, and issues information materials, including a separate information bulletin focused on discrimination. On 20 February 2013 the public defender of rights participated in a panel discussion organized by the Czech public defender of rights in Brno with the topic "Equality and ban on discrimination in activities of the public defender of rights", which brought not only a theoretical discussion about the legal regulation of equal treatment, but also a lot of information and knowledge from practice.

83. During the period under review, Slovakia adopted several key policy programmes for Roma integration. In 2011, the Reviewed National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 updated for 2011-2015 was adopted, focusing on Roma integration in four priority areas (education, employment, health, and housing). In 2012, the Government approved the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020, which also recognized the Reviewed National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, updated for 2011-2015 as the Strategy's Action Plan for Roma integration up to 2020 for the four priority areas. In addition, the Strategy covers financial inclusion, non-discrimination and attitudes towards the majority. Action plans are currently being prepared in these areas. The Strategy is a comprehensive document which also covers the active involvement of Roma in the creation and fostering of its objectives at all levels.

84. The monitoring and evaluation of the fulfilment of individual measures forms an integral part of the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020. The Strategy brings an elaborated set of tools for the evaluation of the impact of governmental policies aimed at ensuring greater transparency and accountability with respect to the implementation of obligations towards the inclusion of Roma. It defines particular measurable indicators for each priority area in order to monitor how objectives are fulfilled. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, being a coordinator of the implementation of the Strategy, is the body with main responsibility for supervising the application of individual policies, programmes and projects. The framework of monitoring and evaluation based on outcomes is also a basic element for proving the outcomes of drawing funds from EU resources.

85. The Strategy was drafted at the participative multi-sectoral level. The process of elaboration was carried out in the form of consultations with representatives of relevant ministries, state administration, local administration, Roma and non-Roma non-governmental organizations, and academic authorities at the regional and national level. The responsibility for and performing of the activities within individual areas is detailed in the Reviewed National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015, and the implementation framework delimiting the role and position of other key partners, i.e. local authorities and non-governmental organizations when performing the Strategy.

86. The text of the Strategy is included in Annex 2.

87. Special attention in the process of the preparation of the above-mentioned documents was also paid to the issue of the collection of ethnic data. The Government of the Slovak Republic is aware of the fact that developments related to targeted public policies focused on the Roma population is complicated due to a lack of ethnic data. The requirement to have exact data available which could be divided according to ethnic characteristics has been appearing both directly and indirectly in almost all draft governmental documents for several years. In past years, data about living conditions and discrimination would be mainly obtained from specialized, mainly sociological surveys in the Roma environment. Such surveys would be initiated and performed by survey institutions, academic workplaces, European institutions, and non-governmental and international organizations. These surveys provided partial data about specific areas of the life of the Roma population. In 2003 and 2004 a sociologic survey was carried out which examined the Roma communities in Slovakia – Atlas of the Roma Communities 2004, based on the precondition that marginalized Roma communities live in certain territorial units, enclaves, either inside municipalities, at their outskirts or in segregated settlements, and therefore Roma communities may be monitored and surveyed. Such a procedure is not contrary to the principles embedded in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, and it is in line with the standards for the protection of personal data, because the surveying does not search for the ethnic identity of individuals, but performs a kind of "inventory" of settlements. In September 2013 the first outcomes of the sociological surveying were published in the Atlas of the Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013, carried out by the Regional UNDP Centre in cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities in Slovakia, the University of Prešov in Prešov, and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities. Based on the survey data, the most disadvantaged municipalities and locations were identified with the presence of marginalized Roma communities, so that corresponding development interventions could be targeted at them. Comprehensive analyses will be disclosed by the end of 2013.

88. The legal issue of processing this kind of personal data remains a subject of interest at both the national and international level. As a part of the project named "Equality in the Slovak reality – Overcoming institutional barriers in applying the equal treatment principle by increasing the potential for equality mainstreaming", an expert Platform for data on equality was created with experts from central state administration authorities, local administration, academia, UNDP and non-governmental organizations dealing with this issue (the Foundation of Milan Šimeček, CVEK, IVO, Differentness Initiative). In addition to the question about ethnicity, the census performed in 2011 also contained for the first time two questions related to the languages of national minorities, in the categories of the language most frequently used in public and the language most frequently used at home. This is considered a great contribution, as self-identification through language used is less stigmatizing than nationality self-identification, which did not allow multiple identity in the case of the census.

89. In the period of 2010-2015 the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Regional UNDP Centre are performing a project named "Statistical monitoring of living conditions of selected target groups". The intention of the project is to monitor the development of living conditions of marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia, with the aim to offer data and analyses for social inclusion policies focused on this disadvantaged target group. Based on the obtained statistical data, it will be possible to better target individual social policy instruments. The project is a continuation of the project already performed in 2005 by UNDP, which was also focused on monitoring living conditions in

Roma households. In the period of 2010 – 2012, a representative quantitative monitoring in Roma households in Slovakia was performed (housing, education, medical condition, labour market, material deprivation, subjective perception of the situation), social surveying of concentrations of the Roma marginalized communities (the above-mentioned Atlas) as well as an in-depth survey of selected aspects of living conditions in the segregated environment (incomes, expenditures, consumption, common situations). The activities also included qualitative research named "Marginalized Roma communities in the eyes of the helping professions", which surveyed the situation and identified obstacles in the performance of services helping with the social inclusion of this target group. The analysis of projects of the European Social Fund in the programming period 2007-2013 was performed within the OP Employment and Social Inclusion, and their impact on marginalized Roma communities was evaluated. The knowledge from this analysis helped to reflect both strong and weak points in the current setting of the funds, and in such way helped achieve an optimum setting of the programming period 2014-2020. Selected outputs of the project have been presented at several expert conferences. The data from the project became crucial underlying documents for the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Integration up to 2020. The European Commission evaluates the above-mentioned Strategy as one of the best ones, exactly due to the application of the number of exact indicators and a well-elaborated framework for monitoring and evaluation.

90. Slovakia pays special attention to the social inclusion of Roma. Support for the social inclusion of persons endangered by social exclusion or socially excluded persons through the development of services of care, with a special focus on marginalized Roma communities, is among the priorities of the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (2007-2013). Emphasis on the creation of equal opportunities in access to the labour market and support for the integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market with a special focus on marginalized Roma communities is another important field of responsibility of the Operational Programme in the programming period 2007 - 2013.

91. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is one of the key authorities to fulfil the tasks and measures resulting from the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, updated for 2011-2015. The Government has set a global objective focused on the improvement of access to work opportunities, with a particular emphasis on non-discriminatory access to the labour market as well as on active policies and programmes directed at the labour market, education, continuing education, and the support of self-employment activities. In 2012, the Offices of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereinafter referred to as the "Labour Office") provided a wide range of information and counselling services with respect to career choice, job selection and job seeking or job change.

92. Two national projects are currently being carried out aimed at the support of employment of persons from socially excluded communities, in particular from marginalized Roma communities. Annex 3 includes information on performed and prepared projects for disadvantaged job-seekers. Since 2012 the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic has been performing a national project on Field Social Work in Municipalities (2011-2015), focused on the improvement of living conditions in Roma settlements and on the promotion of employment. Based on preliminary estimates, the performance of work of 860 field workers and their assistants will be ensured within the project until 2015 in at least 250 municipalities. Community work has been performed since

2004, and it represents one of the most important tools for addressing the issue of marginalized Roma communities. Community work is also an important tool of social assistance. A national project of community centres for social inclusion is currently under preparation with the aim to further strengthen community centres. The project will create preconditions for the construction of the network for socially excluded persons or persons threatened by social exclusion, in particular the population from marginalized Roma communities. The main objective of the project is to support social inclusion and positive changes in communities, in particular in marginalized Roma communities. Its results are expected to contribute to the extension of social and community work and to the standardization of its activity, and thus to prepare an appropriate basis for the legal regulation of community centres. About 120 community centres are expected to be supported within the project.

93. A bill of law of socially excluded communities is under preparation, which represents a brand new attitude to addressing the issue of social inclusion based on the social and economic definition of settlement communities. In our country social exclusion has mainly ethnic roots and the related institutional discrimination is (also from the historical point of view) one of the main determinants of social exclusion. Reflecting the ethnic aspect of social exclusion in law is important also from the point of view of certain historical recollection and the symbolic acceptance of steps of the majority population leading to the social exclusion of persons belonging to ethnic minority, which currently forms a large majority of the population of socially excluded communities. Nonetheless, the intention of the act is not to respond to the phenomenon of discrimination based on ethnic affiliation, but to respond to the existence of the problem of concentrated and intergenerational poverty based on explicit social and economic parameters.

94. As a part of the Housing Development Programme, the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic provides subsidies to obtain rental housing. Although the primary responsibility for obtaining own housing is borne by citizens, the state is aware that not everybody can obtain some housing without a certain form of assistance. Therefore a system of supportive economic tools for housing development, which are differentiated according to the social situation of applicants, has been created. Subsidies are provided to municipalities and higher territorial units to construct rental apartments of regular and lower standard, intended mainly for lower income groups, including socially excluded Roma communities. A subsidy up to 30% of costs is provided for apartments of regular standard (since 1 January 2014 up to 40%), and a subsidy up to 75% for apartments of lower standard. This enables to obtain affordable and at the same time appropriate housing, while there is a possibility that the remaining part of the acquisition costs is worked off by the future tenants. The involvement of future tenants in the construction process of the housing creates a precondition of a positive relationship with the real estate, and also enables to acquire work habits. As a part of the programme, subsidies for technical facilities are provided as well, in order to increase the social and cultural level of Roma settlements, up to 80% of the acquisition costs. Since 2009 more than 7,800 rental houses have been built within the programme.

Table 8

## Summary of subsidies provided in the "Housing Development Programme"

Year	Number of subsidized constructions	Number of rental houses of regular standard	Provided subsidy in euros
		Number of rental houses of lower standard	
2008	156	2 755	33 099 804.19
	36	633	8 530 239.60
2009	122	2 339	28 105 540.00
	23	314	5 065 150.00
2010	122	2 103	25 744 410.00
	19	241	4 058 850.00
2011	110	1 420	16 130 720.00
	16	169	2 862 680.00
2012	84	1 037	12 172 180.00
	23	251	3 883 130.00

Year	Number of subsidized flats	Subsidy provided for the construction of technical facilities to increase the social and cultural level of Roma settlements in euros
2008	264	530 604.80
2009	50	259 050.00
2010	182	423 620.00
2011	64	96 610.00
2012	92	227 420.00

Source: Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic

95. In 2010 the purpose and amount of subsidies for housing development were specified by law, as well as the definition of "social housing". Social housing is defined as "housing obtained through public funds, designed for the appropriate and dignified housing of natural persons who cannot obtain housing on their own". Adoption of Act No. 150/2013 Coll. on State Housing Development Fund will enable persons interested from the private sector to enter social rental housing from 1 January 2014. Slovakia will continue to take steps to support rental housing with the aim to ensure its affordability. Municipalities will be encouraged to create comprehensive plans of territorial development, and to mainly increase the accessibility of rental housing. The aim of these activities is to support the integration of marginalized groups, the limitation of social exclusion, and the elimination of so-called city ghettos through the suitable social mixing of population.

96. In 2011, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Draft pilot approach for the support of housing infrastructure from EU structural funds. In October 2012, the Government endorsed the Draft implementation mechanism of the pilot approach for the support of housing infrastructure from EU structural funds, which also includes a pilot project

for the construction of rental housing for marginalized groups. The amount of EUR 18.529 million is expected to be allocated for supporting housing infrastructure to carry out the pilot project through operational programmes for 2013-2015. Funding of the project will be supplementary ensured by advantageous loans from the National Housing Development Fund in the amount of EUR 3 million. Any rental residential flats must be built on settled land whose owner or long-term tenant is the beneficiary (municipality). In view of the need to create conditions of positive social inclusion, the rental houses will be built in the wider centre of municipalities, or in the case of several rental houses they will be evenly distributed across the municipality so that marginalized groups are not excluded from the territorial point of view by the construction of rental houses in the outskirts or outside municipalities.

97. The principle of non-discrimination is also applied in the area of healthcare, while everyone has the right to be provided healthcare. In accordance with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination in healthcare provision is prohibited on the grounds of sex, religion or faith, race, nationality, affiliation to a national or ethnic group, sexual orientation, marital status and family status, colour of skin, language, political views or other views, trade union activity, national or social origin, disability, age, property, family origin or other status. In view of the Code of Ethics of medical workers, some of the general obligations of medical staff are obligations to preserve life, protect, support and renew health, prevent diseases, and mitigate suffering, regardless of nationality, race, denomination, sexual orientation, political views, social status, moral or mental level and the reputation of the patient.

98. A programme for health support for disadvantaged communities has been performed by the Ministry of Health since 2007. It is a systemic continuation of the pilot project named "Improving access of the Roma minority to healthcare in the Slovak Republic". Currently its 2<sup>nd</sup> stage is under way (2009-2015). It remains aimed at the selected segregated Roma settlements and locations of Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov regions, where health conditions and sanitation are most critical. The programme is realized through community workers for health education who facilitate communication between inhabitants of the settlements and medical staff, spread basic healthcare information and raise awareness of the prevention of diseases, healthcare, health insurance and the rights of patients. Community workers also cooperate with schools, community centres, municipal authorities, health insurance companies, teachers' assistants, regional offices of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, and NGOs acting at the local level. During the period under review, the number of community workers for healthcare has gradually increased – in 2009 they worked in 115 and in 2011 in 122 Roma settlements. Their action is focused mainly on direct work with families living in settlements, as well as on specific activities with children and young women. Health education is focused, inter alia, on personal hygiene, the prevention of infectious diseases, sexual and reproductive health, and children care. The programme is accompanied by informal discussions in community centres, settlements and schools, etc. In 2012 the programme was not performed due to the austerity measures adopted. However, awareness-raising activities were carried out, including the distribution of information materials in the Roma language about children's vaccinating. In 2013, a programme called "Draft to Ensure Financial Stabilization of the Programme of Health Support in Disadvantaged Communities in Slovakia for 2013-2015" was prepared, which will be the subject of approval in the course of this year. It includes the significant extension of the network of community workers in the area of healthcare; their number is presumed to triple by late 2013. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities is currently preparing an alternative programme "Healthy communities"



in cooperation with an NGO and experts from practice, which should start working in the third quarter of 2013.

99. Regarding the cases of alleged illegal sterilization of Roma women, Slovakia adopted in 2005 legislative measures with respect to the rights of patients to comply with international standards. Women who feel affected by shortcomings in connection with sterilizations performed prior to 1 January 2005 can seek compensation before the courts in civil proceedings. In relation to the call for a thorough investigation of all cases of forced sterilizations, we refer to the report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights on Slovakia of March 2006 (CommDH(2006)5), stating that considerable effort has been made to investigate allegations of involuntary and forced sterilizations of Roma women in Slovakia. A professional medical inspection was established beyond the framework of a criminal investigation, and an expert opinion of the Faculty of the Medicine of the Comenius University in Bratislava was requested. It was not confirmed that the Government supported an organized discrimination sterilization policy. The Government adopted legislative and practical measures with a view to eliminate the administrative shortcomings identified during the investigation, and to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future. In his findings, the Commissioner did not require Slovakia to conduct any further investigation. His recommendations only related to the issue of compensation of victims of violations according to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as a result of performing illegal sterilizations.

100. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered judgments against Slovakia in three cases related to the sterilization of women without their informed consent (*V.C. against Slovakia* (judgment of 8 November 2011 which became effective on 8 February 2012), *N.B. against SR* (judgment of 12 June 2012 which became effective on 12 September 2012), and *I.G., M.K. and R.H. against Slovakia* (judgment of 13 November 2012 which became effective on 29 April 2013)). In the case of *V.C. against Slovakia*, the ECtHR did not require national authorities to initiate criminal proceedings on their own initiative, as it did not find that the medical staff acted with the intention of the ill-treatment of the applicant. The ECtHR declared the non-violation of the procedural part of Article 3 of the ECHR in the case of *V.C. against Slovakia* related to the inefficiency of the investigation. Similarly in the case of *N.B. against Slovakia*, the ECtHR did not accept the applicant's allegation of the ineffective investigation of her sterilization. It stated that the complaint had been reviewed at three levels of proceedings, and the General Prosecutor acknowledged that the applicant had been sterilized contrary to the relevant law, as her legal representative had not given consent. The ECtHR only concluded that Article 3 of the ECHR in its procedural part had been violated in the case of *I.G., M.K. and R.H. against Slovakia*, namely due to the particular subject-matter of the case. The ECtHR stated that the manner in which national authorities had been acting was not in compliance with the requirement of promptness and reasonable expedition. The submitted evidence did not, however, convince the ECtHR that it could have been a part of an organized policy, or that the behaviour of the medical staff had been racially motivated. The rulings of the ECtHR in these cases did not confirm the allegations of numerous illegal sterilizations of Roma women. Measures applied by Slovakia in relation to the execution of the judgments (legislative and other) are currently supervised by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The applicants were paid the financial compensation awarded by the ECtHR. All the above-mentioned judgements were published in the *Judicial Revue*. Judgments in the case of *V.C.* and *N.B. against Slovakia* were sent to the President of the Constitutional Court and to Presidents of all District and Regional Courts. The agent before

the ECtHR familiarises judges and prosecutors with the judgments as a part of educational activities. For domestic courts, the judgment in the case of V.C. against Slovakia (as well as the other two cases) provides important guidance on reviewing claims for compensation for women affected by sterilization and on awarding compensation. Currently a draft of a decree of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic is in the legislation process, which lays down details on instruction preceding the informed consent before sterilization, and includes samples of informed consent before sterilization in the state language and in the languages of national minorities.

101. In the programming period 2007-2013 the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities coordinates the horizontal priority marginalized Roma communities. The horizontal priority was established as a part of the National Strategic Referential Framework 2007-2013, being a specialized tool for the comprehensive and effective use of European assistance to perform the objectives of integration. The aim is to increase the employment and educational level of members of marginalized Roma communities, and improve their living conditions. The support is focused on four priority areas: education, health, employment and housing, and three interrelated problematic issues: poverty, discrimination and gender equality. As a part of it, EUR 200 mil. were allocated to perform the comprehensive approach, a part of funds from the European Social Fund for measures related to education, support of social inclusion and support of education, and a part from the European Regional Development Fund for measures related to the development of municipalities with Roma settlements and related to healthcare.

Table 9  
Summary of projects directly supporting MRCs, status as of 31 December 2012

Operational programme	Number of contracted projects with a contribution from the HP MRC	The amount of contracted funds in € with a contribution of HP MRK (EU resources)
Regional OP	43	46 510 815.16
OP Education	93	34 570 880.65
OP Employment and social inclusion	517	75 312 378.40
OP Environment	0	-
OP Healthcare	12	6 895 989.02
OP Competitiveness and economic growth	0	-
Total	665	163 290 063.23

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

Table 10  
Status of contracting and drawing local strategies of a comprehensive approach (LSCA), status as of 31 December 2012

Operational programme	LSCA allocations in OP(EU resources+ SB)	Contracted projects from LSCA (EU resources + SB)		% status of contracting from allocation for LSCA	Drawing NFC from allocation for LSCA	% drawing NFC from allocation for LSCA
	€	number	€	%	€	%
A	B	C	D	E=D/B	F	G=F/B

ROP	85 000 000.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OP EaSI	26 500 000.00	17	6 191 351.70	23.36	746 816.40	2.82
OP Ed	17 000 000.00	18	2 050 782.70	12.06	494 221.26	2.90
OP En	22 937 163.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OP CaEG	16 470 588.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OP H	10 000 000.00	12	7 827 954.17	78.28	4 198 209.09	41.98
Total:	177 907 751.00	47	16 070 088.57	9.03	5 439 246.75	3.06

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

Table 11

Fulfilment of measurable indicators of the HP MRC at the level of NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework) as of 31 December 2012 which the HP MRC coordinator identified as targeted on MRC

Indicators		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Value of projects targeted on MRC (€) /output/	Result achieved	0	0	15 mil.	60 mil.	155 mil.	163 mil.	-	-	-	163 mil.
	Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Starting value	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Number of projects targeted on MRC /output/	Result achieved	0	0	259	532	649	665	-	-	-	665
	Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Starting value	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Number of jobs created targeted on MRC /output/	Result achieved	0	0	94	246	461	668	-	-	-	668
	Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	645	645
	Starting value	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Number of MRC persons who have found a job /output/	Result achieved	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	0
	Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5170	5170
	Starting value	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Number of MRC persons who underwent educational programmes /outcome/	Result achieved	0	0	0	4595	5739	7998	N/A	N/A	N/A	7998
	Objective	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12370	12370
	Starting value	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

Table 12

Status of financial implementation of the HP MRC according to OP as of 31 December 2012 – projects with indirect support of HP MRC

Operational programme	Number of contracted projects with a contribution from the HP MRC	The amount of contracted funds in € with a contribution of HP MRK (EU resources)
Regional OP	759	578 492 067.29
OP Education	65	78 454 621.40
OP Employment and social inclusion	106	16 431 880.66
OP Environment	143	479 123 863.00
OP Healthcare	46	224 580 020.67

Operational programme	Number of contracted projects with a contribution from the HP MRC	The amount of contracted funds in € with a contribution of HP MRK (EU resources)
OP Competitiveness and economic growth	74	85 696 756.58
OP R&D	17	30 768 353.30
OP Bratislava region	6	1 951 189.35
Total	1216	1 495 498 752.25

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

102. Support for the integration of marginalized Roma communities is also performed by providing subsidies to fund projects related to social and cultural needs, and dealing with extremely unfavourable situations of the Roma community. NGOs active in the area of the integration of Roma communities are also involved in the decision-making process regarding the allocation of subsidies. Subsidies have been provided e.g. to support the establishment and activities of community centres, the repair and reconstruction of flats and social housing, project documentation, support of the establishment of bus stops close to Roma settlements and fuel stores for lower-standard apartments, support of education and upbringing, support of culture and development of sports activities, support of establishment of Roma civil patrols, the creation and protection of the environment, and the protection of the health of population in Roma communities. In 2012 subsidies were also provided to support the elimination of emergency conditions of houses and flats, caused mainly as a result of disasters, bad weather or fire, support of power supply, supply of thermal energy, fuel or water intended for human consumption, in cases threatening human life and human health, in particular in cases of adverse effects of the external environment or adverse weather conditions, support of settlement of ownership relations to houses and flats and to the lands on which these are located, or to the purchase of lands specified by municipalities for the construction of new houses and flats.

Table 13  
Summary of subsidies provided in the period of 2003 - 2011

Year	Subsidy amount
2003	34 911 205 Sk
2004	47 024 800 Sk
2005	46 989 935 Sk
2006	43 525 000 Sk
2007	43 473 000 Sk
2008	41 817 215 Sk/ 1 388 077 euro
2009	1 217 924 euro
2010	772 420 euro
2011	753 164 euro

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

103. Since 2005 the project of police specialists for work with Roma communities has been successfully implemented. In 2005 this position was created on experimental basis within Regional Directorates of the Police Corps in Košice and Prešov with the total number of 18 members of the Police Corps. In March 2009 the Presidium of the Police Corps issued a guideline named "Project of Police specialists for work with Roma communities". The aim

was mainly to present the project to the wide expert and general public. Another equally important objective was to prepare a guideline which may be used as a methodology for the preparation of similar prevention projects carried out by both state and non-state entities. The target group are members of the Police Corps, primarily police specialists for community work, social field workers, community workers, Roma leaders, Roma population, members of local governments and of local state administration participating in the project in localities where the police specialists work in the extent of their competence. In a large extent, the guideline is also intended for workers of other areas who participate in the preparation and implementation of precautionary projects, programmes and measures, at the national, regional or local level.

104. The project of police specialists for community work was a continuation of programmes already carried out, which focused on social field work, and regarding the fulfilment of the Police Corps tasks it achieved positive changes in selected Roma settlements. Education of officers – specialists was carried out on the basis of an educational project of a supplementary course of police specialists for community work at the secondary vocational school of the Police Corps in Bratislava. Currently an additional course for members of the Police Corps focused on work in the Roma communities is being carried out, which is adjusted to the current needs of the common performance of the service of officers – specialists. The above-mentioned educational project was accredited by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic on 16 November 2012, and is carried out at the secondary vocational school of the Police Corps in Košice.

105. Basic tasks of the officer-specialist for the work with Roma communities is laid down in Article 32 of the resolution of the President of the Police Corps No. 18/2011 about activities of basic units of service of the Order Police of the Police Corps. They include the following tasks:

- to independently regulate and organize activities related to the regulation of mutual relationships between the Police Corps and the Roma community/minority community;
- to perform patrolling activity related to the territorial and object-related responsibility in the territorial part of districts with a higher concentration of population from the Roma communities/minority communities;
- to reveal, announce and help bodies pursuing criminal proceedings in the clarification of criminal acts committed mainly by members of the Roma communities/minority communities;
- to reveal, clarify, announce and deal with offences committed mainly by members of the Roma communities/minority communities;
- to perform patrolling services;
- if required by the condition and development of safety, based on a decision of a director to perform tasks during the temporary reinstatement of the control of internal borders;
- to perform activities related to legal information dissemination and prevention of criminality with the focus on a certain population group;
- to cooperate with field workers and community centres which deal with the issue of minority communities, as well as with representatives of the Roma communities/minority communities;
- to cooperate with representatives of the local administration of towns, municipalities, regional offices and district offices who in their competence have locations with a higher concentration of Roma communities/minority communities;

- to concentrate relevant knowledge obtained during performance of entrusted activities and to reflect the obtained knowledge and experience in the lecturing, mentoring and publication activity, mainly in regional media.

106. The officers – specialists currently act at all regional directorates of the Police Corps (KR PZ). The unit of the Order Police of the Presidium of the Police Corps annually reviews the numbers of officers – specialists at individual regional departments of the Police Corps. In 2013 the number of police specialists increased to the current 231, while a further increase is expected in the future.

Table 14

Comparison of the positions of officers – specialists in the period of 2005 - 2013

	2005	2007	2009	2013
KR PZ Bratislava	0	6	10	6
KR PZ Trnava	0	6	18	18
KR PZ Nitra	0	6	18	18
KR PZ Trenčín	0	6	8	8
KR PZ Banská Bystrica	0	18	44	44
KR PZ Žilina	0	14	18	8
KR PZ Prešov	8	26	50	64
KR PZ Košice	10	36	64	65
Total KR PZ	18	118	230	231

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic

107. In order to ensure a uniform approach in the collection of data about the condition of socially excluded groups from the point of view of safety, in 2012 a "Methodology for the collection of data about the condition of socially excluded groups from the point of view of safety" was elaborated, which was implemented in 2013. Data was collected in line with the Methodology for the period of the first and second quarter of 2013. The outcomes of the data collection will serve as the basis to review the positions of officers – specialists. Based on the analysis of the regional directorates of the Police Corps, it is currently proposed to increase the number of officers – specialists by 56 positions.

### *Article 5*

- 1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.*
- 2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.*

108. The basic tool to support the maintenance and development of the culture, language, traditions and cultural heritage of persons belonging to national minorities, thus supporting the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue among all persons living in the territory of the Slovak Republic regardless of their ethnic, cultural, language or religious identity, is the subsidy programme 'Culture of national minorities'. Another source is the budget of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, from which eight museums are funded which are subordinate to the Slovak National Museum and which deal with the culture of national minorities. The theatre of dance Ifjú Szivek is funded from the budget of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, and four national minority theatres are funded from the budgets of higher territorial units – two Hungarian ones, one Roma and one Ruthenian theatre. The activities of regional information centres and libraries help support the culture of national minorities as well.

109. In 2011 the subsidy programme 'Culture of national minorities' passed from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic to the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. Allocation of subsidies is governed by Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of subsidies in the competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended. The subsidy programme is divided into sub-programmes within which it is possible to apply for a subsidy to support cultural activities, artistic activity, educational activity in the area of culture, publishing activity, and to support the cultural activities of international significance or of multicultural nature. A separate assessment committee has been created for the applications of each national minority; two committees have been established for the Hungarian national minority and one committee has been established for multicultural and intercultural activities. Members of the committees are mainly persons belonging to national minorities, but also representatives of regions and experts in individual areas of culture. The committees are advisory bodies of the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, who decides about the allocation of subsidies. The committees provide an expert view on applications for subsidies of the respective national minority, and propose the amount of financial subsidy.

Table 15

## Subsidy programme 'Culture of national minorities' in the period of 2011 – 2013

Year 2011

Minority	Planned allocation of funds (in euro)	Actual allocation of funds (in euro)
Bulgarian	32 000	32 000
Czech	166 000	160 000
Croatian	60 000	62 000
Hungarian	2 320 000	2 326 680
Moravian	24 000	13 300
German	136 000	140 000
Polish	76 000	71 866
Roma	540 000	546 354
Ruthenian	212 000	211 500
Russian	48 000	48 000
Serbian	18 000	18 000
Ukrainian	148 000	141 000
Jewish	72 000	72 000
Total:	3 852 000	3 842 700
Cultural policy	148 000	151 570
Total:	4 000 000	3 994 270

Year 2012

Minority	Planned allocation of funds (in euro)	Actual allocation of funds (in euro)
Bulgarian	34 000	34 000
Czech	176 000	176 000
Croatian	64 000	64 000
Hungarian	2 470 000	2 331 910
Moravian	24 000	24 000
German	144 000	144 000
Polish	80 000	70 000
Roma	576 000	525 200
Ruthenian	230 000	230 000
Russian	52 000	52 000
Serbian	20 000	20 000
Ukrainian	155 000	155 000
Jewish	75 000	75 000
Total:	4 100 000	3 901 110
Cultural policy	400 000	388 000
Total:	4 500 000	4 289 110



Year 2013

Minority	Planned allocation of funds (in euro)	Actual allocation of funds (in euro) <sup>1</sup>
Bulgarian	32 000	
Czech	160 000	
Croatian	60 000	
Hungarian	2 600 000	
Moravian	20 000	
German	80 000	
Polish	40 000	
Roma	588 000	
Ruthenian	200 000	
Russian	40 000	
Serbian	20 000	
Ukrainian	100 000	
Jewish	60 000	
Total:	4 000 000	
Multicultural activities	250 000	
Total:	4 250 000	

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities

110. The Hungarian artistic ensemble - theatre of dance Ifjú Szívek – Young Hearts has been established by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic as an allowance organization of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. In the past few years the ensemble has toured the USA, Australia, performed in Austria, and annually had several performances in Hungary and other countries.

111. The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic continues to create conditions for the development and presentation of the culture of persons belonging to national minorities in all areas of art and book culture, also after the subsidy programme 'Culture of national minorities' was passed to the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. An example is the Slovak Folk Artistic Ensemble (SLUK), which is an allowance organization of the Ministry of Culture, its repertoire includes a dance scenic programme with dances and music from the areas of Šariš, Zemplín, Spiš, Gemer, Podpoľanie, Orava, Myjava, and some folklore material of the Ruthenians, Hungarians and Roma. Individual dance and musical shows respect their historical base, regional and thematic variants. Its repertoire also includes a Christmas concert of live music, a women singing group, soloists and guests of SLUK. It is a rich mosaic of songs and carols from the whole of Slovakia, connected with the Christmas music of the nationalities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic: Ruthenians, Croatians, Germans, Hungarians and Polish. This unique programme lasting 70 minutes presents the Christmas

<sup>1</sup> The actual amount will be known only after closing the subsidy programme 'Culture of national minorities' for 2013.

music of Slovakia in its wide variety, rich in terms of nationalities, languages, interpretations, instruments and styles.

112. Regional minority theatres in Slovakia have scope for presentation within national theatre festivals, such as Touches and Connections in Martin, festival Astorka, and international festival 'Stage Nitra'. Minority theatres perform on the stage of the Slovak National Theatre within the project called "In the national theatre like at home". For example in 2010 the theatre of Alexander Duchnovič from Prešov performed there. Since 2005 the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin has been organizing the theatre festival named Touches and Connection, a selective non-competitive festival presenting the current work of professional theatres in Slovakia. The festival is characterised by its intercultural dimension - theatres of national minorities in Slovakia perform regularly there – the Jókai theatre, theatre of Alexander Duchnovič and Romathan theatre.

113. As a part of its subsidy scheme, the Ministry of Culture also provides subsidies to publish artistic translations, including translations into the languages of national minorities. E.g. in 2012 and 2013 the publishing of works in the Hungarian and Ukrainian languages was subsidized. In recent years 25 book publications in the Hungarian language and 8 in the Ukrainian language have been published with the support of the Literary Information Centre, an organization established by the Ministry of Culture.

114. The culture of national minorities is also developed through organizations established by the Ministry of Culture – specialized museums within the Slovak National Museum (SNM). They are documentary, scientific-research, methodological and presentation workplaces focused on the history and culture of national minorities living in Slovakia. Some of the specialized so-called national museums include: Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia, Museum of Jewish Culture, Museum of Ukrainian Culture, Museum of Ruthenian Culture, Museum of Carpathian Germans in Slovakia, Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia, Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia and Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia. The whole amount of funds allocated within the SNM for the culture of national minorities in 2012 amounted to EUR 1 957 586.

115. The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia is a documentary, research and scientific museum presenting Roma culture and informing about its specifics. Some of its long-term activities include building a permanent exposition (a part consisting of traditional Roma settlements), while in 2012 106 objects were acquired for the collection. The museum annually performs the following performances: International Roma Day (informal educational performances for schools); Te prindžaras amen – Let's get to know each other – musical activities, shows of traditional work processes characteristic for the Roma ethnic group, presentation of works of Roma non-professional visual artists, creative workshops, shows of Roma cuisine, and playing documentary films focused on the history and culture of the Roma. The Museum has a Gallery of Roma Personalities (travelling exhibition), and also performs activities focused on the Roma holocaust (Porraimos). In 2010, EUR 46 938 was allocated to fund the Museum, in 2011 EUR 28 419 and 2012 EUR 31 629.

116. The Museum of Jewish Culture plays a significant role also from the perspective of preventing discrimination and all manifestations of violence, elimination of prejudice and stereotypes. The Museum provides informal education for secondary schools – interactive lectures about the holocaust, interactive exhibitions, building a holocaust museum in Sereď, and participates in international projects related to the prevention of all kinds of violence. The

Museum is focused on the presentation of the spiritual and material culture and documentation of the holocaust in Slovakia. The expositions and exhibitions present to the public objects of everyday life, documents and artefacts of visual arts. The Museum also administers expositions in exhibition premises of synagogues in Žilina, Prešov and Nitra.

117. The Museum of Hungarian Culture is particularly active. In addition to general activities it also performs a wide range of other activities, e.g. symposium of the Protection of Cultural Heritage, seminar Traditions and Values, reconstruction of the chateaux of Imre Madách in Dolná Strehová within cross-border cooperation, etc.

118. More detailed information on all specialized national minority museums and their activities in 2012 are in Annex 4.

119. Special attention in the subsidy system of the Ministry of Culture is paid to supporting the culture of marginalized communities, mainly children and youth, as a part of the programme named 'Culture of disadvantaged population groups'. It is mainly focused on the protection of culture of marginalized population groups, and also on supporting the accessibility of culture for vulnerable groups as well as supporting the prevention of discrimination and all forms of violence. The programme is divided into sub-programmes to support: 1. live culture, 2. periodical press; and 3. non-periodical press. Model projects are funded which ensure systematic work with children and youth directly in settlements, and which give them the opportunity to be integrated. In this connection, the Ministry of Culture has long been cooperating with the Roman-Catholic church in Lomnička. The project of 'Cultural and spiritual activities for Roma children and youth' in Lomnička develops aesthetic feelings – feeling for theatre, visual arts and music, as well as the social skills of children. There is a different type of project named Wandering Roma String - CA Lácho Drom, Kokava nad Rimavicou, which supports musical talent in children from settlements as well as their own traditions and cultural identity as well as the ability to be integrated into society more easily. Both projects have been supported by the Ministry of Culture since 2006. EUR 38 500 was allocated for 11 events in 2010 in programme named the Culture of Disadvantaged Population Groups to support cultural activities for socially excluded partnerships – marginalized Roma communities. In 2011 approximately EUR 38 670 was allocated to support 8 events, and in 2012 10 projects were subsidized in the amount of EUR 29 770. They were mainly artistic creative arts – theatre, musical workshops, exhibitions, experience education, etc. The summary of projects subsidized as part of the Culture of Disadvantaged Population Groups programme in 2010-2012 is stated in Annex 5

120. Also libraries established by the Ministry of Culture – University Library, Slovak National Library, State Scientific Library (Košice, Prešov, Banská Bystrica) perform different types of activities – from the acquisition of books with nationality issues and in the languages of minorities, through expert reviews in respective areas, up to discussions, lectures, exhibitions of books with the aim to develop tolerance and prevent all forms of violence. In 2012-2013 the State Scientific Library in Prešov is performing the project 'Documentation and information centre of the Roma culture'. Its task is to collect comprehensive information about the Roma culture, history, language, traditions and other areas of life of the Roma community in one place, and thus to present a new view of Roma culture as a part of the European cultural heritage.

121. The Ministry of Culture and the institutions within its competence perform a number of projects aimed at increasing the accessibility of cultural institutions, cultural events and

activities. It is e.g. free access to selected institutions on the first Sunday of a month, the initiative 'Night of museums and galleries' with access to all cultural establishments for a symbolic price, and the subsidy programme 'Cultural vouchers' for pupils of elementary and secondary schools and for pedagogic employees of these schools who can access cultural events and activities for children and youth through cultural vouchers subsidized by the state. In 2011 the amount of EUR 3 083 846 was allocated as a part of this programme, and in 2012 EUR 2 768 200.

122. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities supports the development of the culture of the national minority within its own subsidy scheme. These are mainly projects to increase the dissemination of information about Roma culture, history, language and standardization of the Roma language, projects focused on increasing interest in Roma communities, and in the presentation of their traditions, habits and cultural values. The intention is to focus on the development of strong relations via mass-communication with the aim to achieve the objective of informing the public about the Roma community living in the Slovak Republic. In 2008 the following projects were supported: Standardization of the Roma language in Slovakia (EUR 12 448), Kalo čangalo – the Roma film festival of Martin Slivka (EUR 4 348), the Roma 2008 – prize awarded to a significant Roma personality for the development of art and knowledge (EUR 1 991), journalistic competition Baroro Kamienok (EUR 1 029), the prize of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities for humanity 2008 (EUR 13 643), Romano Nevo ľil – cultural and social newspaper, Roma new letter (EUR 7 967), Roma national magazine So vakeres? broadcast on Slovak TV (EUR 46 720). In 2009 the following projects were supported: 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Roma festival – Romafest (EUR 1000), Romano nevo ľil – Roma periodical, cultural and social newspaper for the Roma in Slovakia in the Slovak and the Roma languages – issuing and spreading – increasing the costs in 2009 (EUR 15 000), Kaj Ďžas Decade of Roma Inclusion? – supporting the information of the majority and Roma population about the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015 (EUR 15 000), issuing the publication Roma craftsmen, artists and musicians of the Prešov region (EUR 9 000). In 2010 Days of the Roma culture in Giraltovce was supported (EUR 3 000), building the Roma Documentary and Information Centre (EUR 4 500), Roma Media Centre (MECEM) – facilitation of public opinion and the more efficient involvement of Roma communities in the integration process through Roma media. In 2011 subsidies were provided for the project Let's revive Roma literature for children (EUR 5 000), Let's get to know our culture (EUR 500), Our Roma culture (EUR 1 500), Let's lift our hearts and minds through culture (EUR 2 000), Tolerance concerts - NADARA 2011 – Don't be afraid to say that you are Roma (EUR 1 500), Supporting the education of talented Roma children and youth to maintain the Roma culture and identity (EUR 6 000), LULUDI – KVIETOK – issuing a children's magazine (EUR 4 000).

123. In addition to financial support, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities performs activities focused on positive informing about the habits, cultural heritage and history of the Roma. As a part of the International Roma Day, public mass-communication means annually broadcast programmes, at the initiative of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, about positive examples, conversations about the way of life, traditions and Roma culture. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities annually organizes celebrations of International Roma Day, including a ceremonial reception and co-organizes various cultural performances. On the occasion of the Commemorative Day of the Roma Holocaust, thematic programmes are broadcasted on Slovak Radio and Slovak Television. In 2012 the

Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities organized a Commemorative Concert on the occasion of the Commemorative Day of the Roma Holocaust, which was performed under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic and was broadcasted live on public television. Roma artistic ensembles and interpretations performed at the concert. The Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities also supported the International Gypsy FEST - World Roma Festival in Bratislava, which was held in late July and early August 2013 and was also supported by the subsidy scheme of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. On the initiative of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, Slovak Radio on the occasion of the International Day of the Roma Language broadcasted an interview on Roma language.

Table 16

Summary of cultural events of the Roma national minority subsidized also from funds of the state budget of the Slovak Republic

Region	Town/Municipality	Festival name	Organizer	Nature of the festival
Self-governing region of Banská Bystrica	Klenovec	Roma bašavel	Civil association (CA) Upre Roma	local
	Kokava nad Rimavicou	Balvalfest	CA Lačo drom	international
	Hnúšťa	Sama daj	CA Club of Roma activists	Slovakia-wide
	Rimavská Sobota	Roma fest	CA IPCR, Rimavská Sobota	local
	Lučenec	Romano hangóro	CA CESPOM	Slovakia-wide
	Šimonovce	Regional competition of interpretations of traditional folk cimbalom music	CA Rainbow Šimonovce	local
	Rimavské Jánovce	Get to know us - Pindžaren amen		local
	Banská Bystrica	Gypsy fire	CA LAVUTA in cooperation with the CA Rossija	international
	Banská Bystrica	People of the Roma kin	Cultural association of the Roma in Slovakia in cooperation with the Alliance of Roma Initiatives	international
	Detva	Jiloskero Hangoro	CA Club Together Detva	local
	Zvolen	Roma fest Zvolen	QUO VADIS	regional
	Banská Bystrica	Roma literary club – reading Roma literature and literary workshops	KARI – Regional association of Roma initiatives	Slovakia-wide
Self-governing region of Bratislava	Dunajská Lužná	European Roma Symposium of Blacksmiths	Civil association Chartikano	international
	Bratislava	International Roma festival	Committee of NGOs	international

Self-governing region of Košice	Strážske	Roma festival of dance and songs	Civil association Smile of Stráže ASABEN	regional
	Lastovce	Roma festival	CA peaceful life	regional
	Michalovce	Roma festival (small black pearls)	OZ New way	regional
	Trebišov	Roma festival - Gypsy Fest (During its existence the festival was also held in Bratislava and Sečovce)	Civil association Roma Production	international

Source: Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities

124. Attention is also paid to the popularization of the Roma language. Several projects have been performed in recent years with state support, e.g. Roma language – means of social inclusion, Roma language as a means of building Roma identity, summer camp for Roma children supporting education of cultural and national identity, International conference "Language, history and cultural identity of the Roma in Slovakia and today's Europe". As a part of the subsidy scheme, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities also supported the project Standardization of the Roma language in Slovakia. The Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities and the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities had a discussion about increasing the efficiency of supporting the popularization of Roma language at the Information Seminar in Bratislava with representatives of NGOs held in 2012.

125. The amendment of the Act on State Language in 2011 (Act No. 35/2011 Coll.) has brought several positive changes in relation to persons belonging to national minorities. One of these changes was also the abolishment of the requirement to state a full translation of texts into the state language in occasional cultural press documents issued in the languages of national minorities. Since 1 March 2011, the published materials in the minority language intended for cultural purposes do not have to contain a translation into the state language. It is sufficient to state only basic data in the Slovak language in such published materials. Through the regulation of Article 5 (5) of the Act of the State Language, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee from the previous monitoring cycle was reflected in its full extent into Slovak legislation, thus eliminating any additional financial burden for national minority organizations.

### *Article 6*

- 1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.*
- 2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.*

126. The subsidy programme "Culture of national minorities" also subsidizes projects focused on supporting intercultural and multicultural dialogue. In 2013 the funds allocated to this sub-programme amounted to EUR 250 000. 50 projects were subsidized, focused on Slovakia-wide intercultural and multicultural activities with the target group comprising the majority society, representative researches focused on multicultural and intercultural issues, expert conferences and seminars related to the position of national minorities in Slovakia, as well as multicultural and intercultural printed and electronic media.

127. One of the most important projects which have been subsidized includes the Festival of national minorities in Košice. The festival is an opportunity to present the culture of thirteen national minorities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic, also within the activities of the European Capital of Culture 2013. Children and adult folklore ensembles, choirs and groups of singers, various musical formations, amateur and professional theatre ensembles performed at the festival; literary activities, film projections, exhibitions were carried out, and also material culture was presented in the form of folk-artistic crafts, gastronomic national specialties, and production by national publishing houses. A conference named "National minorities in the light of history and presence" was held as a part of the festival, organized by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities, at which representatives of all thirteen national minorities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic participated.

128. Another subsidized project is the Musical Days of Bruno Walther, the aim of which is to present the common cultural tradition of the Central-European region, and to participate in the reinstatement of the position of Bratislava as one of the centres of art in Central Europe. The Musical Days of Bruno Walther was devoted to the memory of a great conductor, composer, writer and humanist, whose destiny was typical for a number of artists, as he was forced to emigrate due to his Jewish origin. Since its start in 2004 in Bratislava, the Days have been held in Vienna, Prague, Hamburg, Brussels and Lugano. In 2013 concerts were held in the three most significant metropolises of the Central-European cultural region - Budapest, Vienna and Bratislava.

129. A significant project was also the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the singing competition Gypsy Spirit. The Gypsy Spirit project is focused on supporting the active effort of all those who help improve

the situation of the Roma in Slovakia. The aim of the Gypsy Spirit project is to create a public platform to appreciate the work done with the Roma community. Appreciation and presentation of positive examples may be a motivation for other entities to become involved through projects to achieve a comprehensive, efficient and long-term solution of problems of the Roma community. The Gypsy Spirit award is focused on supporting and informing about those projects and activities which bring real, measurable outcomes, and thus represent real assistance for the Roma population.

130. The 8<sup>th</sup> year of the [fjúžn] festival was subsidized as well. Until 2011 the event had been called the Week of New Minorities. The new name, meaning fusion and joining, renders more the nature of the festival. It expresses the dynamically changing multicultural society and the mixing of different cultures. The main objective of the festival is to increase awareness of the majority about new minorities living in Slovakia, as well as to develop relationships among the communities, and to give communities some room to present themselves. A lot of activities were carried out during one week: discussions, concerts, workshops, informal meetings, exhibitions, films, dance and theatre performances.

131. The Festival of Art and Culture of national minorities in Martin was also subsidized. The main intention of the project is to contribute to the creation of an open cultural room in the heart of Slovakia through the artistic and cultural confrontation of creations of artists of national minorities which live in this area and create: Hungarians, Roma, Ruthenians and the Poles.

132. The main objective of the project named "Examining the relations of the Hungarian and Roma minority in ethnically mixed areas of the Slovak Republic" is to spread knowledge about the multi-ethnic nature of minorities living in Slovakia: on Hungarian-speaking Roma, relationships between the Hungarian and Roma minority at the local and regional level. In this relation the project was focused on the creation of methodology to examine inter-ethnic relationships with potential practical application also to other minorities living in Slovakia; surveying the ethnic identity of the Roma living in ethnically mixed territories of Southern Slovakia; identifying and bringing attention to Roma-Hungarian social elites.

133. Human rights education is an integral part of the Plan on Human Rights Education in the School System for 2005-2014, a comprehensive programme of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. One of its most significant tasks is to ensure education and upbringing about and towards human rights. Since 2008 it has been included in national educational programmes for primary (1<sup>st</sup> level of primary schools), lower secondary (2<sup>nd</sup> level of elementary schools), and higher secondary education (secondary schools). The Plan is conducted through educational topics (such as "People and society", "People and values", "Art and culture", "People and health"), as well as through the implementation of cross-cutting topics such as "Multicultural education" and "Personal and social development" in the educational programmes of primary and secondary schools. The State School Inspectorate supervises the implementation of the Plan on Human Rights Education in all areas of education on the basis of criteria elaborated in line with legal regulations and international human rights treaties. The Inspectorate's findings at elementary and secondary schools confirmed the sufficient equipping of schools with international and national documents on human rights, appropriate level of the implementation of human rights aspects into school educational programmes, and the integration of human rights education into educational plans. The functioning of school coordinators obtained positive evaluation, as well as the involvement of pupils in school projects focused mainly on human rights and



multicultural education. The establishment of pupils' school councils/parliaments in 40% of the assessed schools was assessed as a clearly positive achievement. Certain space for the improvement was identified with respect to the building of barrier-free environment aimed at the inclusive education of physically disadvantaged children in common schools.

134. In 2012, a research of the opinions and attitudes of pupils "Example of tolerant behaviour of young people in the family and school" was carried out by the Institute of Information and Prognosis of Education. The research was a response to the requirement to review the status of the implementation of multicultural education into the educational process, with an emphasis on models of behaviour and awareness about culturally different groups presented to young people by their nearest surroundings (family and school).

135. The national project "Comprehensive Advisory System for the Prevention and Influence of Social-Pathologic Phenomena in School Environment" carried out in 2013 is focused, inter alia, on increasing the quality of psychological services (psychological testing, psychological, career and educational counselling) in school and counselling facilities for Roma pupils.

136. The intercultural aspect, with a view to the culture and history of minorities, is applied in national educational programmes for individual education levels, in particular in the cross-cutting topics of "Multicultural education", "Regional education and traditional folk culture" as well as in educational areas such as "People and values", "Art and culture", and "People and society". The document named "Elaboration of the objectives and content of multicultural education and upbringing" (2011-2012) is focused on assistance to elementary and secondary schools in conducting multicultural education and upbringing. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport approved the reviewed national educational programmes for vocational education effective from September 2013. They pay special attention to human rights; in addition, individual contextual standards of vocational education in the field of human rights were elaborated as well.

137. Slovakia also pays appropriate attention to raising awareness of human rights through information campaigns. IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute – performs educational and cultural activities involving human rights aspects. A "Live library" is scheduled for December 2013, creating space for an informal dialogue between readers - members of the majority public and books - members of disadvantaged population groups. In 2013, an art and literary competition of primary schools - Human Rights as Seen by Children – was carried out under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. A competition about human rights, consisting of tests and essays on human rights topics, is organized for secondary schools. Slovakia actively participates in the Council of Europe's campaigns, e.g. in 2013 the "No hate speech movement" internet campaign.

138. Information on the measures related to combating extremism, including racial violence, is included in part III of the Report.

139. The Directorate of Supervision and Inspection Service of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic performs the supervision and inspection activity in relation to members

of the Police Corps. It reports directly to the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. Investigation of criminal activity of members of the Police Corps is performed by the Inspection Service Office. It performs the investigation and shortened investigation of criminal acts committed by members of the Police Corps in line with the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Criminal Code. The relevant prosecution performs supervision of legality before the initiation of criminal prosecution and in preparatory proceedings. Each issued decision of a Police Corps investigator, as well as of an authorized member of the Police Corps on the merits, is reviewed by the relevant prosecution.

140. Several measures have been adopted in order to avoid cases of police maltreatment. In 2009 the Minister of Interior issued an order related to tasks to prevent the violation of human rights and freedoms by members of the Police Corps when performing their interventions and limitations of personal liberty. It also includes tasks to improve the psycho-diagnostic examination of applicants for a job in the Police Corps with the aim to assess aggression, interpersonal perception and social sensitivity more strictly. As a part of the service preparation for employment of members of the Police Corps with the focus on work with minority communities, all members have been retrained in relevant state legislation, Code of Ethics of Police Corps members and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As for the inspection activity, increased attention is paid to the behaviour of members of the Police Corps when treating people, and findings from the inspection activity are regularly assessed and measures to remedy any shortcomings and their underlying causes are adopted within five days of performing an inspection.

141. Human rights education is also included in post-secondary-schools studies at the secondary vocational schools of the Police Corps where policemen acquire both basic and specialized police education to be employed as warrant officers or in officer ranks. Study documents in all kinds of studies at the above-stated schools also contain topics related to human rights protection. The Police Academy in Bratislava, state university ensuring the education mainly of members of the Police Corps and other security services, contain the issue of human rights in their education. Education on human rights is performed by the Academy at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level of university studies and as a part of specialized police studies. As a part of the education and trainings of members of the Police Corps, the Academy is also focused on the prevention of racial discrimination, racial criminal activity, human rights, racism and extremism, with a particular focus on the Roma national minority. In addition to lectures, seminars and exercises, members of the Police Corps at the Academy participate in seminars and conferences related to the issues of the Roma national minority and racial criminal activity organized by other institutions or organizations acting in this area. As a part of the cooperation of the Academy with the European Police Academy, members of the Police Corps participate e.g. in courses related to the topic "Human rights and police ethics" where also the issue of national minorities and ethnic groups in the context of the legitimacy of police interventions is dealt with.

142. Objectives resulting from the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2012 – 2016 and the Concept of Combating Extremism for 2011 – 2014 also contain the systemic education of relevant professional groups which, when performing their profession, have an impact on preventing extremism and racial criminal activity and increasing legal awareness and informing the public. As a part of it, judges, prosecutors and members of security units and armed forces are educated in this area about the current trends related to extremism, racial activity and other forms of discrimination, including new aspects of

committing criminal activity, the characteristics of perpetrators, and variations of appearance of their members and supporters. Judges, judicial aspirants and court officers are continuously educated through expert seminars conducted by the Justice Academy of the Slovak Republic, mainly in the area of criminal law from the point of view of using efficient tools of judicial power in the prevention and suppression of extremism. Members of basic units of the Police Corps are educated at least once a year in the area of human rights and about how to identify manifestations of extremism and racial criminal activity. In addition, in July 2013 the educational project "Education of members of the Police Corps in extremism, racism, intolerance, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism, who are in the service of the criminal police – training of trainers" was accredited. 25 trainers are planned to be trained in 2014 – 2015 who will then, in the period of five years, train members of the Police Corps performing directly their service.

143. Accreditation and performance of two projects of education of members of the Police Corps at the Police Academy called "Training for trainers" and "Training by trainers of target policemen" is expected in 2013-2014. In 2012 an educational project of the further education of policemen was accredited by the Ministry of Interior called "Additional course for members of the Police Corps focused on performing their work in Roma communities". The aim is to inform participants about the nature of the Roma community, with specifications of criminal acts committed by and on the Roma community, with the tactics of performing interventions in the community and specifications of performing the service in the Roma community with an emphasis on respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. In 2013, 21 members in the position of officers – specialists for work with the Roma community underwent this education. Approximately 80 – 100 more policemen in this position are planned to be educated in 2013.

144. In order to support the development of the capacities of the Police Corps and to contribute to increasing the information spread about relationships between the Police and Roma, a publication was published in December 2012 in cooperation with the OSCE named "Police and the Roma: Examples of good practice in building trust and understanding". This Slovak translation of the publication, published in 2010 by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), contains a set of examples of good practice and programmes from different OSCE participating states focused on the improvement of the institutional environment and relations between the police and Roma communities. On the occasion of its publication, in December 2012 an expert seminar was held for members of the Police working in the positions of officers – specialists working in Roma communities.

145. Members of the Police Corps are also regularly familiarised with the Report on Criminal Activity of Members of the Police Corps for the relevant calendar year, and with the Report on attending to complaints and petitions in the competence of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic for the relevant calendar year.

146. One of the possibilities to increase the efficiency of the effort in combating racial criminal acts is the active performance of individual tasks resulting from the Concept of Combating Extremism for 2011 – 2014, which provides a comprehensive response to a social situation and increased manifestations of hatred in the media, on the Internet and social networks. The Ministry of Interior, as the subject-matter entity in charge of the prevention of criminality and combating the manifestations of extremism, is actively involved in the

preparation and performance of the national campaign against hatred on the Internet. In May 2013 a campaign on manifestations of hatred on the internet was officially launched, as well as the page which originated for this purpose: [www.beznenavisti.sk](http://www.beznenavisti.sk). This campaign is performed in Slovakia as a part of the European-wide campaign of the Council of Europe "no hate speech movement", responding to the increase of so-called hate speech – manifestations of hatred on the Internet. The objectives of the campaign is to inform, eliminate prejudice and myths, raise awareness about this problem and provide tools, mainly to young people, how to efficiently face any manifestations of hatred in the online environment.

147. At the national level, preparations continue for accession to the Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Cybercrime of 2003 related to the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature on the Internet.

**Article 7**

*The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.*

**Article 8**

*The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.*

148. In the period under review, there were no changes in legislation or implementation which would lead to limitations in exercising these rights.

149. As of June 2013 there were 18 registered churches and religious societies in the Slovak Republic. As many as 98.6% of believers of all churches acting in Slovakia declare their affiliation to six historical churches, and approximately 1.4% of the population declare their affiliation to other 12 churches and religious societies. In its relationship to registered churches, the state recognizes their social and legal position as legal entities "sui generis", while it has a specific attitude to them and cooperates with them based on the principles of partnership cooperation. Slovak legislation ensures the equal position of all churches and religious societies before the law. The state may conclude contracts on mutual cooperation with churches, such as the Basic Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See of 2000, and the Treaty between the Slovak Republic and Registered Churches and Religious Societies of 2002 regulating the position of 11 registered churches, including smaller churches. Treaties related to the financial securing of churches and the exercise of objection of conscience have not been approved until now, and their preparation is an issue of mutual agreement between the churches and the state. The state provides significant support to registered churches and religious societies when performing their activities through a direct financial subsidy from the state budget. Direct subsidies from the state budget form a major part of the incomes of most churches, mainly churches with low numbers of believers. Out of the 18 registered churches, 4 churches do not claim any financial subsidy. The determining criterion for the amount of contribution is the number of clergymen, not the number of believers.

150. In the census of population, houses and flats in 2011, altogether 75% of the state population declared their affiliation to churches and religious societies registered in Slovakia; 13.4% of the population are unreligious and 10.6 % of the population did not state their religion. A church or religious society is understood as a voluntary association of persons of the same religious faith in an organization formed according to their affiliation to a religious belief based on the internal regulations of members of the church or of the religious society. In Annex 1 we enclose a table of the religious structure of person belonging to national minorities in Slovakia according to the census conducted in 2011.

### *Article 9*

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.*
- 2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.*
- 3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.*
- 4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.*

151. According to the Act on the Slovak Radio and Television (hereinafter referred to as the "RTVS") of 2010, which inter alia merged public-service media into one institution, one of the basic tasks of RTVS is to ensure the broadcasting of contextually and regionally balanced programmes in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the territory of the Slovak Republic in the time span corresponding to the national minority and ethnic structure of the population of the Slovak Republic. In order to ensure the production and broadcasting of programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups, RTVS has established separate organizational units for Slovak Radio and Slovak Television. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities and the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups continuously inspect the observance of this provision of the Act, and communicate with the management of RTVS about the elimination of any potential problems. At a meeting of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups held in May 2013 an RTVS representative informed about the status of minority broadcasts.

152. RTVS considers national minority broadcasting to be an organic part of the broadcasting structure not only because national minority broadcasting is one of its main tasks defined by the Act, but also because more than 14% representation of national minorities in the Slovak population means a significant base of listeners and viewers. Slovak television broadcasts a programme for 13 national minorities on its Dvojka channel, and radio broadcasts in seven languages on Rádio Patria.

153. The production and broadcasting of national minority programmes is ensured by a separate organizational unit of RTVS; for the first time in the history of public-service broadcasting in Slovakia it is a section reporting directly to the Director General of RTVS with separate overheads and programme budget. Dramaturgy of the programmes is fully in

the competence of the management of the National Minority Broadcasting Centre. All programmes of national minority broadcasting are prepared, from the dramaturgy and editorial point of view, by members of the particular national minority, editors who at least speak the broadcasting language, though usually it is their mother tongue as well, they also check the contributions and whole programmes. As a result of obligatory subtitles, all television programmes are also understandable for viewers who do not speak the language, and the responses of viewers prove that national minority programmes are not watched only by persons belonging to national minorities, which is an added value of the public service also in view of getting to know and understanding each other. The National Minority Broadcasting Centre works in the same budget and technical conditions as other RTVS units. All activities which are aimed at improving the wage, remuneration or technical conditions apply equally to the National Minority Broadcasting Centre.

154. National minority broadcasting on the radio is ensured by RTVS through an independent programme service with an appropriate name - Rádio Patria. The radio works with two editorial offices – the office for Hungarian broadcasting and the office for national minority broadcasting.

Table 17

Editorial Office for national minority broadcasting – planned performances in 2013

Language	Total number of hours	Mother tongue (number of members)	Nationality (number of members)
Hungarian	4 368	508 714	458 467
Ukrainian	301	5 689	7 430
Ruthenian	327	55 469	33 482
Roma	168	122 518	105 738
Czech	16	35 216	30 367
Polish	16	3 119	3 084
German	16	5 186	4 690
Total	5 212		

Source: Slovak Radio and Television

155. The National Minority Broadcasting Centre wishes to balance the ratio of broadcasting times to the population proportion, but gradually and sensitively and in constant dialogue with representatives of national minorities. At the same time, due to the fact that national minorities low in numbers such as the Serbian, Croatian, Jewish, Bulgarian, Russian and Moravian ones, have no representation in radio broadcasting, in the future the National Minority Broadcasting Centre will search for possibilities for the production of programmes also in the above-mentioned languages. The structure of the national minority broadcasting programme strives to be similar to full-format radio model, i.e. representation of the highest possible number of genres in broadcasting. Daily 12-hour Hungarian broadcasts comply with the criteria of full-format radio; programmes for the Ukrainian and Ruthenian minorities also contain several formats, while Roma broadcasting is rather informative and other broadcasts are exclusively informative. Since national minorities in Slovakia differ not only in their numbers but also in their organization and needs, the genre representation of radio formats is appropriate in broadcasting.

156. Due to technical and financial possibilities, television broadcasting for national minorities is not performed in a separate programme service but within the Dvojka

programme service. Broadcasting for all 13 national minorities is ensured and the programme structure is closer to the ratio of persons belonging to national minorities.

Table 18

Programme service Dvojka, national minority broadcasting in hours

National minority broadcasting	Performances in broadcasting 2013
Hungarian	108
Ruthenian	22
Ukrainian	18
Roma	30
Czech	3
Polish	3
German	3,5
Serbian	2
Croatian	2
Russian	2
Jewish	3
Moravian	2
Bulgarian	2
Other (mixture of national minority news)	4.5

Source: Slovak Radio and Television

157. Television programmes for national minorities are usually magazine programmes. All formats which television has obtained from independent creators are added to the planned extent of broadcasted hours at the end of the year. This offer changes throughout the year; currently the independent environment offers 1.5 hours of national minority broadcasting. The presented data is therefore higher than stated by the programme concept for 2013. Except for the magazine programmes, RTVS broadcasts also documentaries and interviews; a well run-in interview format in Hungarian is Face to Face, extended in 2013 by Roma, Ukrainian and Ruthenian formats. Documentaries in the Hungarian language (eight parts in total) are prepared for broadcasting, one documentary in the Ruthenian language and one in German. The mixture of national minority news is a news programme in which all national minorities are represented, while the proportion of time depends on the number of events processed in the particular week. National minority news representing a seven-minute summary of events is prepared on average in three languages in one part.

158. Programmes for national minorities are programmes in the public interest. Most programmes are financially subsidized by RTVS in the form of a contract with the state – they are all artistic, documentary, literary, magazine formats and radio plays or adaptations. News formats are funded directly beyond the contract with the state, as news coverage cannot be included in the contract with the state. The contract with the state is an institute representing a form of guarantee for persons belonging to national minorities about ensuring national minority broadcasting, as on its basis RTVS must produce the programme planned in the particular year and broadcast it not later than in the following year. It means that national minority programmes, except for news coverage, cannot be excluded from the programme, not even in the case when the collection of fees for radio and television broadcasting was much lower than expected, and not even in the case when RTVS would have to cut its budget for other reasons.



159. The listening rates of the broadcasting of Rádio Patria is satisfactory, in each data collection its listening rates exceeded one per cent of the market share, in summer months it achieved even 2 per cent of the market share. Almost 60,000 listeners listen daily to Rádio Patria, and the average daily listening time is over 160 minutes. On average 130,000 listeners answered affirmatively to the question "I was listening last week" in individual data collections, which gives a reply mainly to the spontaneous knowledge of the Rádio Patria brand, in summer this number amounted to 160,000. The situation in television programmes is less favourable; here national slots fluctuate in daily measurements between 0.3-1%, the viewing rates of news are almost immeasurable. RTVS does not strive to achieve the highest possible rates at any cost, but on the other hand it must ensure the efficient spending of public funds. It is natural that if we have a programme for minority viewers, the price of the programme is high in comparison to its viewing rates. This is true not only for language, but many times for genre minorities. However, it is the aim of RTVS that as many viewers as possible have access to the national minority format, while new programming and new position on the Dvojka channel will be adjusted to it.

160. Radio and television broadcasters are obliged to ensure a Slovak language version of all programmes broadcasted in other than the state language, with the exception of radio programmes in regional or local broadcasting for persons belonging to national minorities, including events broadcasted live and other programmes to which exceptions apply in accordance with Article 5 (1) and (2) of the Act on the State Language. This requirement does not limit private television broadcasters in any way in using the minority language, because each broadcaster may send all its programme service in the language of the relevant national minority. In 2011 – 2013, 18 such broadcasters perform their activities. It is sufficient if programmes to which exceptions stated in the Act do not apply are supplemented with subtitles in the Slovak language. It is the issue of the free choice of the broadcaster if it will ensure the Slovak language version in the form of subtitles, or if it will broadcast the programme in the state language as well instead of providing subtitles. The possibility to broadcast the whole programme in the state language is favourable for broadcasters who have both language versions of a programme available (both in the state language and in the language of the national minority), and thanks to this possibility they do not have to provide subtitles in the state language in such cases.

161. In order to facilitate broadcasting in one of the official languages of the European Union (other than the state language) in the territory of the Slovak Republic, the amendment of the Act on Broadcasting and Retransmission, effective from 1 January 2014, extended the exception from the principle that the broadcasting of the radio and television programme service is performed in the territory of the Slovak Republic in the state language by a new exception, namely in relation to broadcasters licensed by the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission under the conditions stipulated by a special regulation for broadcasting a programme service exclusively in one or several official languages of the European Union, which is not the state language of the Slovak Republic. A broadcaster broadcasting in one of the official EU languages other than the state language of the Slovak Republic, or in several such languages, may broadcast all programmes as well as all other parts of its programme service exclusively in other than the Slovak language, which means that such broadcaster is not required by law to provide a Slovak language version of any part of broadcasting. Since six out of nine minority languages (Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German and Polish language) are official languages of the European Union, this measure will also have a positive impact on television broadcasting and nation-wide radio broadcasting in the language of minorities, as the radio broadcasting in the regional or local broadcasting for persons

belonging to national minorities need not be translated into the state language in accordance with the current legal regulation.

162. In 2013 the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic registered 45 periodical papers issued in the Hungarian language, three in the Polish language, two in the Ruthenian language, two in the Ukrainian language, four in the Czech language, six in the German language and one in the Croatian language. In addition to the above-mentioned papers, 62 periodical papers are published in the combination of the Slovak-Hungarian languages, 30 in the Slovak and Czech languages, three in the combination of the Slovak and Roma languages, two in the Slovak and Ruthenian languages, and one in each of the combination of the Slovak/Ruthenian/Ukrainian/Russian, Slovak/Hungarian/Czech, Slovak/German and Slovak/Bulgarian. Since December 2010 the number of published periodical papers has increased in almost all minority languages, what may be viewed very positively also in view of the fact that the position of the periodical press has been recently weakened by other media, in particular by the Internet.

### *Article 10*

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.*
- 2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.*
- 3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.*

163. Information about the amendment of language legislation in 2010 and 2011 is also included in part III of the Report.

164. Since the third State report in 2009, legal possibilities and guarantees for using the languages of national minorities have been significantly extended. It was achieved in particular by an extensive amendment of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, which has brought several changes also in the area of the communication of persons belonging to national minorities with administrative bodies. In July 2011 persons belonging to national minorities were given new possibilities, guaranteed by law, to use minority languages in official communication, and public administration authorities were given new obligations in relation to the languages of national minorities.

165. The extended area of rights and obligations related to official communication is laid down in several provisions of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in municipalities where, according to two subsequent censuses, citizens belonging to a national minority form at least 15% of the citizens in the municipality, or 20% of citizens in the municipality until application of 15% rule. A citizen who is a person belonging to a national minority has the right to communicate in such municipality, both orally and in writing, with a public administration authority (i.e. a local state administration body, territorial self-administration body and territorial self-administration established by a legal entity), including the submission of written instruments and evidence also in the minority language, and the public administration authority will answer the submission written in the minority language in the minority language too, in addition to the state language, with the exception of issuing public instruments. The public administration authority is obliged to create conditions for the application of this right in an appropriate way, while it may specify a time span to attend to issues in the language of the national minority. The public administration authority is also obliged to display the information about the possibilities of using the minority language in the office of the public administration authority in a visible place. A decision of the public administration authority in an administrative procedure is issued, if the procedure was

initiated by a motion in the minority language or on request, in the minority language, in addition to the state language, in equal counterparts. Birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, permissions, authorizations, confirmations, opinions and declarations in the municipality which the Act applies to are issued bilingually on request, namely in the state language and the minority language. A designation of a public administration authority placed on buildings is stated in the minority language along with the state language. Public administration authorities provide to citizens official forms issued in the extent of their competence bilingually on request, namely in the state language and in the minority language. Citizens who are persons belonging to a national minority may use the minority language in oral communication in a municipality which does not meet the conditions of the 15% or 20% share of persons belonging to national minority, if the employee of the public administration authority and persons involved in the procedure agree.

166. Discussions of the public administration authorities may also be held in a minority language if all persons present agree with it. Deputies of the local council have the right to use the minority language during discussions of this authority. Other participants in the discussion of the local council may use the minority language only if all the deputies of the local council present and the mayor of the municipality agree with it. Interpretation is ensured by the municipality. The chronicle of the municipality may also be kept in the minority language. Official agenda, mainly minutes, resolutions, statistics, records, balances, information for the public and the agenda of churches and religious societies, with the exception of the registry, may be kept in a minority language along with the state language. Within its competence, the public administration authorities ensure, on request, information on generally binding legal regulations also in a minority language along with the state language. Municipalities may issue generally binding regulations within their competences also in a minority language along with the state language; in such case the wording in the state language is decisive. Municipalities disclose important information stated on the official board of the municipality, on the web site of the municipality and in the published periodical press in a minority language along with the state language, namely:

- information about the composition and powers of bodies of the municipality's self-administration;
- summary of legal regulations, instructions, orders, explanatory opinions in accordance to which the municipality acts, and decides or which regulate the rights and obligations of natural persons and legal entities in relation to the municipality;
- place, time and form in which it is possible to obtain information and information about where natural persons or legal entities may file a request, proposal, motion, complaint or other submissions;
- procedure which municipalities must comply with when attending to all requests, proposals and other submissions, including relevant periods to be complied with;
- the rates of administrative fees which the municipality collects for acts and procedures of administrative bodies and the rate of fees for the disclosure of information;
- information on managing public funds and on treating the municipality's property.

167. In order to improve the conditions for using the languages of national minorities in the official agenda, the employees of the local state administration, but not only them, have the possibility to undergo two accredited programmes of further education at the Faculty of Central European Studies of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, namely in two modules:

- Development of competencies in the administrative style in the extent of 50 hours; and

- Development of Hungarian-Slovak bilingual competence of administrative workers in the extent of 50 hours.

The curricula of both modules are formed so that graduates acquire practical knowledge in the area of bilingual competence in official communication which is based on both theoretical and practical knowledge of official, legal and economic style and bilingual correspondence.

168. In 2011 the Government Office of the Slovak Republic conducted a survey on the use of languages of national minorities related to territorial self-administration – municipalities. The Government Office addressed all municipalities listed in the list of municipalities laid down in the annex to the Regulation of the Government No. 221/1999 Coll., i.e. 656 municipalities, out of that 512 with Hungarian, 68 with Ruthenian, 57 with Roma, 18 with Ukrainian and 1 with German population. The municipalities received questionnaires with questions related to the use of languages of national minorities in official communication and designations in the languages of national minorities. A unit for national minorities of the Government Office processed the data obtained in this way, and used it when providing expert and methodical assistance in administering the law.

Table 19

Number of employees speaking the languages of national minorities in municipalities where the languages of national minority are used

National minority	Number of municipalities in which languages of national minorities are used in official communication	Number of employees of the municipalities	Number of employees speaking the languages of national minorities (in absolute figures and in %)	
Hungarian	512	4603	4059	88%
Ruthenian	68	154	147	95%
Roma	57	400	105	26%
Ukrainian	18	29	23	79%
German	1	1	1	100%

Source: Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities for 2012

169. Administrative offences related to the use of languages of national minorities are dealt with by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. The Head of the Civil Servant's Office of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic acts on behalf of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic in this area, at a lower level it is the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. In 2012 one petition was inspected, related to a failure to issue a bilingual marriage certificate. The Government Office of the Slovak Republic found a violation of the respective provision of law, warned about the violation of law and required elimination of the identified shortcomings. In 2013 submissions concerned a failure to issue a counterpart of a decision in a minority language, a failure to allow both oral and written communication in the Hungarian language, a failure to inform about a possibility to communicate both orally and in writing in the Hungarian language, and a failure to disclose important information. In the case of the failure to issue a counterpart of a decision in the

minority language, a violation was identified and a notification was issued about the violation of law and a request for the elimination of the identified shortcomings. In other cases the objections were assessed as unsubstantiated.

170. Based on the practice of the Police Corps, there are no cases when in criminal proceedings a person belonging to a national minority would not be immediately informed in the language they understand about the reasons for being taken into custody, about each accusation towards them, as well as about the right to their defence in the minority language, if necessary also with the free assistance of an interpreter. The Police Corps follows the provision of the Criminal Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

171. It is also possible to use a language of national minorities in communication with the public defender of rights. In order to facilitate access to information and communication, the public defender of rights also has information materials as a form for filing a complaint in several languages, including the languages of national minorities. In 2009-2013 the public defender of rights received 107 submissions in one of the languages of national minorities. Most were in the Hungarian language, 84 in total, there were 15 submissions in the German language, 4 in the Russian language and one in the Croatian and one in the Serbian language. Submissions delivered in the Czech language are not recorded due to their comprehensibility. In the case of a submission in a different language, the office of the public defender of rights also ensures translation into the language in which the request has been delivered or into a different language, if stated in the request.

172. In 2011 the public defender of rights dealt with a complaint related to a potential violation of the right to use a language of a national minority in official communication. The person filing the complaint perceived communication of the Tax Office only in the Slovak language as a violation of their rights, while the submission was in the Hungarian language. The place where the relevant Tax Office resided was one of the municipalities in which, according to the last census, at least 20% of the population was formed by citizens belonging to the Hungarian national minority. According to the opinion of the public defender of rights, by communicating with the person who filed the motion only in the Slovak language, the Tax Office did not abide by law and violated the basic right of the citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups to use their language in official communication, under the conditions stipulated by law, in accordance with the Article 34 (2) (b) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The outcome of the procedure based on the motion is the elimination of the violation and the adoption of measures to ensure the protection of this right if the violation of a basic right has been identified. Remedy could potentially be provided by sending a call also in the Hungarian language. However, in the meantime the Tax Office issued a separate confirmation about the tax residence. As a result of that, it was not meaningful anymore that the Tax Office called on the person filing the motion in the Hungarian language to add any the essentials necessary for issuing a confirmation. Therefore the public defender of rights did not propose to the director of the Tax Office to adopt any additional measures. However, the public defender of rights found it important that employees of the Tax Office have knowledge and carefully apply the law. The outcomes of the procedure were communicated to the director of the Tax Office. From the future perspective, in order to ensure the correct and careful proceedings of motions filed by citizens of the Slovak Republic in Hungarian language, the public defender of rights asked to adopt general measures aimed at correct application of the law by employees in charge. The director of the Tax Office then informed the public defender of rights that he had held a meeting where the heads of departments were familiarised with the outcomes of processing the motion, key legal regulation as well as

internal regulations. They were tasked to act in line with these regulations when dealing with the motions of citizens in other than the state language.

### *Article 11*

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.*
- 2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.*
- 3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.*

173. Along with amending the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in 2011, the Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on Names and Surnames, as amended, was amended as well. On 1 July 2011 there was a change in the use of surnames in the spelling form of languages of national minorities. Permission for changing a surname is not necessary if it is a change in the surname consisting of a modification of the surname in line with Slovak spelling or the spelling of a national minority in accordance with a special regulation, while a special regulation is understood as the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. It means that citizens may ask for a change in their surnames into the spelling form of a language minority, e.g. modification of the surname Nad' into Nagy according to the Hungarian spelling, or the surname Cvek into Zveck according to the German spelling. However, the provision does not apply to a change of a surname or its translation which are regulated by other provisions of the Act on Names and Surnames.

174. In 2011 Act No. 154/1994 Coll. on Registers, as amended, was also amended in the way that in the case of a deceased person whose name is written in the register in other than the Slovak language, and a later official extract from the register was made with a name in the Slovak equivalent, the register will make an official extract from the register in the original wording if a family member asks for it in writing who is a husband or child of the deceased person, and if they do not live, the parents of the deceased person. Similar steps are taken also in the case that the person whom the registration concerns or a member of their family prove that the name was registered in the Slovak equivalent only additionally, without the agreement of the person whom the registration concerns.

175. In relation to local names in the languages of national minorities, the amendment of 2011 brought several changes as well. According to the current regulation, the name of a municipality in the state language, in municipalities where the citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority form at least 20% of the population, is accompanied by a designation of the municipality in the minority language, namely on road signs denoting the start and end of the municipality, buildings of public administration authorities, and decisions



in administration proceedings issued in the minority language. Road signs with the designation of the municipality in the minority language are placed under the road signs with the name of the municipality in the state language. The law also enables to use the designations of given municipalities in the minority language also in the designations of a railway station, bus station, airport and port. The designation of the municipality is placed under the name in the state language in the same or smaller letters. Given municipalities may mark streets and other local geographic markings in their territory also in the minority language. According to the current regulation, if a minority language is used in expert publications, in the press and other means of mass communication and in the official activity of a public administration authority, also designations of geographic objects which are conventional and used in the minority language may be used along with standardized geographic names.

176. Similarly inscriptions on monuments, memorials and tablets may be written in a minority language along with the state language.

177. In municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority form at least 20% of the population, the following public and registry documents are issued bilingually on request, i.e. in the state language and the minority language: birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, permissions, authorizations, confirmations, opinions and declarations. In the event of any doubts, the text in the state language is decisive.

178. According to the valid legal regulation, persons belonging to national minorities may use designations of geographic objects in the minority language in municipalities stated in the regulation of the Government No. 221 of 1999, while there are more than 650 municipalities listed. This option is used frequently in most municipalities, mainly where persons belonging to the Hungarian national minority live. After the adoption of the amendment of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities of 2011, several dozen new designations of municipalities were added in the languages of national minorities on road signs at the start and end of the municipalities in which such designations had not been used until then. As a flexible approach is applied in the Slovak Republic in relation to the percentage representation of persons belonging to national minorities in individual municipalities, the road signs are also placed in municipalities which do not meet the 20% or 15% threshold. Since 1994, when the Act No. 191/1994 Coll. on Designation of Municipalities in the Language of National Minorities laid down the obligation to place designations of municipalities in minority languages on road signs denoting the start and end of municipalities (in the municipalities listed in the annex to that Act), no road sign with the designation of a municipality in a minority language has been removed which was placed in the municipality according to this Act, not even after a decrease of the number of persons belonging to national minorities in the particular municipality. In municipalities where persons belonging to national minorities live, the possibilities to mark streets, public areas and other geographic objects in the languages of national minorities are extensively used as well. Such designations are commonly also placed in municipalities where the number of persons belonging to minorities does not reach the threshold stipulated by law.

## *Article 12*

- 1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.*
- 2. In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.*
- 3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.*

179. Education about the culture and history of national minorities is provided for individual education levels in cross-cutting topics "Multicultural education", "Regional education" and "Traditional folk culture" as well as in educational areas such as "People and values", "Art and culture", and "People and society". The document "Elaboration of objectives and content of multicultural education and upbringing" (2011-2012) is focused on assistance to elementary and secondary schools when performing multicultural education and upbringing.

180. Specialized, so-called national minority museums, are significant documentary, scientific-research, methodological and presentation workplaces focused on the history and culture of individual national minorities living in Slovakia. More detailed information is included in Article 5 of the Convention.

181. The supreme scientific institution of Slovakia – the Slovak Academy of Sciences – also deals with the scientific research of issues related to the position of national minorities. Its scientific workers also provide expertise and advisory activity for public authorities in these issues.

182. Religious education or the subject of religion is taught at schools in line with law, with the exception of elementary artistic schools and language schools. Religious education is also possible in kindergartens. The education is ensured by registered churches and religious societies. Religion is also taught as one of the obligatorily elective subjects in alternation with ethical education at elementary and secondary schools and it is a part of the state educational programme.

183. Educational projects co-funded from the European Social Fund within the Operational Programme Education are also used to improve the education of national minorities in Slovakia. In 2012 a call was issued "Increasing the quality of education of the Slovak language and literature where the language of instruction is a minority language, through a method of teaching foreign languages by increasing the quality of university programmes" with the total financial amount of 1 million euros. State, public and private universities could apply for non-returnable financial contributions, and the target groups were university students and professors. From the geographical point of view, the call covered the territory of

the whole Slovak Republic with the exception of the self-governing region of Bratislava. The call was focused on the creation, innovation and/or implementation of study programmes focused on the education of future teachers of the Slovak language and literature, and future teachers of primary education with regard to the education of the Slovak language and literature through a method of foreign language at schools where the language of instruction is a minority language and on the preparation of new study materials and the implementation of new methods in teaching the study programmes focused on the education of future teachers of the Slovak language and literature, and future teachers of primary education with regard to the education of the Slovak language and literature through a method of a foreign language at schools where the language of instruction is a minority language.

Five applications were submitted, while four applications met the selection criteria and conditions for providing the subsidy and three applications were approved in the total amount of EUR 652,594:

- Extending the study programme Slovak language and literature in combination with a didactic element of the Slovak as a foreign language – University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice;
- Increasing the quality of university preparation of future teachers of the Slovak language and literature at elementary and secondary schools where the language of instruction is a language of national minorities through methods of teaching foreign languages – University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava;
- The Nitra model of increasing the quality of education of the Slovak language and literature at schools where the language of instruction is a language of national minorities through methods of teaching foreign languages (with an emphasis on schools with the Hungarian language of instruction) – University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra.

184. The expert guarantor of the further education of teachers, including pedagogic employees from schools where the instruction language is a language of a national minority, or where a language of a national minority is taught, is the Methodology and Pedagogical Centre. Since 2009 the Centre has been performing a national project within the Operational Programme Education "Professional and career growth of pedagogic employees" in the total financial amount of EUR 49.8 million. The aim of the national project is to create and develop an efficient system of further education of pedagogic and expert employees of schools and school establishments, with an emphasis on the development of key competencies, deepening and increasing the qualifications of pedagogic and expert employees in line with the Act on Pedagogic and Expert Employees, and in line with the current and perspective needs of the knowledge society.

The national project is mainly focused on:

- creation, innovation and implementation of professional standards and tools of assessing the development of professional competencies for categories, career degrees and career positions of pedagogic and expert employees of schools and school establishments;
- creation and accreditation of programmes of continuous education and the development of the quality of institutions of further education;
- increasing and renewing the level of key competencies of pedagogic employees and employees working in the area of education in the system of continuous education in line with professional standards and the current and perspective needs of the knowledge society;

- increasing informedness about the possibilities of learning and facilitating the access to educational programmes and teaching resources through modern educational forms and technologies.

185. As of June 2013, 264 newly-created programmes of continuous education were accredited out of the planned 625 newly-created educational programmes. The offer of educational programmes is disclosed and continuously updated on the web page of MPC.

Selected examples of already accredited educational programmes include:

- Creation of didactic tests in general-education subjects with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Digital technologies to increase the efficiency of instruction using an interactive board at schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of reading literacy at elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Strengthening communication competencies in teaching the Slovak language for teachers of the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of communication competencies at the lessons of the Ukrainian language;
- Development of communication competencies through texts of different language styles at the lessons of the Ukrainian language;
- Regional education in primary education;
- Regional history in the school educational programme;
- Education of upbringing of the Roma at the lessons of religion/religious education;
- Roma language in education;
- Methods and forms of work supporting the critical thinking of pupils from socially disadvantaged environments;
- Specific methods and forms of work with pupils from socially disadvantaged environments.

186. The following educational programmes are examples of programmes which are in the accreditation process:

- Development of the reading literacy of pupils in schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Training of communication skills at the lessons of the Slovak language at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Teaching of the Ruthenian language at elementary and secondary schools in the context of current changes in the schools system;
- Development of communication skills at schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Possibilities of processing the extending subject-matter of visual-arts lessons at schools with the Hungarian language of instruction.

187. In April 2011 the Methodology and Pedagogical Centre in Bratislava established a Field Office in Komárno. This office started to perform tasks in supporting the professional development and continuous education of pedagogic and expert staff of schools and school establishments with the Hungarian language of instruction. The office currently employs 11 employees. From April 2011 to August 2013 more than 1 600 pedagogues from schools with the Hungarian language of instruction were retrained. One of the important objectives of the office is to provide methodical guidance in the teaching of the Slovak language at national

minority schools to achieve sufficient conversation skills of persons belonging to national minorities in the state language.

188. In 2010, 3 programmes of continuous education were elaborated by the Methodology and Pedagogical Centre which aimed to cover the issue of teaching the Slovak language at schools with the Hungarian language of instruction, from the primary up to full secondary education:

- Strengthening communication competencies in teaching the Slovak language for teachers of the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Strengthening the communication competencies in the subject Slovak language and literature at elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of reading literacy at elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction.

Approximately 100 teachers participated in education named "Strengthening the communication competencies in the subject Slovak language and literature at elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction".

189. Other educational programmes are also other in the accreditation process:

- Cooperation of family and school at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Application and creation of didactic games and teaching aids at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Reading with pleasure and developing the reading literacy of pupils at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Training of communication skills at the lessons of the Slovak language at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of the creativity of pupils at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of the logical thinking of pupils at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction;
- Development of children's imagination at the first level of elementary schools with the Hungarian language of instruction.

190. As of July 2013 there are 458 pending applications for continuous education from the whole of Slovakia at the Filed Office, while it also deals with reviews and consultancy activities for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> attestations of teachers.

191. In line with the University Act, studies and research of minority languages are supported. Education in the Hungarian language is performed at the following universities:

- Faculty of Philosophy of the Comenius University in Bratislava;
- Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica;
- Faculty of Education of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra – Faculty of Central European Studies;
- University of J. Selye in Komárno (3 faculties – Economic Faculty, Faculty of Reformed Theology, Faculty of Education);
- University in Prešov – Institute of Hungarian Language and Culture.

192. University education in the Ukrainian and Ruthenian language is provided by Prešov University in Prešov. In the academic year 2012/2013 the Ministry of Education, Science,

Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic nominated 8 candidates for study activities at Ukrainian universities, out of that 6 participants of study mobility were from Prešov University in Prešov. The aim was the effort to improve language skills in the Ukrainian language, to acquire supporting materials for the preparation of Bachelor's and Master's theses as well as materials for scientific and educational activity, and participation in the expert seminar related to the education of the Ukrainian language.

193. Regarding the Roma language:

- University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra – Institute of Romology Studies;
- University of Healthcare and Social Work of St. Elisabeth, Bratislava – Institute of Roma European Studies;
- Prešov University – Institute of Roma Studies.

-

***Article 13***

- 1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.*
- 2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.*

194. Article 34 of the Constitution guarantees the right of the citizens belonging to national minorities to create and maintain their educational institutions. The education of languages of national minorities is also carried out within state universities. These universities are a part of the educational system of the Slovak Republic, and they are funded from the state budget. Based on legal regulations, in addition to state schools it is possible to establish private or religious schools which are also funded from the state budget on the basis of valid legal regulations.

195. The School Act lays down the principle of equality of education acquired at state schools and private and religious schools, i.e. those which may be established by a person who is a member of a national minority, as one of the basic principles of education and upbringing.

196. The Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Universities and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended lays down the conditions for activities of private schools as well. Such school may be established only by a legal entity and an agreement for its establishment is given by the Government of the Slovak Republic based on the proposal of the Ministry of School, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

#### *Article 14*

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.*
- 2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.*
- 3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.*

197. The right to be educated in the in the language of national minorities is laid down in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and in Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Upbringing (School Act) and on amendments and supplements to certain laws. The education and upbringing of students and pupils is performed at elementary and secondary schools where a language of national minorities is the language of instruction, where a language of national minorities is taught, and where the Slovak language is the language of instruction based on a free decision of their parents or legal representatives. Pre-school and after-school education and the upbringing of children in school educational establishments are also ensured with respect to the mother tongue of children.

198. In accordance with public statutes including international conventions, national minorities can exercise the right of education in the mother tongue. The decision depends on interest and on the requirements of the legal representatives of children. The education and upbringing of persons belonging to national minorities in and of the mother tongue, including its institutional securing by schools and school establishments where a minority language is the language of instruction and where a minority language is taught, forms an equal and inseparable part of the educational system of the Slovak Republic. Education won at these schools is equal to the education won at schools with the Slovak language of instruction.

199. The educational process at schools where a minority language is the language of instruction is performed in line with the state educational programme. Each change in the content and organization of education is also identically transformed into the content of education at schools and school establishments where a minority language is the language of instruction and where a minority language is taught.

200. The democratic right of parents to choose a teaching language of the school is applied and complied with in the education of children belonging to national minorities.

201. In 2013 the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic established the Council of the Minister for National Minority Schools as his advisory body for the area of the education of persons belonging to national minorities and the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The first session was held in April 2013, and it was also attended by persons belonging to the



Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German and Roma national minorities, as well as by the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities. The subject of discussion was the issue of textbooks, teaching texts for national minority schools, framework curricula for national minority schools, and a report on the condition of national minority schools, elaborated by the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups in March 2013.

202. Since the submission of the 3<sup>rd</sup> State Report, the following legislative measures have been adopted in the field of education:

- Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 320/2008 Coll. on Elementary Schools (amended in 2011);
- Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 282/2009 Coll. on Secondary Schools (amended in 2011 and 2012);
- Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 318/2008 Coll. on Termination of Studies at Secondary Schools (amended in 2011 and 2013);
- Decree of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic No. 233/2011 Coll., implementing certain provisions of the Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Universities and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended.

203. The content of education is specified for individual levels of education by educational standards in the state educational programmes (hereinafter referred to as the "SEP") which lay down general educational objectives and key competencies which education should lead to. The objectives of education are set to ensure a balanced development of the personality of pupils. The SEP include a profile of a graduate, characteristics of educational areas, framework curricula, organizational conditions and obligatory personnel, material-technical and spatial conditions of education, and also delimit the framework content of education. It forms the basis for the creation of a school educational programme in which the specific conditions and needs of the region are taken into account as well. SEP are issued and published for individual levels of education by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

204. SEP also include a framework curriculum which contains educational areas and the list of obligatory and elective subjects, limiting the lowest number of lessons within the whole educational programme or its integral part. The framework curricula also determine the extent of the highest weekly number of lessons in the particular year of the educational programme, and the number of lessons which each school may use for its own focus when creating the school educational programme. The framework curricula are binding for the elaboration of curricula of relevant educational programmes.

205. Instruction of or in the language of a national minority is ensured at schools on the basis of valid framework curricula (FC) for elementary schools and secondary grammar schools with 4-year and 8-year studies where a minority language is the language of instruction. Currently there are elementary and secondary schools in Slovakia with the Hungarian language of instruction, elementary and secondary schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction, elementary schools with the Ruthenian language of instruction, and elementary schools with the German language of instruction which follow the current SEP for schools where a minority language is the language of instruction. Teaching of minority languages at these schools is not to the detriment of the state language. Schools where a language of national minorities is taught follow the valid FC for schools with the Slovak language of instruction, but instruction of the minority language is performed within the

school educational programme. The exact number of lessons of the state language and of the minority languages is included in the following table.

Table 20  
Number of lessons of the state language and of the minority language

	Subject/year	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	1.	2.	3.	4.
FC/2008 Schools with SLI*	Slovak language and literature	8	6	6	6	5	4	4	5	5	3	3	3	3
FC/2011 Schools with SLI	Slovak language and literature	26				23					12			
FC/2008 Schools with NLI* *	Slovak language and Slovak literature	5	5.5	5.5	5	5	4	4	5	5	2	2	2	2
	National minority language and literature	5	5.5	5.5	5	5	4	4	5	5	2	2	2	2
RUP/2011 Schools with NLI	Slovak language and Slovak literature	21				23					8			
	National minority language and literature	21				23					8			

Source: Ministry of School, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

Notes: \* Slovak language of instruction

\*\* National minority language of instruction

206. The state creates conditions for teaching the mother tongue of persons belonging to national minorities, while schools have sufficient scope for their own profiling within the school educational programme according to the needs and interests of pupils, legal representatives, local conditions, etc. Schools where the languages of national minorities are taught follow the framework curricula for schools with the Slovak language of instruction (they do not need to be kept as national minority schools in the network), but they can also use elective lessons for teaching the languages of national minorities. Schools use this in practice.

207. As for schools with national minority languages of instruction, they are usually schools with a lower number of students where, based on the demographic evolution, the number of students will continue decreasing annually, which sometimes leads to elimination from the school network. In the case of the Ruthenian language, the elementary school Ruská Poruba was eliminated from the school network as of 1 September 2010. Due to the unfavourable demography, it is a general trend also at schools with the Slovak language of instruction. Most elementary schools teaching one of the languages of national minorities see a lower interest of parents and children in such teaching. The reason for that is an insufficient application of the national minority language in everyday life and practice.

208. After schools and school establishments have passed to the establishment competence of municipalities, and with the transfer in funding into normative funding, many establishers started to face a lack of funds as well. They are mainly schools with lower numbers of students. In spite of a higher state subsidy per student, several establishers are hardly able to ensure the financial operation of their schools. If a school has fewer than 150 students, the state subsidy per student is increased by the 1.495 coefficient, and schools with a different language of instruction have a higher state subsidy per student of 8%.

209. When creating SEP, the State Institute for Vocational Education pays constant attention to the education of national minorities at secondary vocational schools. In the period under review, the Institute was focused on changes in vocational education and preparations at secondary vocational schools which are also related to national minorities, and on inclusion of the languages of national minorities into the framework curricula of state educational programmes of secondary vocational schools. In the period of 2011 - 2013 all state educational programmes, all groups of study fields and all levels of education were reviewed. In this relation, individual parts of SEP were modified with a focus on SEP characteristics, graduate's profile, framework curricula and educational areas – theoretical education and practical preparation. All changes also concern the educational and study fields in which the languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction. The FC for both the daily and external form of studies has been modified for national minorities. All FCs for educational and study fields in which the languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction have an obligatory subject "Language of national minorities and literature" in the educational area "Language and communication". Schools with the Hungarian language of instruction also cooperated in reviewing the SEP.

210. The State Institute of Vocational Education also provides assistance in establishing and operating private secondary vocational schools where a minority language is the language of instruction, in the creation of school educational programmes, and in the submission, performance and evaluation of new educational and study fields for experimental verification. In the period of 2012 - 2013 assistance was provided to the Private secondary vocational school in Očová which is focused on the education of mainly Roma youth, namely for the creation of SEP for the study fields of cook, waiter, waitress, inn keeper and the study field of the 2-year studies of kitchen assistant, which is being verified experimentally and is intended for pupils who have left primary school at lower than the 9<sup>th</sup> year. There is also cooperation in the area of research. 8 pilot secondary vocational schools, out of them one Private secondary vocational school with the Hungarian language of instruction from Dunajská Streda, are involved in the research task "Uniform assignment of a final examination" which is being experimentally verified in the field of 'hairdresser'. The outcomes for the school year 2012/2013 are currently being processed, and they will form the basis for the elaboration of a uniform methodology for UAE for all study fields.

211. Effective from 1 September 2013, the reviewed curricula of state educational programmes for all groups of study fields and all levels of education are set so that they provide equal conditions for all secondary vocational schools in Slovakia, i.e. also for schools where languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction.

212. In line with the right of children and pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups and with the School Act, textbooks are provided to pupils at schools where the languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction/are taught in appropriate numbers. The Ministry of Education annually earmarks approximately 12-16% of funds in the

budget to purchase and distribute textbooks to ensure textbooks for schools where the languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction, or where the languages of national minorities are taught. In 2013 the Ministry earmarked 30% of the total budgeted funds for the purchase of textbooks for national minorities to ensure the textbook policy.

213. Since launching the school reform in 2008, schools with the Hungarian language of instruction in Slovakia have been gradually provided new textbooks in sufficient numbers, corresponding to the contextual modification, as well as the schools with the Slovak language of instruction, for the educational areas and subjects according to the SEP, including the subject 'minority language and literature and religious education'. Specific textbooks and workbooks for the subject 'national minority language and literature' are provided for the Ukrainian and Ruthenian national minorities. The Ministry of Education is preparing the public procurement and publication of specific textbooks and workbooks for the subject 'national minority language and literature' for the Roma national minority, and for the creation and publication of the 'Roma history' textbook.

214. A part of textbooks for schools with the Hungarian language of instruction is made by experts – persons belonging to the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia, and a part of textbooks was also written in cooperation with experts from the Hungarian Republic. Experts, university teachers and teachers from practice who are persons belonging to the particular minorities participate in the creation of textbooks for the Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities.

215. According to the current legislation, schools where the languages of national minorities are the languages of instruction may also use textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education along with the approved textbooks in their educational process, as well as other educational texts which are in line with the objectives and principles of the School Act.

Table 21

Summary of schools with national minority language as language of education and instruction in the school year 2012/2013

Language of education and of instruction	Kindergartens Total in Slovakia 2866	Elementary schools Total in Slovakia 2178	Secondary schools Total in Slovakia 778	Universities Total in Slovakia 40	In the form of courses
Bulgarian	1*	1*	1*	Department + courses	
Czech	-	-	-	-	-
Croatian	-	-	-		yes
Hungarian	263	234	29	1+ departments	-
Slovak-Hungarian	81	33	48		
Moravian	-	-	-	-	-
German	1	2	1	-	yes
Slovak-German		2	6 BG		
Polish	-	x	x	1 department BB	yes
Roma	1x	2x	5x	4 institutions	-
Ruthenian	1	1	5x	PU Prešov	-
Slovak -Ruthenian	1	1	-		
Russian	-	-	-	-	

			2 BG		
Serbian	-	-	-	-	-
Ukrainian	12	5	1	FF PU	not stated
Slovak-Ukrainian	3	1	0		
Jewish	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Report on the Status and Rights of persons belonging to national minorities for 2012

Notes:

x = where the language is taught

BG – bilingual secondary grammar school

\*established by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bulgaria

216. Annex 7 contains a summary of the number of schools and pupils of daily studies by the language of instruction in 2009-2012.

217. The instruction of the Ukrainian language as the mother tongue is performed at schools and classes where a minority language is taught, while several subjects are taught in Slovak. In relation to the Ukrainian language, instruction is carried out at schools or classes in combined education, i.e. a part of subjects is taught in the state language and other subjects in the minority language. The average number of pupils in classes at elementary schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction is 11 pupils. In the case of schools with the Slovak language of instruction it is 21 pupils. In the school year 2012/2013, 290 pupils were educated at 6 elementary schools (28 classes) with instruction of the Ukrainian language, and 92 pupils were educated at the secondary grammar school of Tarasa Ševčenko in Prešov (5 classes) with the instruction of the Ukrainian language. 186 children were included in 8 kindergartens with the Ukrainian language in the above-mentioned period.

218. Kindergartens with the Ukrainian education language: Jarabina, Údol, Vyšný Mirošov, Humenné, Habura, Prešov, Medzilaborce – Duchnovičova street and Medzilaborce –gen. Slobodu street. Elementary schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction: Chmeľová, Humenné, Údol, Jarabina, Habura and the united school in Prešov, Sládkoviča 4 street, established by the self-governing region of Prešov. In two schools education is carried out in both the Slovak and Ukrainian languages: Jarabina (elementary school) and Medzilaborce (kindergarten).

219. It is positive that Ukrainian language is taught at some schools with the Slovak language of instruction as a part of school educational programmes: in 2012/2013, 56 pupils learnt the Ukrainian language at the elementary school and kindergarten Nižná Polianka in 14 classes; at the elementary school and kindergarten Čirč 10 pupils were taught in two classes of the 1<sup>st</sup> level, at the elementary school Jarabina 79 pupils were taught in 20 classes, and at the elementary school Snina 14 pupils learnt the Ukrainian language.

220. Conditions are prepared for elementary schools and secondary schools to introduce the subject "Roma language and literature" in the school educational programme within available hours, according to the interest of pupils and their parents. When planning the education of the Roma language and literature, schools have documents available – performance and contextual standards of Roma language and literature. The standards are based on the Framework Educational Programme of the Roma Language, which was made in cooperation with the European Roma and Travellers Forum in 2008 and was elaborated in the same nature as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Its main objective is to strengthen the Roma language as the mother tongue of the Roma in modern society. The

basis for teaching the Roma language and literature is the standardized form of the Roma language, in Slovakia the Northern-Central dialect, which the prevailing part of the Roma in Slovakia uses to communicate.

221. Pupils of secondary schools who have met the conditions can take a school leaving examination in the Roma language and literature as an elective subject for the school leaving examination. When preparing the school leaving examination in the Roma language and literature, schools have target requirements for the knowledge and skills of students taking the school leaving examination in the Roma language and literature available on the web page of the National Institute for Education – level B1, B2.

222. The use of the Roma language in communication with children and pupils, with a gradual overcoming of the language and cultural barrier in the educational process of kindergartens and the first level of elementary schools, presupposes the careful preparation of pedagogic staff, mainly of teachers – specialists for work with children and pupils from socially a disadvantaged environment and teachers' assistants, including speaking basic Roma language. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport has educational texts in the Roma and the Slovak languages for pupils of the primary educational level. The aim is to increase the preconditions of success in the education of the pupils, and also to support intercultural competencies of the Roma and non-Roma pupils. Mutual understanding is built among pupils from different cultural environments in a playful form. Fairy tales contribute to the development of good relationships based on mutual help and cooperation of pupils, to the extension of their vocabulary by new notions from the Slovak language and the Roma language, and to the development of the ability to read with understanding. The bilingual nature of the fairy tales enables pupils to compare the text in the Slovak language with the text in the Roma language and vice versa.

223. In relation to the performance of tasks resulting from involvement in the Decade of Roma Inclusion for 2011 – 2015, educational texts were elaborated in the Roma and Slovak languages. The bilingual texts for pupils of the primary level are focused on the development of vocabulary, and of the reading and communication literacy of the pupils. The educational texts contain simple tasks which motivate pupils to search for connections between pictures and words, developing and strengthening not only their vocabulary but also their independence, creativity, thinking and imagination. The educational texts are based on the Textbook of the Roma language of 2007. Schools are recommended to use the educational texts as a teaching tool to support and increase the efficiency of the process of intercultural education at schools.

224. In the network of Slovak schools, there is one school where the Roma language is taught. The private secondary grammar school in Kremnica was included in the network of schools and school establishments in 2008.

225. In order to ensure the teaching of the Roma mother tongue at elementary and secondary schools, in 2004 "Temporary affirmative action with the aim to prepare a sufficient number of teachers teaching in the Roma language" was approved. The first 25 participants were accredited in March 2005.

226. In line with the School Act No 131/2002 Coll. on Universities and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, as amended, studies and research of the Roma language is supported at:

- Institute of Romologic Studies – University of Constantine the Philosopher, Nitra;
- Institute of Roma European Studies – University of Healthcare and Social Work, St. Elisabeth Bratislava;
- Institute of Roma Studies, Prešov University.

227. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic cooperated with the Government Office of the Slovak republic in preparation of the programme "Local and regional initiatives to decrease national disparities and support social inclusion" within the EEA financial mechanism. The basis of the programme is the Memorandum of the Council of Europe "Education of and for the Roma in Europe". The main objective of the programme is to create conditions, mainly staff and expert resources, for high-quality intercultural educational programmes with the help of the Roma language in a wider extent, as well as to support elementary and secondary schools which wish to develop inclusive education through intercultural education. All activities of the programme will be focused on strengthening social inclusion through intercultural education, Roma language and culture, and the cooperation of schools and families:

- Inclusion in education, joint education of the Roma and non-Roma pupils through strengthening intercultural education at schools, mainly through teaching the Roma language and literature together with the Roma culture and history.
- Use of the Roma language as the auxiliary language in education, as well as the application of such pedagogic approaches which will create a favourable school atmosphere and prevent any discrimination of Roma pupils at schools.
- Education of pedagogic staff.
- Preparation of teaching materials.

228. Pedagogic documentation is kept bilingually, i.e. in the state language and in the language of a relevant national minority, at schools and school establishments where education is carried out in a minority language. At schools where education is performed in other than the Slovak language of instruction, documents on the won education are kept bilingually, i.e. in the state language and in the language of a relevant national minority.

229. The law also defines the form of using geographical names in textbooks as well as educational texts and workbooks published in the languages of national minorities - the geographical names which are conventional and used in a minority language are stated bilingually, first in the language of the relevant national minority and then in the brackets or after a slash in the state language, in the form which was used in the textbooks approved in the period of 2002 - 2006. Cartographic works are stated in the state language, and at the end of the textbook a summary of geographic names is included in the form of a dictionary in the language of the national minority and in the state language.

### *Article 15*

*The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.*

230. All legal regulations regulating the voting rights fully respect the provision of Article 30 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic that citizens have access to elected and other public functions under equal conditions, while the voting right is general, equal and direct, and is performed by direct vote. The right to participate in the administration of public issues directly or through free choice is granted, in addition to the citizens of the Slovak Republic, also to foreigners with their permanent residence in its territory, namely in elections for municipality self-administration bodies and in elections to bodies of self-governing regions. In the period under review, there were no changes in the election legislation from the point of view of delimiting the entities to which the active and passive voting right is conferred.

231. Along with the amendment of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, in 2011 there were also changes in all legal regulations regulating elections in the territory of the Slovak Republic. Since 1 July 2011 the municipalities which meet the conditions in accordance with the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities are obliged to send notification about where and when the elections will be held, with information about the form of voting in both the state language and in the minority language.

232. In 2009 elections for the European Parliament were held. The Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja obtained 11.33% of the valid votes, representing two seats. In the elections for bodies of self-governing regions held in 2009, 35 Councillors were elected for the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja, two Councillors for MOST–HÍD and one MP for the Roma coalition party – SRK. Another three seats were obtained by representatives of the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja and MOST–HÍD in coalitions with different political groups. In two self-governing regions candidates for the chairman were elected who were from a coalition of which the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja is a part and in one self-governing region a candidate for the chairman was elected from a coalition the part of which is MOST–HÍD.

233. In 2010 elections were held for the National Council of the Slovak Republic in which the Roma coalition party– SRK obtained 0.27% of the valid votes (it did not win any seat), the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja obtained 4.33% of the valid votes (it did not win any seat) and MOST – HÍD obtained 8.12% of the valid votes, representing 14 seats. In the elections for municipality self-administration bodies held in 2010, 1 194 Councillors were elected from the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja, 908 Councillors from MOST-HÍD, 52 Councillors from the Roma Initiative in Slovakia and 50 Councillors from the Roma coalition party - SRK. Other seats were obtained by the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja, MOST-HÍD and Roma initiative in Slovakia within different



coalitions. 129 mayors of municipalities were elected from the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja, 95 mayors from MOST–HÍD, 5 mayors from the Roma coalition party – SRK and 2 mayors from the Roma Initiative in Slovakia. Other mayor positions were won by the Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja, MOST–HÍD, Roma Initiative in Slovakia and Roma coalition party – SRK within different coalitions. 28 mayors declaring their affiliation to the Roma national minority were elected in total.

234. In 2012 elections for the National Council of the Slovak Republic were held on the basis of the Constitutional Act on shortening the electoral term of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. In these elections the MOST-HÍD party obtained 6.89% of the valid votes, representing 13 seats, Hungarian coalition party – Magyar Koalíció Pártja obtained 4.28% of the valid votes (it did not win any seat) and the Roma Union Party in Slovakia obtained 0.11% of the valid votes (it did not win any seat). Representatives of the political party MOST-HÍD have the positions in the Parliament in the function of the Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities, Chairman of the Foreign Committee, Chairman of the Committee for Reviewing Decisions of the National Security Authority, the Vice- Chairman of the Committee for Public Administration and Regional Development, and Vice- Chairman of the Committee for Healthcare.

235. Basic bases of government policies supporting the involvement of the Roma in civil society are worded in the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 2015 for 2011 – 2015. Cooperation with civil society, including cooperation with Roma NGOs, forms a solid part of the Strategy. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities cooperates with 265 NGOs to different extents, inter alia in the creation of programme documents and in the performance of individual tasks of advisory bodies of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities. The Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 defines the necessary stimuli and conditions for strengthening the capacities of Roma NGOs in the form of increasing investments to support the efficient mechanisms of internal activities of the Roma NGOs, strengthening administrative capacities, financial planning and NGO sustainability. Attention is also paid to supporting human resources mainly through education and increasing the expertise of NGO members, supporting NGO networks and building partnerships at the regional and local level. No special funds are earmarked from the state budget for these purposes now, NGOs may ask for subsidies only within subsidy systems of individual Ministries and at the regional or local level.

236. As a part of using assistance from European funds, the civil association "Council of NGOs of Roma communities" obtained a non-returnable financial contribution to perform the project 'Assistant for marginalized Roma communities' in the amount of EUR 222,337 within the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion, framework activity "Supporting the development of human resources and increasing the quality of services provided by non-profit organizations". The project was carried out in the period of 2010 - 2011. Monitoring of the strategic governmental documents related to the Roma is performed by the coalition of non-profit NGOs coordinated by the NGO Roma Institute. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities has one work position for the development of cooperation with NGOs. Higher territorial units and municipality self-governing bodies cooperate with the NGOs as well. Within its communication and cooperation policy, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities has supported the inclusion of the Roma into the political system, mainly at the level of local governments.

237. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities carefully supervises the active involvement of the Roma in public life. In the elections for bodies of local governments, it obtained information from the candidates declaring their affiliation to the Roma national minority about the programme which they will foster if they obtain a seat to improve the position of marginalized Roma communities. It provides assistance to the candidates successful in elections in the form of consultations, recommendations and advice. Education is performed by other state administration authorities as well. Education of mayors of the Roma origin in the form of special educational programmes is also provided by certain universities. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities cooperates with the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia. In the elections held in 2010, 28 mayors were elected who declared their affiliation to the Roma national minority. With respect to the ban on processing personal data based on ethnicity in view of national legislation, it is only possible to estimate the number of deputies in self-administration bodies of municipalities after the elections held in 2010 who declared their affiliation to the Roma national minority. According to the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, their number is lower than 100. The journal "Theoretical and practical issues of Roma participation at the local level" of 2013 contains a set of recommendations related to the participation of the Roma in public life.

238. The institutional consultation mechanism in the issue of the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in dealing with issues which concern them is the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. The Committee was established in 2011 through a transformation from the Government Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups within wider institutional changes in advisory bodies of the Government in issues of human rights. The Committee is a permanent expert body of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality for issues related to national minorities and ethnic groups and their members, and for the area of implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages according to Article 7 (4) of the Charter and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities according to Article 15 of the Convention. The Committee performs the function of a consultancy body for the issue of participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in dealing with issues related to national minorities and ethnic groups according to Article 34 (2) (c) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. From the organizational point of view, the activity of the Committee is ensured by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities, as a part of organizational structure of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

239. Principles of the structure and decision-making processes of the Committee are set so that the efficient participation of persons belonging to national minorities is achieved in dealing with issues which concern them. All 13 national minorities are represented in the Committee, while the Hungarian national minority has 5 representatives, the Roma national minority 4 representatives, the Czech, Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities have 2 representatives each, and the German, Polish, Moravian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Jewish and Serbian national minorities have 1 representative each. The key for such structure was the current data from the census. The representatives of minorities have been appointed on the basis of nominations of registered minority organizations which demonstrably deal with the issues of minority culture and identity, and their representation corresponds to their proportion in the population of the state. These organizations presented themselves within an open

registration process and nominated their voters and candidates. At individual voting assemblies organized separately for all national minorities, the voters elected representatives of the minorities together with their substitutes. The representatives and the substitutes are elected for a 3-year term, while the next voting assemblies are to be held in 2014. If a representative of a national minority cannot participate in a session of the Committee, he/she specifies a substitute who is usually responsible for the same area as the member (this applies to minorities with majority representation). The representatives of national minorities have their travel, food and accommodation expenditures reimbursed which are connected with participation in the Committee sessions.

240. Only the representatives of national minorities and the Chairman of the Committee (Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities or a person authorized to perform tasks of the Plenipotentiary) have voting rights in the Committee; representatives of central state administration authorities represented in the Committee do not have voting rights. Based on the repeated proposals of representatives of several national minorities, in November 2013 the Committee approved a change in its statute. Following this change each national minority and ethnic group has only one vote in the voting, regardless of the number of representatives, leading to an equality of votes and a balance in the decision-making processes of the Committee among all the minorities represented in the Committee. For the purpose of voting representatives of particular national minority identify a representative who is entitled to vote. This decision is communicated in written to the Chairman of the Committee. If no representative is identified not later than 48 hours prior to a session of the Committee, the Chairman of the Committee will herself/himself determine the representative with the voting right. Within its competence the Committee may adopt principal opinions binding for the Council. Principal opinions are adopted by at least 3/5 majority of all members of the Committee.

241. The Committee discusses legislative and non-legislative measures of the Government or of other state authorities, local government bodies and other entities which concern the rights of persons belonging to national minorities – it gives opinions, proposals and statements to them. It cooperates in the submission of periodical reports to international conventions which are related to the protection of national minorities. The Committee annually submits to the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality three assessment reports: on the use of languages of national minorities, on the support of culture, and on the national minority education. The first such reports were approved by the Council at its session in November 2013.

242. To date the Council has approved over thirty resolutions and one principal opinion. In the principal opinion in 2011 it recommended to the Government to approve a new, extended and adjusted list of designations of municipalities in the languages of national minorities. The Government accepted this recommendation.

***Article 16***

*The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention.*

243. In the period under review no legal regulations or measures were adopted which would change or influence the proportion of population in the areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities. Act No. 221/1996 Coll. on Territorial and Administrative Division of the Slovak Republic, as amended, continued to be valid. Municipalities and higher territorial units are self-governing territorial units of the Slovak Republic. 8 regions and 79 districts, which are territorial districts for exercising competencies of state authorities, are administrative units of the Slovak Republic.

**Article 17**

1. *The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.*
2. *The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international levels.*

**Article 18**

1. *The Parties shall endeavour to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.*
2. *Where relevant, the Parties shall take measures to encourage transfrontier co-operation.*

244. No measures were adopted in the period under review which would interfere or limit the possibilities to establish and maintain cross-border contacts and to participate in the activities of NGOs.

245. On 29 December 2011 the Treaty between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine became effective on the amendment of the Treaty between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on minor frontier traffic. The substance of the Treaty is to extend the option of one uninterrupted stay in the regime of minor frontier traffic in the frontier area of the other contracting party from the original 30 days to 90 days within 180 days. At the same time, the period for issuing permission for minor frontier traffic was shortened from the original 60 days to 30 days, and also the extension of this period was shortened from the original 90 days to 60 days. The Treaty also regulates new conditions related to the option of the exemption from a fee for the processing of an application for permission of minor frontier traffic of certain categories of persons.

246. Cross-border cooperation is also supported through intergovernmental committees for cross-border cooperation established on the basis of bilateral agreements on cross-border cooperation. The Slovak Republic has such agreements or a framework contract on cross-border cooperation concluded with all neighbouring countries. The main objective of the activity of intergovernmental committees for cross-border cooperation is to support activities focused on the creation of conditions for the development of cooperation among the population, territorial self-administrations and institutions involved, including cooperation activities in which persons belonging to national minorities are involved. The committees also create a platform for all entities involved in cross-border cooperation to exchange experience and examples of good practice, to enable to identify obstacles inhibiting the development of

cross-border cooperation and to contribute to their elimination in the form of addressing particular recommendations to the relevant authorities.

247. Cross-border police cooperation is carried out on the basis of bilateral contracts with neighbouring countries, which also includes agreements on mutual contact workplaces, e.g. an agreement was concluded in August 2011 with the Czech Republic, between the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, on establishing a joint Slovak-Czech contact workplace Holíč – Hodonín. In 2009 the Implementation Agreement became effective between the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Finance of the Polish Republic, Commander in Chief of the Border Patrol of the Polish Republic, Commander in Chief of the Police of the Polish Republic on establishment and principles of centres of police and customs cooperation.

248. Cross-border cooperation is also performed at the level of Registries. Since 2002 the Association of Registrars of the Slovak Republic has been a member of the European Association of Registrars (EVS). Staff of registries annually meets at congresses always held in a different EVS member state. They inform each other about the legislation of individual member states related to registry, family and state-civil law and respecting human rights, and they also address the issue of national minorities living in the territory of EVS member states.

249. At the level of ombudsman institutions, one of the forms of cross-border cooperation is the cooperation of ombudsmen of the Visegrad region established in 2004, initiated by the public defender of rights in the Slovak Republic. Along with developing narrow cooperation in the form of exchange meetings of staff, conferences, etc. with countries of the Visegrad region, Summits of V4 ombudsmen are organized. In the period of 7 – 10 September 2009 a Summit of V4 ombudsmen was held in Białowież, Poland. The main topics of discussion were ensuring the right to legal assistance and information, economic obstacles in access to justice and forms of elimination of these barriers, as well as relationships between the ombudsman and parliament and the financial independence of ombudsmen. In the period of 9 – 11 May 2011, at the Summit of V4 ombudsmen held in Budapest, the ombudsmen's discussions were focused on international law, mainly provisions of the EU Charter, OPCAT and NHRI and on the current, special social problems to which people turn to them. Another meeting of V4 defenders of rights was held in the period of 21 – 23 May 2012 in Brno. It was focused on comparing the extent of competencies of the public defenders of rights in individual V4 countries towards judicial power. The last meeting of V4 ombudsmen was held in Slovakia in Častá – Papiernička in the period of 10 -12 April 2013. Ombudsmen discussed the topic "Competence of public defenders of rights in relation to fostering good administration". In September 2012 a bilateral discussion was held about the application of rights of national minorities with the public defender of rights of the Polish Republic, Irena Lipowicz, and on the next day they together participated in the first discussion with the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights and National Minorities.

250. Twelve joint Slovak-Hungarian commissions continue their activities. The commissions were established according to the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Hungary signed on 19 March 1995 in Paris. The summary of joint Slovak-Hungarian committees follows:

- for minority issues;
- for European and Euro-Atlantic integration;

- for education, science, sport and youth;
- for culture and press;
- for cross-border cooperation;
- for cooperation in the areas of competence of Ministries of Interior;
- for military and other security-political issues;
- for nature and environment protection;
- for transport, communications and infrastructure;
- for economic cooperation;
- for agriculture, veterinary and phytosanitary care;
- for healthcare, medical insurance and social care.

251. Since 1995 the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission for national minorities, education and culture has been having regular sessions. The Commission is an advisory body of governments of both states, and deals with the comprehensive issue of the Slovak minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Slovakia with the aim to improve the conditions of development of their identity. The Commission also monitors overall bilateral relations in the area of education, science and culture. The parties inform each other about measures and policies in relation to the protection of national minorities, about the cooperation of relevant ministries of both countries in the area of education and culture, as well as about the performance of tasks which they agreed upon during the previous Commission session. New recommendations for the next period are formulated during the session which form a part of the information submitted to the relevant government. Along with representatives of state and self-administration, persons belonging to the relevant national minority are also represented in the Commission. The 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission was held in November 2013 in Prešov in Eastern Slovakia.