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THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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Third Periodic Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia

Introduction

The Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the Framework Convention), which entered into force on 1 February 1998, is one of the most comprehensive treaties designed to protect the rights of members of national minorities. Parties to this Convention undertake to promote the full and effective equality of persons belonging to minorities in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, together with the conditions that will allow them to express, preserve and develop their culture and identity.

The Republic of Slovenia ratified the Framework Convention on 25 February 1998. The Convention contains no definition of the concept of national minority. Therefore, each State Party is left room to decide which ethnic groups are to be given the status of national minorities as defined by the Convention within their respective territories. Upon ratifying the Framework Convention, the Republic of Slovenia, in compliance with the Constitution and its national legislation, declared in writing that the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia are regarded as national minorities. Insofar as this is not in contravention with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and other legislative acts (in conflict with the legal order), the norms in this Convention also apply to the members of the Roma community living in the Republic of Slovenia.

The implementation of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Slovenia, aside from the competency areas of other bodies, falls under the overall responsibility of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities,¹ in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

¹ The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities (Decision on the Organization and the Field of Work of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities, Ur. l. RS [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia] No. 75/2002) is an independent professional service within the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, which monitors the implementation of the constitutional and statutory provisions relating to the special rights of members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, and also monitors and provides for protection of special rights of the Roma community living in the Republic of Slovenia, unless this falls within the competence of other national or local authorities.

The basic provisions on the protection of national communities are set out in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, while more detailed provisions are included in the legislation regulating various areas that in any way relates to the situation of the national communities and the Roma community. The relevant ministries are responsible for the implementation of the provisions. With such a division of responsibilities, the main task of the Government Office for National Minorities is the overall monitoring of the implementation of legal and constitutional provisions on the protection of national communities and of their practical effects, drawing attention to deficiencies, drafting proposals and initiatives for the Government and other national authorities, and preparing analyses and reports on wider issues of the protection of national communities, together with the relevant ministries.

In the field of minority issues, the Office for National Minorities also cooperates with international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, civilian part of the NATO Pact). There are some responsibilities that are exclusively in the domain of the Office for National Minorities. These mainly include areas that are not within the competence of individual ministries (financing of umbrella organizations of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, co-financing of bilingualism and other constitutional rights in those municipalities where the two national communities live autochthonously, co-financing of the joint Italian cultural organizations residing in Croatia, co-financing of Italian and Hungarian radio and TV programmes; there are also some responsibilities regarding the traditionally/historically settled Roma community that lives in Slovenia, such as financing of the Roma umbrella organization, indirect co-financing of Roma associations all over the country and, finally, co-financing activities of providing information to Roma, including the media).

I. Practical measures taken at the national level for following up the results of the second monitoring cycle on the implementation of commitments under the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia.

a. The Government Office for National Minorities maintains regular contact with the national communities (e.g. on the occasion of the signing of annual contracts on the co-financing of constitutional and other rights of the national communities, it visits municipalities and meets with representatives of local communities [mayors] and chairpersons of the municipal self-governing national communities). On such occasions, mayors and chairpersons present the needs of the national communities to be addressed. The Government Office for National Minorities maintains regular contact with the Roma community, participates in the events to which it receives an invitation from the Roma community, and is always open to talks and dialogue with representatives and members of the Roma community. This enables a fruitful exchange of opinions and, at the same time, provides an opportunity for the Roma community to express its opinion, needs, views or suggestions. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia maintains regular contact with representatives of other ethnic groups in the Republic of Slovenia.²

² The legal basis (Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Articles 8 and 65 of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act, the National Programme for Culture) in the field of culture is wider than that in other fields. Consequently, the Sector for Minority Cultural Rights and the Development of Cultural Diversity (hereinafter referred to as the Sector), which was set up in 2004 within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, deals not only with minority ethnic groups recognised under the Constitution but also with other various ethnic groups operating in the Republic of Slovenia and co-shaping conditions for cultural diversity as a wealth of cultural life. The basic principle of the Sector's activity is to create conditions for cultural diversity on an ethnic basis.

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Framework Convention officially applies to national communities and the Roma community; there is, however, a concern also for cultural diversity in the broader sense, particularly based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe. Specific measures are also being implemented with regard to the German-speaking ethnic group.

The Sector also attracted the representative bodies of the communities recognised under the Constitution, bearing in mind that the concern of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture is focused **not only on the autochthonous members but on all members of the Roma community**. The Sector is responsible for the implementation of three types of programmes on the basis of seven calls for applications and requests for proposals, and for all the strategic, legal, inter-ministerial, international and other matters relating to ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. The Sector assisted in establishing a professional institute of the Italian national community; furthermore, a considerably larger number of applications filed by other ethnic groups was addressed due to a 100% increase in funds in 2005.

The Sector received support from the Slovenian Ministry of Culture for certain initiatives which were also implemented:

- An increase in funds;
 - A conceptual solution for a broader strategy in the area of minority protection in the Republic of Slovenia (submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia in April 2007);
 - Setting up an internal working group for human rights which involves representatives of all organizational units of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture;
 - An integrated approach to addressing the issues relating to disability in all organizational units of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture;
 - Particular care for vulnerable groups (priority consideration of projects for children, refugees, etc.);
 - Integration of cultural projects related to minorities into the public cultural infrastructure (Islamic community project in the City Museum of Ljubljana, numerous events in the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum and the Cankarjev Dom Cultural and Congress Centre), which indicates development of the so-called integration programme;
 - Pre-financing the European programme from the next invitation to tender onwards; and
- Other matters.

The Sector provides the following services: legal advice and raising awareness about cultural rights, mediation for preventive settlement of conflicts or misunderstandings, counselling on the drafting of applications for financial resources and reports on the implementation of financed projects, implementation of censuses and keeping records (accessible through COBISS) issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia as evidence of the growing multicultural heritage on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, services for artists and professionals from minority communities, etc. Among normative instruments, the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act should be mentioned, which stipulates in Article 8 that concern for cultural diversity is in the public interest. Specific objectives and measures, as well as the indicators for implementing the measures, are defined in the National Programme for Culture. Another important step forward is the Radiotelevizija Slovenia Act, which in Articles 3-5 focuses on the minority communities recognised under the Constitution, persons with disabilities, and children; supports the spread of knowledge of other cultures that are represented in the Republic of Slovenia and their representatives; and prohibits religious, sexual, racial, national and other forms of intolerance. The executive regulations also take into consideration particularities which are important to improve regulatory conditions for enhancing cultural diversity. The Ministry's work is based on direct cultural needs identified in annual reports on the implementation of projects financed and on the continuous upgrading of its measures, taking into account existing possibilities.

Since 2005, legal counselling has been intensified and is made available during office hours and by phone. The Sector endeavours to raise the level of mutual information exchange between itself and the communities recognised under the Constitution, in particular when harmonising the text of laws and executive regulations, namely those relating to their rights and obligations.

Within the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, an internal working group for human rights was formed in 2005, which has thus far organized several meetings and addressed the following topics: the implementation of international covenants on human rights,

Hereinafter, report is made according to individual articles of the Framework Convention on specific measures aimed at various minority – i.e. ethnic – groups in the Republic of Slovenia. In light of the above, additional consultations on the implementation and monitoring of the commitments undertaken are not necessary.

b. Second report submitted by the Republic of Slovenia on the implementation of the Framework Convention, Second Opinion of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Republic of Slovenia, Comments and Opinion of the Government of Slovenia on the Main Statements and Recommendations of the Second Opinion of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee, as well as Resolution ResCMN(2006)6 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Slovenia are available on the website of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

including a unified data collection method to enable reporting on the implementation of covenants to international bodies; the new Radiotelevizija Act in relation to human rights; the social integration of vulnerable groups into cultural life and life in general; the protection of the diverse cultural heritage, etc. At the last meeting of the aforementioned project group, it was proposed that in the future, from the point of view of protection of human rights, the following issues be highlighted: the use of mother tongues, media reporting, the protection of diverse cultural heritage and cultural education. Said project group provides consultations on cultural issues relating to the respect of human rights for all heads of internal organizational units within the Ministry.

In the procedures of a call for applications and requests for proposals (as also reported below) – before drafting a final proposal at the expert commission and pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 2, of the Self-Governing National Communities Act stipulating that in matters related to the status of members of national communities, state authorities must acquire the prior opinion of the self-governing national communities – the opinion of the Coastal Italian Self-governing Community should be obtained. Pursuant to the aforementioned Article 15, the opinion of the Pomurje Hungarian national community should be obtained as well. The same applies with regard to the Roma community – pursuant to Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act stipulating that national authorities, bearers of public authority and self-governing local community authorities must obtain the prior opinion of the Roma Community Council for the purposes of adopting and issuing regulations and other general legal acts relating to the status of the Roma community, the opinion of the Roma Community Council must be obtained prior to drafting a final proposal by the expert commission.

Statutory and other legal bases: The Sector's scope of work requires regulatory compliance. For the aforementioned specific groups, UN covenants apply, namely: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Ur. l. RS, International Treaties, No. 7/1993), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Ur. l. RS, International Treaties No. 7/1993), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ur. l. SFRJ (Official Gazette of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), International Treaties and Other Agreements, No. 6/1967) and Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999. In addition to said documents, there are two international Council of Europe documents that also apply to the Italian, Hungarian and Roma communities: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Ratifying Act, Ur. l. RS – International Treaties, No. 4/1998) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Ratifying Act, Ur. l. RS – International Treaties, No. 17/2000); **the two also apply to various other minority ethnic groups**. The international framework for the protection of children is provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1989) and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (Ratifying Act, Ur. l. RS, No. 86/1999).

The international legal basis for persons with disabilities is represented by the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN General Assembly, 1993) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention (UN General Assembly, 2006).

The Convention was ratified by the Act Ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Ur. l. RS, No. 37/2008). The Republic of Slovenia is obliged to report on the implementation of all the stated international documents to international bodies.

The constitutional provisions applicable to specific groups are as follows: Article 64 (Italian and Hungarian national communities), Article 65 (Roma community), Article 61 (various other minority communities) and Article 52 (persons with disabilities).

The acts and executive regulations are as follows: Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 96/2002, ..., 56/2008), Media Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 35/2001, ..., 36/2008), Libraries Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 87/2001, ..., 96/2002), Self-Governing National Communities Act (Ur. l. RS No. 65/1994), Disabled Persons' Organizations Act (Ur. l. RS No. 108/2002), The Use of Slovenian Sign Language Act (Ur. l. RS No. 96/2002), Roma Community Act (Ur. l. RS No. 33/2007), Rules on the Implementation of a Public Call and Public Tender (Ur. l. RS No. 93/2005), Rules on the Manner of Funding Public Institutions, Public Funds and Public Agencies in the Field of Culture (Ur. l. RS Nos. 117/2002, 97/2003), Decree on the Methodology Determining the Basis for the Calculation of Funds for Carrying Out Public Services in the Field of Culture (Ur. l. RS No. 100/2003), Decree on the Implementation of Procedures for the Use of European Cohesion Policy Funds in the Republic of Slovenia in the Programming Period 2007–2013 (Ur. l. RS No. 41/2007), Rules on the Procedures for Implementing the Budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Ur. l. RS Nos. 50/2007, 61/2008), Rules on Expert Commissions (Ur. l. RS Nos. 109/2002, 104/2005), and Rules on Conditions for Providing Library Services as a Public Service (Ur. l. RS Nos. 73/2003, 70/2008). The legal basis for the current focus of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture on the sensory-impaired is provided by Article 65 of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act and Article 4 of the Media Act.

c. In cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government Office for National Minorities organized a seminar on the implementation of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Slovenia, which took place on 21 October 2008 in Ljubljana.

The seminar addressed the following topics: legal, institutional and other measures aimed at encouraging and strengthening the identity of the members of national minorities (language, culture, education, media), progress made in improving the status of the members of the Roma community, strengthening intercultural dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity in Slovenian society, and participation in public matters. The seminar was attended by representatives of the ministries and government offices whose field of work includes the protection of minorities, representatives of the RTV Slovenia public institution, the Institute for Ethnic Studies, the Peace Institute, representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, and a representative of the Roma community. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, the Human Rights Ombudsman and representatives of other ethnic groups were also invited to participate. In total, the seminar was attended by nearly 50 persons. It provided an opportunity to exchange opinions on the manner of exercising the rights of minorities in the Republic of Slovenia and on shortcomings, outstanding issues and dilemmas that need to be addressed by relevant authorities.

d. On the basis of Resolution ResCMN(2006)6 on the implementation of the Framework Convention, the Slovenian Ministry of Culture further requested all communities recognized under the Constitution to submit their opinions on the implementation of the Framework Convention. Recently, the Ministry has prepared a number of initiatives for systemic and other improvements and submitted them to the competent authorities.

II.a. Measures taken to improve implementation of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities

Wider consultations with representatives of the various ethnic groups and civil society regarding the personal scope of application given to the Framework Convention in the Republic of Slovenia

With a view to establishing the situation and status of members of the former Yugoslav nations in the Republic of Slovenia, the Government Office for National Minorities in 2001 requested the Institute for Ethnic Studies to conduct a study entitled "*The Situation and Status of Members of the Former Yugoslav Nations in the Republic of Slovenia*". The study was published on the website of the Office:

http://www.uvn.gov.si/fileadmin/uvn.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf_datoteke/Raziskava_Polozaj_in_status_pripadnikov_narodov_nekdanje_Jugoslavije_v_RS.pdf

The authors of the study hold different positions on the treatment of the former Yugoslav nations in the Republic of Slovenia and the regulation of their situation and status. Their recommendations evolved in three directions:

- The issue should be further addressed in accordance with Articles 61 and 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia;
- The Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of the Former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia should be amended and an appropriate resolution adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia; or
- The Constitution should be amended and, consequently, a relevant law adopted that would equalise the status of members of the former Yugoslav nations, recognising them as

modern immigrants with the same status of traditional national minorities that remained and/or have been formed in Slovenia as a result of changes in borders and the formation of new states.

Inter-disciplinary research conducted by the Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana), the Institute for Ethnic Studies, and the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts produced a study entitled *Perceptions of Slovenian Integration Policy*, which is published on the website of the Institute: <http://www.inv.si/>. One of the questions that the authors of the study tried to answer was: “Do inhabitants of the villages Bojanci, Marindol, Milici and Paunovici in the Bela Krajina region even want the status of an (autochthonous) national minority?” They discovered that at present, the majority is opposed to a special minority status.

To acquire accurate information on the national/ethnic vitality of members of the Serbian, Croatian and German national communities in the area of their traditional settlement, in 2008 the Government Office for National Minorities tasked the Institute for Ethnic Studies with elaborating a study entitled *National/ethnic vitality of members of the Serbian, Croatian and German ethnic groups in the area of their traditional settlement – Analysis of immigration to Slovenia from EU Member States* (Ugotavljanje narodne/etnične vitalnosti pripadnikov srbske, hrvaške in nemške narodne skupnosti na njihovem zgodovinskem poselitvenem ozemlju. Analiza imigracijskih procesov v Slovenijo iz držav EU).

The study is aimed at:

- Examining the views of inhabitants of the villages of Bojanci, Marindol, Milici, and Paunovici on the methods of preserving the ethnic and cultural heritage of the Uskok territories; identifying objective indicators of ethnic vitality of the population on this territory with a view to abolishing protective “discrimination” between different minority groups in Slovenia;
- Examining the views of villagers along the Slovenian-Croatian border, which is also included in the Report of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- Examining the views of inhabitants of traditional German settlements (Baška Grapa, Apaška Kotlina, Kranjska Gora and its surrounding area, etc.).

The Republic of Slovenia welcomes dialogue with representatives of other ethnic groups aimed at creating conditions for cultural diversity as an expression of cultural wealth. On 6 June 2006, Dr Vasko Simoniti, former Minister of Culture, received the Coordination Committee of the “new minorities”; in April 2007, a meeting with the Committee was organized in the Office of the Prime Minister (for further details, see below). Minister of Culture Majda Širca received them on 2 March 2009. Participants in a seminar held on 21 October 2008 in Ljubljana also highlighted the broader meaning of consultations with representatives of various minority or ethnic groups, civil society and other relevant players. The seminar brought no specific solutions but added value to the comprehensive approach of the country towards implementing the provisions of the Framework Convention.

As to the endeavours of members of other ethnic groups to resolve their status, it should be noted that the Council of the Slovenian Government for the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment (hereinafter referred to as the Council) discussed the initiative of the Ex-Yugoslav Minorities Coordination (hereinafter referred to as

ExYumco) in the Republic of Slovenia and established that the regulation of the constitutional status of national minorities falls under the competence of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia.

The ExYumco initiative was presented at the fourth session of the Council held in October 2006. At the same session, a decision was made to establish a working group (hereinafter referred to as the Council working group) to discuss the ExYumco initiative. The representatives of ethnic groups who signed the initiative called upon the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia to examine the enclosed arguments and adopt their public initiative, in which they propose to the National Assembly initiating and carrying out the procedure to amend the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia so as to list Albanians, Bosnians, Croats, Macedonians, and Serbs in the Republic of Slovenia by name in the text of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and to define them as national communities/national minorities in the Republic of Slovenia. The established Council working group discussed the ExYumco initiative at two working meetings. The first one was held in November 2006 and the second in February 2007. The ExYumco representatives were invited to participate in both meetings; they attended the first one only. The Council working group drafted a proposal for decisions at its second meeting, and adopted them at its fifth regular session in March 2007. With regard to the initiatives presented by Sinti and ExYumco, the following decisions were made:

- The Council took note of the issues raised by the Association of Sinti Communities in Slovenia and ExYumco in terms of implementation of the principle of equal treatment, in particular in the fields of employment, education and culture;
- The Council set up a working group which met with the initiators and became acquainted with the activities undertaken since 1992, as well as with existing possibilities within the functioning and legal bases of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and within the framework of bilateral and international agreements which include cultural rights of minorities;
- The Council supports the strengthening of civic dialogue between competent national authorities and civil society organizations of national and ethnic groups in the Republic of Slovenia with a view to implementing equal treatment in all areas of social life.

The session also highlighted that the regulation of the constitutional status of national minorities is not within the competence of the Council, but it falls under the responsibility of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia; consequently, the Council working group did not address this issue. The discussion established that there is dialogue between the two organizations and national authorities; namely, the Slovenian Ministry of Culture has been co-financing and supporting cultural projects of various minority ethnic groups in the Republic of Slovenia for 14 years through calls for applications. The members of the Council agreed, however, that dialogue with ExYumco should be further strengthened.

In April 2007, representatives of ExYumco met Aleksander Zorn, State Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia. At the meeting, the State Secretary supported ExYumco efforts to improve their status within existing legislation, where much more can yet be achieved. He drew attention to the fact that an amendment to the Constitution falls within the competence of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia; he expressed his belief that the situation and status of individual nationalities may also be improved through the exercise of individual rights. Those present came to the conclusion that there are still a number of open and unrealised possibilities within the legislation.

A model of care for the Slovene language was presented, which was developed in cooperation with Slovenians in neighbouring countries and around the world. This model includes the Faculty of Arts, through which a network of teachers is formed. A similar solution was proposed to ExYumco representatives, who should establish appropriate links with their home countries. The meeting also highlighted new funding opportunities available after the adoption of the new Personal Income Tax Act³ (donations in the amount of 0.5% of funds). Specific rights which are not defined in the laws may also be exercised through bilateral agreements. The meeting further emphasised that the Slovenian Government is always ready for dialogue. Given that representatives of the former Yugoslav nations and nationalities are concentrated in major urban centres, cooperation with local authorities was also proposed, as certain solutions may be reached more easily at these levels.

The earliest possible solution for the status of non-Slovenians from the former Yugoslavia (SFRY), whose legal status in the Republic of Slovenia has not been resolved

In accordance with the recommendations contained in Resolution ResCMN(2006)6, the Republic of Slovenia continuously makes every effort to finally resolve the pending status of the citizens of the former SFRY successor states. The Slovenian Ministry of the Interior made a decision to fully implement the decision of the Constitutional Court granting legal status with retroactive effect to all persons who have already regulated their status in the Republic of Slovenia. The Ministry also decided to draft an appropriate law with a view to finally solving this pending issue.

The adoption of enhanced measures to prevent and combat discrimination and social exclusion of and among Roma; efforts, in consultation with those concerned, to improve their situation in fields such as employment, housing and education

The Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act was adopted by the National Assembly on 30 March 2007 and entered into force on 28 April 2007. For the operationalisation of its provisions, the Act (Article 6) stipulates that the Government, in cooperation with the self-governing local communities and the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia, shall adopt a programme of measures in order to ensure the coordinated implementation of special rights of Roma community members. The programme of measures will specify the obligations and tasks of the Republic of Slovenia, primarily relating to the living conditions of Roma, education, inclusion of Roma in the labour market, and the preservation and development of the language and culture of Roma. In addition, the programme will also include Roma health care and measures to combat discrimination. In drawing up the aforementioned programme envisaged to be adopted at the beginning of 2010, the Roma community was actively involved in all preparatory stages, i.e. through its representatives and wider consultations with the Roma community (for further details, see comments on Article 4).

The activities aimed at preventing discrimination of Roma also include the awareness-raising campaign “Dosta! Go beyond prejudice, discover the Roma!”, focusing on learning about and understanding Roma, their culture, way of life, and, by conveying a

³ Ur. l. RS Nos. 54/2004, ..., 45/2007)

positive message, seeking to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes about this population group (for further details, see comments on Article 6).

With regard to consultations with the Roma community in the procedures for the preparation, formulation, adoption, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of programmes, measures and legal acts relating to the situation of the Roma community, the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act, Article 12, stipulates that the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (as the umbrella organization of the Roma community) may present proposals, initiatives and opinions in matters of its competence to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, the Government, other state authorities, bearers of public authority and self-governing local community authorities. Furthermore, the state authorities, bearers of public authority and self-governing local community authorities must obtain the prior opinion of the aforementioned Council for the purposes of adopting and issuing regulations and other general legal acts relating to the status of the Roma community. In practice, cooperation with the Roma community has been very successful.

The adoption of all necessary measures to completely eradicate the practice of segregating Roma children in the school system

In the Comments of the Government of Slovenia on the Second Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention, the Republic of Slovenia assured that a normative act banned classes composed exclusively of Roma pupils.

Increased assistance granted to cultural projects and other activities, including access to media, fostering the preservation and affirmation of the cultural, linguistic and religious identity of Hungarians, Italians and Roma, ensuring that the relevant legislation is applied in practice and that resources are commensurate with needs

Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Language

In accordance with the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science and Culture, concluded between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, and in compliance with the Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science and Culture for the Period 2006–2008, concluded between the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, and the Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Language (hereinafter referred to as the Agreement) was signed by the Balassi Bálint Intézet Institute from Budapest, the Pomurje Hungarian Self-governing National Community in Pomurje and the Institute for Culture of the Hungarian National Community in Lendava on 14 March 2008 (on the basis of an authorisation issued by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on 28 November 2007), with a view to, within their competences, contributing to cooperation between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary in the fields of culture and further strengthening mutual contacts in the fields of culture and language. The signatories will make every effort to contribute through their activities and cooperation to the enrichment of Hungarian culture in the Republic of Slovenia, and to encourage presentations of Hungarian culture and language in the

Republic of Slovenia and culture of the Pomurje Hungarian national community in Hungary. They will also promote presentations of Slovenian culture and language in Hungary. The signatories to the Agreement will cooperate in the implementation of the following activities:

- Hungariology and other research on Hungarian culture, within cultural activities or Hungarian international cultural cooperation;
- Carrying out language programmes and/or mobility programmes for students of the Slovene and Hungarian languages;
- Exchange of experiences and efficient flow of information;
- Mutual professional assistance in the fields of culture and language;
- Strengthening of international cooperation of signatories;
- Supporting the organization of cultural performances.

Lendava Cultural Centre

In the area of culture, the Lendava Cultural Centre managed by the Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion is an important acquisition for the Hungarian national community.

At its 159th session on 21 February 2008, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision (Decision No. 41010-2/2008/5) establishing the public interest of the state that the Municipality of Lendava, within the system of funding municipalities in 2008, should be granted additional funds for the operation of the Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion (*Művelődési es Promóciós Intézet Lendva*) amounting to EUR 80,000; furthermore the Minister of Culture and the Municipality of Lendava conclude a contract stipulating the amount of state funds referred to in point 1 of this Decision and the scope of the Municipality's obligations.

The Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act, Article 67, regulates municipal public institutions of general importance. A municipality which is the founder of a public institution that goes beyond municipal importance, or which also meets the needs of the inhabitants of neighbouring municipalities, and if this is in the public interest, shall be provided with corresponding additional funds within the framework of the municipality funding system. The public interest of the state is established by the Government at the proposal of the Minister when the latter has received a petition from the municipality under the preceding paragraph. On the basis of the decision of the Government establishing the public interest of the state, the Minister and the competent municipal authority agree on the amount of state funds and the scope of the municipality's obligations by means of a contract. The Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion (*Művelődési es Promóciós Intézet Lendva*) operates in an ethnically mixed area, where an autochthonous national community recognised under the Constitution lives, which is given special attention by the state in compliance with Article 64 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. This is an additional argument why the work of this Institute is in the public interest or in the interest of creating conditions for a national community in accordance with Article 64 of the Slovenian Constitution.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia, at its 48th regular session held on 8 October 2009, adopted a decision establishing the public interest of the state and granting the Municipality of Lendava additional funds for **2009, 2010 and 2011** from the budgetary funds of the Ministry of Culture for the operation of the Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion (*Művelődési es Promóciós Intézet Lendva*). The minister responsible for culture

and the Municipality of Lendava conclude a contract each year (2009, 2010, 2011), laying down the amount of additional funds to be allocated to the Municipality of Lendava for the operation of the Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion, and the scope of the municipality's obligations.

Carlo Combi and the Manzioli Palace

The Italian Centre for Promotion, Culture, Education and Development *Carlo Combi, Koper*⁴ (Centro Italiano di Promozione, Cultura, Formazione e Sviluppo Carlo Combi Capodistria) was set up in 2007 with the aim of becoming a reference point for all those who wish to develop ideas and projects regarding the Italian language, culture and relations between the Italian community and the Slovenian majority population. The reconstructed **Manzioli Palace** in **Izola** is of great significance for the creativity of the Italian national community. In this project, Slovenia provided financial support for the restoration of the Palace and co-financed the furnishing of its library.

Information activities of the Roma community

The Republic of Slovenia – more precisely the Government Office for National Minorities and the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, the latter through annual calls for applications – supports cultural projects and other activities of the Roma community aimed at the preservation and affirmation of the cultural and linguistic identity of the Roma community, including access to media. For details on positive developments in the field of information activity of the Roma community, see comments on Article 9.

The Ministry of Culture provides an opportunity to Roma who are engaged in the field of culture but are not included in existing societies and in the Roma Union of Slovenia (artists, intellectuals) to submit their opinions and proposals. The Head of the Sector for Minority Cultural Rights within the Directorate for Cultural Development and International Affairs has set Wednesday to be a regular open-door day for their initiatives. This way Roma, including Roma immigrants, can participate in measures concerning them. The Ministry of Culture includes into its programmes the projects of all Roma groups; talks on financing options have also taken place with Sinti.

Looking for ways to increase the level of state assistance granted to non-Slovenians from the former Yugoslavia (SFRY) and to German-speaking persons in their efforts to develop their identity through education, culture and the media

The Republic of Slovenia assures that progress has been made in creating conditions for cultural diversity on an ethnic basis, since in 2005 the funds for the Slovenian Ministry of Culture's special programme for minority ethnic groups were increased by 100 percent. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture set up a programme for the German-speaking ethnic group, based on a bilateral agreement and Article 34 of the second work programme on cooperation in culture, education and science between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria for the period from 2008 to 2012, which provides additional support to cultural projects for the German-speaking ethnic group. In 2009,

⁴ Website of the centre: <http://www.centrocarlocombi.net/ita>

responsibilities concerning conditions for the cultural activity of various minority ethnic groups and immigrants to the Republic of Slovenia were extended further to the Public Funds of the RS for Cultural Activities, with a view to improving integration by geographic areas and fields of activity. Since 2008, the Ministry of Culture has issued a call for applications for drawing funds from the European Social Fund, aimed at increasing social inclusion through education and employment. The Ministry of Culture, within the present conditions and possibilities, thus continuously evaluates and improves the conditions for cultural activity, cultural creativity and integration of minority ethnic groups, including the so-called new minorities, in cultural life on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia.

Preventing and combating displays of intolerance and xenophobia, including on the political scene, via every possible means; more actively fostering a sense of respect for diversity and multiculturalism among the public, and encouraging and supporting media to play a more active role in this regard

The Republic of Slovenia stated its endeavours to reduce and eliminate intolerance, applying other available mechanisms as appropriate to create a positive climate for minority communities (also in other parts of this report) already in the Comments of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Second Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention.

Identifying, together with representatives of the minorities, ways to improve their participation in decision-making concerning them at the local and central levels

*Laws, regulations and other general acts that concern the exercise of the rights provided under the Constitution and the situation of the **Italian and Hungarian national communities exclusively may not be adopted without their consent.** The Self-Governing National Communities Act⁵ Article 15, paragraph 2, stipulates that “In matters related to the status of members of national communities, state authorities must acquire the prior opinion of the self-governing national communities.”*

The Secretary General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia issued instruction No. 023-12/2001 of 3 March 2003 and instruction No. 02300-17/2005/12 of 8 June 2007 on the participation of national communities in decision-making concerning the status of their members, appealing to all state authorities (government, ministries, other state authorities, etc.) to consistently observe the provisions of the rules of procedure and the relevant laws.

The Government Commission for the two National Communities is a consultative body monitoring the implementation of constitutional obligations and legal provisions of the Republic of Slovenia relating to the national communities. It drafts proposals and initiatives for the protection of the national communities, aimed at obtaining the official position of the Government and individual ministries. The Commission, composed of representatives of ministries, government services and the national communities, promotes the exchange of views between representatives of the national communities and state authorities on issues concerning the status of the national communities.

⁵ Ur. l. RS No. 65/1994

Another important role in the implementation of constitutional obligations and legal provisions of the Republic of Slovenia relating to the national communities is attributed to the Commission of the National Assembly for the National Communities; its Chair and Deputy Chair are always members of the national communities. The Commission addresses issues concerning the implementation of the national communities' rights, as well as proposing measures.

The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities performs expert, organizational and administrative tasks for the Government Commission for the two National Communities and attends sessions of the Commission of the National Assembly for the National Communities and maintains, as already reported, regular contact with the national communities.

As already mentioned in the explanations on the implementation of one of the recommendations, Article 12 of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act stipulates that the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (as the umbrella organization of the Roma community) may present proposals, initiatives and opinions in matters of its competence to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, the Government, other state authorities, bearers of public authority and authorities of self-governing local communities. Furthermore, the state authorities, bearers of public authority and authorities of self-governing local communities must obtain the prior opinion of the aforementioned Council for the purposes of adopting and issuing regulations and other general legal acts relating to the status of the Roma community.

As already reported, the Government Office for National Minorities maintains regular contacts with the Roma community, participates in the events to which it receives an invitation from the Roma community, and is always open to talks and dialogue with representatives and members of this community. This enables the fruitful exchange of opinions and, at the same time, provides an opportunity for the Roma community to express its opinion, needs, views or proposals.

The Roma community actively participates in the discussion about all issues concerning the exercise of its rights and the improvement of its status held within the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community, in which 4 out of 16 members represent the Roma community. The tasks of the Commission are to:

- Effectively monitor and coordinate the implementation of the programme of measures pursuant to the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act (Ur. l. RS No. 33/2007);
- Propose further measures required for the implementation of the programme of measures in the future;
- Prepare proposals, opinions, initiatives, expert explanations and reports, as well as guidelines relating to the implementation of the programme of measures;
- Propose amendments to the programme of measures;
- Oversee the allocation and use of funds for the implementation of the programme of measures provided by the budget of the Republic of Slovenia;
- Monitor the implementation of constitutional obligations and statutory provisions of the Republic of Slovenia relating to the protection of the Roma community;
- Draft proposals and initiatives for the protection of the Roma community aimed at obtaining the official position of the Government and individual ministries;

- Exchange opinions between representatives of the Roma community and state authorities on all issues relating to the status of the Roma community;
- Discuss topical issues concerning the exercise of special rights of the Roma community;
- Adopt positions, opinions, proposals, decisions and recommendations for the work of the Government in this specific field.

II.b. Report by individual article

Articles 1–3

Exercise of rights individually or within the community

In the Republic of Slovenia, collective (special) rights are granted to the Italian and Hungarian national communities in accordance with Article 64 and to the Roma community in accordance with Article 65 of the Slovenian Constitution; Article 61 of the Constitution refers to individual cultural rights. The above legal bases indicate that the Republic of Slovenia has a three-part minority protection system. **Any other arrangement would require an amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia.** The public efforts of certain societies and associations of people who immigrated to the Republic of Slovenia from the former Yugoslavia (see other parts of the report) may be understood as endeavours to obtain the recognition of collective rights. At present, the Republic of Slovenia recognises collective rights under the Constitution only to the Italian and Hungarian national communities and to the Roma community.

Article 4

Equality before the law, special measures (taking into account special circumstances)

In the Republic of Slovenia, everyone is guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other belief, material standing, birth, education, social status, disability or any other personal circumstance. Everyone is equal before the law. The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia has again been issuing supplementary decisions to persons whose names were deleted from the registers of permanent residents on 26 February 1992, which is the implementation of Decision No. U-I-246/02-28 of 3 April 2003 of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, imposing the obligation to issue such decisions. With regard to the part of the decision of the Constitutional Court referring to the elimination of inconsistencies of the law with the Constitution, the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior is drafting expert bases for an appropriate law.

In the Republic of Slovenia, **the protection of the Italian and Hungarian national communities** is set out in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Articles 11 and 64), as well as in more than 90 sector-specific laws and other regulations, ordinances and statutes of municipalities in the ethnically mixed areas, other legal acts, bilateral treaties or agreements, and international conventions ratified by the Republic of Slovenia.

The protection of the Italian and Hungarian national communities on the basis of Article 64 of the Constitution is as follows:

- The autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and their members are guaranteed the right to use their **national symbols** freely;

- In order to preserve their national identity, they have the right to establish organizations, and to develop economic, cultural, scientific and research activities, as well as activities in the field of media and publishing;
- In accordance with the law, these two national communities and their members have the right to education in their own languages, as well as the right to establish and develop such education (the geographic areas in which bilingual schools are compulsory are laid down by law);
- These national communities and their members are guaranteed the right to foster relations with their nations of origin and their respective countries (Slovenia provides material and moral support for the exercise of these rights);
- In order to exercise their rights, the members of these communities establish their own self-governing communities in the geographic areas where they live (upon the proposal of these self-governing national communities, the state may authorise them to perform certain functions under national jurisdiction, and provide funds for the performance of such functions);
- The two national communities are directly represented in the representative bodies of local self-government and in the National Assembly (Article 80, paragraph 3, of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates that one deputy of the Italian and one deputy of the Hungarian national communities should always be elected to the National Assembly; the deputies of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia are elected according to the principle of proportional representation, while the representatives of the national communities are elected according to the majority principle);
- The status of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the manner in which their rights are exercised in the geographic areas where they live, the obligations of the self-governing local communities for the exercise of these rights, and the rights which the members of these national communities exercise outside these areas are regulated by law;
- The rights of both national communities are guaranteed irrespective of the numerical strength of these communities;
- Laws, regulations and other general acts that concern the exercise of the constitutionally provided rights and the status of the national communities exclusively may not be adopted without the consent of representatives of these national communities.

As previously stated, the Republic of Slovenia has a three-part system for the protection of minorities, which is evident from three articles of the Constitution (Articles 61, 64 and 65). The collective rights of national communities have remained the same as in previous constitutions. State authorities are obliged to respect the constitutional order and guarantee similar treatment to those communities and their members that are included in a particular constitutional provision, in compliance with the provision. The Slovenian Ministry of Culture endeavours to ensure similar conditions for both the Italian and Hungarian national communities. Particular support is provided for their cultural development – hence the support for the establishment of the institute of the Italian national community a few years ago. A special measure applicable both to the Roma community, officially represented by the Roma Community Council, and to other minority communities enables them to directly submit their opinions in the field of culture. This is done by means of an open-door day of the head of the sector intended for minority artists (the service is published on the Ministry’s website) to discuss issues concerning creative achievements and the consideration of their proposals for integrated functioning in various areas of culture. Various other minority communities are treated with special care in a special programme (and within a special sector of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture), primarily aimed at preserving their special cultural identities and protecting and promoting cultural

diversity. **The mere fact that the minority sector provides special services like counselling, professional assistance, mediation, check and storage of materials in INDOK, services for artists, etc. shows that their special circumstances have been taken into consideration and that special measures apply to them, which is laid down in Article 4 of the Framework Convention and is applicable in general as the principle in minority doctrine.** The competent ministry is aware that the number of societies and projects has been increasing over the years, which requires more funds. The funds were actually increased by 100 percent, mostly for the programme of various minority communities in 2005, since this is where the biggest deficits were recorded. They also responded positively to the human resources and spatial requirements of the aforementioned communities and provided financing from the European Social Fund and set up regulatory conditions for the use of public cultural infrastructure pursuant to Articles 74 through 79 of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act.

The legal basis for the regulation of the status of members of **the Roma community** in the Republic of Slovenia is provided by Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, which stipulates that the status and special rights of the Roma community living in Slovenia are regulated by law. This sets the legal foundation for protective measures. This constitutional provision was fully implemented through the adoption of the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act (Ur. l. RS No. 33/2007). Furthermore, the protection of the Roma community is also enshrined in other laws.⁶ In addition, a number of programmes, strategies and resolutions in individual social areas provide for the exercise of special rights of the Roma community and for the improvement of its status.

The **1995 Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma** is considered an important basic programming document and legal source. Certain parts of it are still relevant and include measures for improving the status of the Roma community in key areas such as housing, education, employment, family welfare, social and health care, the cultural development of the Roma community, information and organization of Roma. Furthermore, **government decisions** should be mentioned, whereby the government also decreed that all ministries and government services must devote, within the scope of their responsibility, special attention to Roma issues and include them in sector-specific national programmes.

The Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act⁷ (hereinafter referred to as the Act) was adopted by the National Assembly on 30 March 2007 and entered into force on 28 April 2007. The Act comprehensively regulates the status of the Roma community in Slovenia; it defines the role of state authorities and authorities of the self-governing local communities in exercising the special rights of the Roma community, and it regulates the organization of the Roma community at the national and local levels, including financing. The Act represents an important step in meeting obligations under international conventions signed by the Republic of Slovenia, as well as an example for introducing affirmative action.

The Act stipulates that the Republic of Slovenia creates the conditions and pays special attention to:

⁶ Local Self-Government Act, Local Elections Act, Voting Rights Register Act, Organization and Financing of Education Act, Elementary School Act, Pre-school Institutions Act, Media Act, Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act, Libraries Act, Promotion of Balanced Regional Development Act, Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, Financing of Municipalities Act, Cultural Heritage Protection Act, Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia.

⁷ Ur. l. RS No. 33/2007

- The integration of Roma community members into the education system, the improvement of their education level and the creation of an appropriate scholarship policy;
- The integration of Roma community members into the labour market and employment;
- The preservation and development of the Romani language, as well as cultural, information and publishing activities of the Roma community;
- The resolution of spatial planning issues of Roma settlements and the improvement of housing conditions for Roma community members.

For the operationalisation of its provisions, the Act (Article 6) stipulates that the government, in cooperation with the self-governing local communities and the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia, **should adopt a programme of measures in order to ensure the coordinated implementation of special rights of Roma community members.** The programme will define the obligations and tasks of the Republic of Slovenia imposed by the Act for the period 2010–2015, primarily related to the areas referred to in the preceding four indents. It will also include other important areas, such as health care and measures to combat discrimination. In autumn 2007, the Slovenian government set up a working group for drafting the programme of measures, which prepared a draft of the working material. The working group was composed of representatives of the relevant ministries covering various areas, representatives of the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia and of local communities (municipalities).

The proposal for the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010–2015 was discussed and approved by the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community at its fourth session on 23 November 2009. The programme has been drafted so as to impose or envisage, to the greatest extent possible, deadlines for the implementation of each measure, together with the financial implications. The tasks and obligations under the Government programme of measures will be performed by the relevant ministries, other state authorities and authorities of self-governing local communities, which will adopt detailed sector-specific programmes and measures, and earmark the necessary funding in their financial plans. The programme is envisaged to be adopted by the Slovenian government at the beginning of 2010, following public discussion. In accordance with the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act, the implementation of the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010–2015 will be monitored by a special working body, i.e. the Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Ethnic Community (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) which, pursuant to the said Act, consists of 16 members (8 representatives of state authorities, 4 representatives of the Roma Community Council and 4 representatives of self-governing local communities in which representatives of the Roma community are elected into the city or municipal council). The Commission is chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport, while administrative affairs are conducted by the Government Office for National Minorities.

Based on reports from individual state authorities and self-governing local communities in which representatives of the Roma communities are elected into the municipal council, in accordance with the law governing local self-government, reports from the Roma Community Council and from other state authorities, the Commission must draft a report on the implementation of the programme of measures on an annual basis and submit it to the government. In accordance with Article 4, paragraph 4, of the Roma Community in

the Republic of Slovenia Act and based on the aforementioned report, the government must report once a year to the National Assembly on the implementation of statutory obligations toward the Roma community.

The new **Criminal Code**⁸ (adopted on 20 May 2008, in force as of 1 November 2008) stipulates in Article 165 (Insult to the Slovenian People or National Communities) that whoever publicly commits any of the offences under Articles 158–160 of the Code against the Slovenian nation or the Italian or Hungarian national community or the Roma community living in the Republic of Slovenia shall be punished by a fine or by imprisonment of up to one year.

Unfortunately, Roma still face discrimination in various fields of social life, including housing conditions, employment, education and health care; nevertheless, these fields have undergone a number of positive changes. Competent line ministries are adopting and developing various programmes and measures within their areas of work that are aimed at improving the status of the Roma community and at ensuring and exercising their rights. These efforts will be coordinated within the framework of the national programme of measures for Roma and within detailed sector-specific programmes and measures imposed by individual bodies of ministries.

According to the recommendations of the European Commission on tackling poverty and social exclusion, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia coordinates the preparation of national documents, e.g. the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006–2008 and the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008–2010, which includes a particular chapter on the status of vulnerable communities, including Roma and their issues concerning unemployment, low level of education and poor housing conditions.

Political participation

Pursuant to the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act, the Roma Community Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) was established at the national level on 20 June 2007. The Council represents the interests of the Roma community in Slovenia in relation to state authorities and carries out other important tasks relating to the interests, status and rights of the Roma community. It has the right to submit proposals, initiatives and opinions on matters within its competence to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, the Government, other state authorities, bearers of public authority and authorities of self-governing local communities. When adopting or issuing regulations and other general acts relating to the Roma community, these authorities must obtain the prior opinion of the Council.

Slovenia is one of the European countries that includes Roma in the management of public affairs at the local level. The said Act introduced special working bodies at the local level, which monitor the situation of the Roma community and are set up in the municipalities in which a representative of the Roma community is elected to the city or municipal council. **These working bodies are set up in all municipalities defined in the Local Self-Government Act, with the exception of the Municipality of Grosuplje.**

⁸ Ur. l. RS No. 55/2008 (66/2008 – amended)

Members of the Roma community enjoy, in addition to the general voting right to which they are entitled as Slovenian citizens, also a special voting right at local elections in the 20 municipalities where Roma are traditionally settled, which enables them to elect by themselves a Roma councillor from special lists of Roma who are entitled to vote. Today, the Roma right to representation in municipal councils, namely in areas of traditional settlement, is exercised in 19 municipalities out of the 20 stipulated by the law. The only municipality not providing for a special statutory right of the Roma community to a representative in their municipal council is the Municipality of Grosuplje. Consequently, the Local Self-Government Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 94/07 – official consolidated text, 76/08 and 79/09) has been amended so as to ensure that, in the event of a municipal council failing to call elections for a representative of the Roma community to a municipal council, this shall be done by the National Electoral Commission on the account of the municipality.

The elected members of the Roma community in municipal councils may participate in solving problems that are faced by the Roma community in the municipalities where they are elected and accountable to their voters, i.e. to Roma in the municipality in which they live and act at the local level. Representatives of the Roma community in municipal councils are currently active in two associations: the Union of Roma of Slovenia, currently functioning as a working body bringing together certain Roma councillors; the Group of Councillors was established in April 2008. Until August 2008, a Forum of Roma Councillors under the auspices of the Union of Roma of Slovenia had operated for a number of years. The Forum was then dismissed and subsequently began to operate independently at the end of 2008 by establishing the Forum of Roma Councillors as an association. Both bodies represent a link among Roma councillors in the municipalities where Roma elect their own representative into the municipal council.

The Forum of Roma Councillors association and the Group of Councillors within the Roma Union of Slovenia represent the way and means of linking Roma councillors between the municipalities in which Roma are represented. They have an important role in providing advice to Roma councillors and coordinating their work. The representation of the Roma community through its representatives in the self-governing local authorities influences the work of the municipality, since a Roma councillor provides information to the municipal council about difficulties of the local Roma community; the council may then adopt suitable measures. Furthermore, certain Roma societies also play a significant role in assisting Roma councillors.

At the local level, the law introduced special working bodies which monitor the status of the Roma community and which are set up in the municipalities in which a representative of the Roma community is elected to the city or municipal council. These working bodies are set up in all the municipalities laid down by the Local Self-Government Act, with the exception of the Municipality of Grosuplje.

Housing conditions

Housing conditions of the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia still need to be improved, since Roma in certain areas continue to face issues relating to poor basic public utility infrastructure, property ownership and illegal construction. The situation and living conditions of the Roma community differ between different regions in the Republic of Slovenia; a difference can also be noted within regions and particular municipalities, and

therefore rough assessment of the situation can be too generalised. In all areas populated by Roma, there are examples where their living conditions are good, while there are also examples where Roma still face a number of difficulties.

On the basis of the 1995 Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning conducts, directs and coordinates activities for providing expert and financial assistance to municipalities populated by Roma, for the preparation of spatial and implementing documents for the improvement of Roma settlements. In December 2006, the Expert Group for Resolving the Spatial Issues of Roma Settlements was appointed within the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning with a view to providing counselling and strategic activities for ensuring spatial and housing conditions of the Roma community in Roma settlements. Based on rough analyses, the group produced an assessment of the situation of Roma settlements on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, in which it defined existing problems and proposed concrete measures for resolving them, by implementing the chosen model of urban planning of Roma settlements.

Alongside the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, measures for assisting Roma are also implemented by the Slovenian Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, in line with its competences, namely through financial measures for the rehabilitation and improvement of the public facility infrastructure of Roma settlements. Since spatial planning falls within the competence of self-governing local communities, the endeavours of some municipalities populated by Roma for the improvement of housing conditions of the Roma community should be mentioned. The improvement of housing conditions and spatial planning are lengthy and complex procedures associated with high costs; accordingly, some settlements have not been adequately arranged yet, which remains the objective of current measures.

Ensuring adequate housing conditions to the Roma community and its members continues to be one of the priorities of the state; therefore, appropriate measures will be developed within the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010–2015, which will satisfy the needs of the Roma community.

Labour market

Unemployed Roma are included in local and national programmes of public works without a waiting period. In 2009, three national programmes of public works for Roma were carried out (unemployed Roma participate in these programmes), namely: Socialisation and Integration of Roma, Socialisation and Integration of Roma 2, and the programme Landscaping Public Areas and Urban Planning of Roma Settlements. In 2009, the three national programmes of public works included altogether 161 persons (the social programmes included unemployed Roma as half of all persons involved, while the public utility programmes included unemployed Roma only). *With a view to ensuring full wages to the participants in these three programmes, in 2009 the Ministry allocated funds in the amount of EUR 1,015,950.00.*

In the period from January to August 2009, 154 Roma were included in local and national programmes of public works, of these 97 Roma in the area of the Municipality of Murska Sobota, which accounts for 63% of all Roma included in the public works programmes in this period.

Despite the relatively unfavourable picture revealed by the data on registered unemployment among Roma, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has assessed that many positive changes have occurred in just a few years in this area, some of which can already be clearly recognised, while others will be seen in the following years. The first set of changes includes an increased number of employment programmes tailor-made for members of the Roma community, a larger number of public works programmes intended for and adjusted to Roma (specifically programmes of the groups Roma for Roma) and greater participation of Roma in defining development programmes in terms of their content. The most significant changes, in terms of quality, in the status of Roma in the labour market will be positively influenced by an increased educational level and vocational qualifications, which can already be seen in the younger generation of this population. In previous years, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs carried out a number of programmes in the area of labour market and employment, which aimed at a target population of unemployed Roma. The active employment policy measures adopted for each separate calendar year or planning period define a number of programmes and target groups of unemployed who can participate in these programmes, including Roma.

In 2006, the *Active Employment Policy Programme 2007–2013* and plan for the implementation of the Active Employment Policy Programme for 2007 and 2008 were adopted by the government. The *Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2006–2010* pays special attention to Roma as a vulnerable group. In addition, the Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs publishes calls for applications for co-financing programmes in the area of social assistance and family support.

In September 2008, the Slovenian government adopted the programme *Public Works for 2009 and 2010*, which aims at activating unemployed persons, fostering their social inclusion, preserving or developing working abilities and promoting the creation of new jobs. The target group of unemployed persons to be involved in the public works programme includes long-term unemployed persons, unemployed persons with disabilities and unemployed Roma. A call for applications for the selection of public works programmes in the Republic of Slovenia for 2009 was published in September 2008, and another call for applications for the selection of public works programmes in the Republic of Slovenia for 2010 was published in October 2009. Such planning of the period for publishing the calls for applications ensures that unemployed persons can participate in the selected public works programmes in a timely manner. For implementation of the programme, funds in a total approximate amount of EUR 20,350,000 are allocated for 2009 and EUR 35,000,000 for 2010.

Health care

The right and accessibility to both preventive and curative health systems apply equally to all citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, i.e. *to persons fulfilling the conditions for compulsory health insurance in accordance with regulations governing this area in Slovenia (the Health Care and Health Insurance Act, Compulsory Health Insurance Rules).*

The Resolution on the National Plan of Health Care 2008–2013 “Satisfied Users and Performers of Medical Services” (Ur. l. RS No. 72/08) makes reducing health inequality between the regions, individual social groups and genders a priority field and an objective of the health care policy.

There are systematic efforts at all levels to improve the overall quality of health care, focused on the health care needs of the individual, and in particular the needs of vulnerable groups of inhabitants. In line with the development policy of the Ministry of Health and due to its special nature requiring integrated active approaches, improving the health status of the Roma is included in the national programme for health promotion and prevention. By doing so, the Ministry of Health complies with European recommendations (among others Recommendation of the Council of Europe Rec(2006)18 on health services in a multicultural society and Rec(2006)10 on better access to health care for Roma). Health care programmes for Roma pay particular attention to women’s health and the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities for women and men in compliance with the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for the period 2005–2013. Specifically, integrated strategies are being developed for the protection of children and women against violence, with an emphasis on the implementation of national guidelines to combat violence.

In spite of efforts to improve the situation, there are health inequalities in Slovenia between regions and between various social and ethnic groups. The results of the study “Risk Factors for Non-Communicable Diseases in Adult Roma Community Members”⁹ (Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota; 2007) confirmed that a low education level, high unemployment rate, poor social and economic situation, insufficient participation in prevention programmes and the presence of chronic diseases contribute to health inequalities of Roma. The study provides a basis for drafting programmes and projects to promote health or reduce health inequalities.

To address health inequalities within the Pomurje region, where the majority of Roma reside, the *Strategy for Promoting Health and Action Plan for Reducing Health Inequalities in the Pomurska Region* was drawn up and adopted. The overall objective of this strategic plan is to improve the state of health of the population and thus reduce health inequalities. The strategy is based on an analysis of the current situation and on regional priorities; it is part of the Regional Development Programme 2007–2013. The English version is available at <http://www.zzv-ms.si>.

The Institute of Public Health Murska Sobota is already implementing the programme with these objectives titled *Reducing Health Inequalities*. Roma are one of the priority groups covered by the strategy. Since 2006, the Institute has been implementing programmes and activities aimed at reducing health inequalities among the Roma population within the annual programme for the provision of public services in the area of public health. It closely cooperates with the Union of Roma of Slovenia and the Roma Community Council in the Republic of Slovenia. Furthermore, a programme (approaches

⁹ The study “Risk Factors for Non-Communicable Diseases in Adult Roma Community Members (Pomurje)” is the first Slovenian research on health-related lifestyle habits, such as smoking, nutrition and physical activity, alcohol consumption, road safety behaviour etc. in the Roma population. A questionnaire applied by the World Health Organization within its CINDI programme (Countrywide Integrated Non-communicable Disease Intervention) was used. This questionnaire is also used in national studies in the Republic of Slovenia.

in particular) for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle of Roma (in the Slovene and Romani languages) is being prepared. The measures planned to improve the health care of Roma and reduce health inequalities in the Roma community include the development of programmes aimed at strengthening and protecting health. These programmes are adjusted to the cultural needs of Roma and can be, after their successful pilot implementation, extended to the national level.

In cooperation with public health experts and representatives of the Roma community, the Ministry of Health organized in autumn 2008 the first national conference on the health of Roma, entitled “**Reducing Health Inequalities among the Roma Population**”, and the second, “Health of Roma Women” in 2009. Conferences and expert consultations on the health of Roma will be organized every year alternately in the regions with a traditionally high Roma population.

Within the framework of the programme *Slovenian competitiveness 2006–2013*, the Ministry of Health provides funds for the study “Assessment of the Use of Health Care Services among Roma Women and Children in Slovenia – Contribution to Reducing Health Inequalities”. The results of the research will provide an expert basis for the preparation of adequate programmes to protect and promote the health of target groups. Representatives of Roma have been included in the preparation and implementation of the research, which will subsequently also facilitate implementation of the results.

¹⁰**The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Equal Opportunities** has drawn up the **Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act** (Ur. l. RS No. 93/07 – official consolidated text 1), which is a fundamental and general act (*lex generalis*) prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of any personal circumstance. **The Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act (hereinafter referred to as the Act)** was adopted in 2004 (Ur. l. RS No. 50/2004) and amended in 2007 (Ur. l. RS No. 61/2007). The Act provides for equal treatment in all areas of social life irrespective of gender, nationality, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or other personal circumstance. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and any kind of harassment (Articles 4 and 5). The Act allows the introduction of special measures (positive and incentive measures) designed for the prevention of a less favourable situation of persons with a particular personal circumstance (Article 6 and 10a). It imposes an obligation on the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the government, ministers and other state authorities and self-governing local authorities that, within their respective competences, establish conditions for the equal treatment of persons by raising awareness and monitoring the situation of individual social groups, as well as by measures of a normative and political nature. Offices and government services engaged in the field of equal treatment of persons, which includes in particular the

¹⁰ As regards the work of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Equal Opportunities (hereinafter referred to as the Office), we would like to explain that the Office has been tasked with elaborating policies in the field of non-discrimination on the basis of gender or equal opportunities of women and men. Within its competencies, the Office particularly monitors the situation of women, draws up analyses, reports and other material on equal opportunities of women and men as well as promoting equal opportunities by providing information and raising awareness. In order to implement the principle of equal treatment, the Office also coordinates the formulation of policies and the drafting of regulations on the prevention and elimination of discrimination, particularly in the transposition of the EU acquis. This means that the Office formulates policies on gender equality, while it merely coordinates the work of other bodies in the area of non-discrimination on the basis of other personal circumstances. The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities is responsible for monitoring the situation of minorities and national communities.

Government Office for Equal Opportunities (hereinafter referred to as the Office), the Government Office for National Minorities and the Government Office for Religious Communities, must especially strive to implement this Act.

The Act has established the institution of **Advocate of the Principle of Equality**, who operates within the Office and deals with cases of alleged violations of the ban on discrimination. *In accordance with the Act, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality* is responsible for cases of alleged unequal treatment on grounds of gender, nationality, race or ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or other personal circumstance, and for providing general information, recommendations and advice. The Act amended in 2007 clearly defines in particular the purpose of dealing with cases of alleged violations of the ban on discrimination and assistance to discriminated persons by the Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Due to the amended definition of the purpose of dealing with cases by the Advocate, its scope of functioning has been expanded from the strict establishing of violations of the ban on discrimination to providing general information, recommendations and advice. This emphasises the importance of preventive action in the field of protection against discrimination. According to the new arrangement, the Advocate still operates within the Office, but his/her importance has been considerably enhanced. As specifically laid down in the Act, the Advocate is independent and autonomous in performing his/her tasks. The Advocate's workplace is a special public service work post within the Office with some managerial characteristics. The Advocate is completely independent from the Office in performing his/her tasks, appointment to and leaving the work post, and also in cases of substitution. In relation to the Office or the Director of the Office, the Advocate is obliged to exercise the rights and obligations arising from the employment relationship in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Servants Act and the Public Sector Salary System Act, as well as executive regulations issued on their basis. The Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act has introduced changes in the procedure for appointing the Advocate and laid down conditions concerning the educational level and work experience that a candidate must fulfil.

Unlike the inspectorates, the Advocate has no authority to carry out investigative activities. All cases are dealt with on the basis of data provided by the parties concerned. It is often impossible to establish the actual course of events due to contradictory statements of the parties involved. When considering cases of alleged discrimination, the Advocate applies the rule of sharing the burden of proof defined in Article 22 of the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act. The rule stipulates that if a discriminated person demonstrates the probability of unequal treatment, an alleged offender must prove that no violation of the prohibition of discrimination occurred. Cases of alleged discrimination are examined with a view to detecting and drawing attention to discrimination and providing general information and explanation about discrimination, rather than to establishing the facts.

In 2005, the Advocate considered one case of alleged discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin relating to custody, which was brought by a woman of Roma origin. In the consideration procedure, the Advocate established a lack of interest on the part of the initiator in continuing the case and therefore stayed the procedure. Furthermore, it is not

the Advocate's prerogative to deliver an opinion on the existence of discrimination in connection to a specific court decision, because this would constitute an encroachment on the constitutional independence of judges.

In 2006, the Advocate considered four cases of alleged unequal treatment based on nationality or ethnic origin, but the allegations were not proven. These cases did not refer to members of minorities or the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia.

In 2007, the Advocate also considered two cases of alleged unequal treatment on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin. In one case, in which members of minorities in Slovenia were not involved, the alleged discrimination was not found. In the other case, where the initiators alleged discrimination against a Roma family on grounds of ethnic origin, the procedure has not yet been concluded.

In 2008, the Advocate considered five cases of alleged unequal treatment on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin. In three cases not referring to members of minorities and in one case involving alleged discrimination against a Roma family on grounds of ethnic origin, allegations were not proven.

On the basis of the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, the Office also carries out technical and administrative tasks for the **Council of the Slovenian Government for the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment**. The Council was established by the Slovenian government pursuant to the above Act with a view to monitoring and assessing the situation of individual social groups in the light of the implementation of the principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination. The Council is an expert and advisory body of the Slovenian government also devoted to establishing and maintaining dialogue with non-governmental organizations and professional institutions engaged in the field of equal treatment of individuals and preventing discrimination on grounds of personal circumstances. In the first four-year term of office (first appointed by the Government on **26 August 2004**), the Council consisted of 24 members, of which 9 represented the ministries, government offices and other state institutions, and 15 the civil society. In the first term of office, the Council met in five regular and one extraordinary session; it only discussed the issue of discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin once, namely in 2006 in connection with the alleged discrimination of the Strojan Roma family. In the case concerned, the Council assessed that open expression of intolerance was involved and condemned any manifestation and encouragement of intolerance towards various ethnic groups; it also urged all responsible and competent state and local community authorities to act appropriately and in line with their statutory powers. The Council also called upon the Slovenian government to resolve the issue of the Strojan family as soon as possible and to create conditions for equal treatment of the family. Invitations, meeting documents and minutes of the Council meetings are available at the Office website.

The Council in a new composition was set up on the basis of a government decision of 16 September 2009. It is now composed of six members representing state institutions and seven members representing civil society. Their term of office is four years. The first

meeting of the Council chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport has not been convened yet.

Together with the Government Office for Development and the Slovenian Research Agency, **the Office co-funded, in 2006, 2007 and 2008, a research project entitled *Effects of Discrimination on Societal, Political and Social Inclusion of Young People in Slovenia: An Analysis on the Basis of Gender, Sexual Orientation and Ethnicity*, carried out within the targeted research programme “Slovenia’s Competitiveness 2006–2013”.** The total project value amounted to EUR 33,383.41. One of the personal circumstances covered by the research was nationality/ethnic origin. The research was conducted by the Faculty of Social Sciences in cooperation with the Peace Institute and the University of Primorska, with a view to developing detailed expertise in the types, scope, factors and implications of social and political discrimination on grounds of national/ethnic origin.

As part of its coordination role, the Office records data on projects and other activities carried out in the field of combating discrimination and the implementation of the principle of equal treatment. The database stores data on research, education, awareness-raising and networking. It should be pointed out that the database only holds data gathered through a questionnaire distributed to members of the Council for the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment; they are invited to continue submitting these data. The database is accessible at the Office website.

Within its coordination role in the area of prevention and elimination of discrimination, the Office also actively co-operates with the competent inspectorates. On several occasions, the Office has drawn the attention of the inspectorates (most often the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia and the Inspection of the Civil Service System) to the consistent and correct implementation of legislation in the field of equal treatment, and cautioned about the potential increase in the number of alleged violations of the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of gender in particular areas. Within the scope of the tasks, the Equal Opportunities Advocate actively cooperates with the competent inspectorates.

Article 5

Protection against assimilation: care for the preservation and development of cultural identities

Members of the Italian national community in the Republic of Slovenia have set up numerous societies (political, general, cultural, sport, research, etc.), they have three libraries, and there are also special departments devoted to Italian culture, journalism and publications within the network of public libraries.¹¹

The Hungarian national community has **set up a number of amateur societies and groups** (folk dance groups, music groups, choirs, recital and theatre groups); their activities and organizational tasks are managed by the **Institute for the Culture of the**

¹¹ The Central Library Srečko Vilhar Koper: <http://www.kp.sik.si/node/43>

Hungarian National Community.¹² A special centre has been established within the Institute – **Centre Bánffy, opened on 20 August 2004.** In addition to a bookstore with a handful of employees **selling only Hungarian literature and periodicals** and a cyber-café with modern multimedia equipment, the Centre is the venue for various meetings and small-scale events.

The Lendava Cultural Centre¹³ was an important acquisition for the Hungarian national community in the area of culture. This multifunctional building is the biggest of its kind in Prekmurje.

*Resolution on the National Cultural Programme 2008–2011*¹⁴

The priorities in culture defined in Slovenia's Development Strategy 2007–2013 are in tune with the challenges of the time and include:

- Care for cultural identity and promotion of cultural diversity,
- Promotion of cultural development of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the Roma community and other minority ethnic groups.

The principles of cultural policy include the right to culture. According to the Constitution, the state must pay particular attention to ensuring the implementation of cultural rights of national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups, immigrants and children. The right to culture must also be granted to various marginal groups to whom, in accordance with the legislation, the state must ensure cultural participation and integration, if necessary in their own languages. At this point, this principle is combined with that of tolerance and evidently embodies the acceptance of different cultural traditions and identities, so as not to aggravate the differences but make them more distinct. Therefore, cultural policy must protect, preserve and develop the right to culture.

Cultural policy will pay particular attention to strengthening and consolidating the position of Slovene as the official language in the Republic of Slovenia, and of the Hungarian and Italian languages in the two areas in which the autochthonous national communities (Hungarian, Italian) live. It will disseminate information about the possibilities for learning Slovene as a second/foreign/neighbouring language and improve the offer of Slovene language courses for immigrants, migrant workers, asylum seekers and the like. It will also support the use of languages of Roma and other minority ethnic groups in Slovenia, especially in the media of those communities, from print to electronic, and in language courses and cultural events organized by ethnic groups. As a matter of priority, support will be given to diverse ethnic themes, minority cultures and programmes, and projects of vulnerable groups.

The principles of cultural policy also include a special chapter on the care for the two national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups, immigrants and vulnerable groups. Besides the autochthonous national communities of Hungarians and Italians, whose rights are granted by the Constitution, there is also the Roma community and a number of other minority ethnic groups in the Republic of Slovenia. Slovenian cultural policy sees this ethnic structure as richness in diversity, which enables the creative intertwining of cultural patterns. In its relation to ethnic groups, it takes into

¹² The Institute for the Culture of the Hungarian National Community: <http://www.mnmi-zkmn.si/>

¹³ Lendava Institute for Culture and Promotion: <http://www.zkp-lendava.si/>

¹⁴ Ur. l. RS No. 35/2008

account general values and guidelines contained in international documents on human rights as stipulated in Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. Many aspects of the current pressing issues concerning the Roma community are regulated by the Roma Community Act; cultural policy will have to pay more attention to cultural activities which can significantly contribute to the integration of Roma and to creating cultural awareness for them. This kind of encouragement is very important, since the Roma community at large, with certain exceptions, can only offer rudimentary cultural expression and creation. In this context, more needs to be done at the local level in regard to education for creativity; the media, especially the national television (with a programme for Roma), play an important role. Cultural policy will support the cultural activities of different ethnic groups and their efforts to preserve their language, culture and artistic expression, and to maintain cultural ties with their nations of origin. Cultural awareness and the awareness of people about their cultural rights are prerequisites for integration into an open society based on the individual's autonomy and freedom. The implementation of such cultural policy, which must not be exclusive but should embrace all who so wish, is tested by its attitude towards groups whose particularities and resulting specific needs are often inadequately expressed or defined; these are vulnerable groups of the elderly, children, adolescents and others, who have to be given additional opportunities to access cultural goods and services and to express their own creativity.

The chapter *Areas and long-term objectives of cultural policy* comprises a sub-chapter devoted to the two national communities, the Roma community, different minority ethnic groups, immigrants and vulnerable groups. The right to culture is part of the right to participate in cultural life as an author, intermediary or recipient of cultural goods and services. By establishing the Sector for Minority Cultural Rights and the Development of Cultural Diversity (hereinafter referred to as the Sector), operating since 2009 under the Cultural Development and International Affairs Directorate, and by introducing a special programme in 2004 intended for the two national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups, immigrants and vulnerable groups, the Ministry of Culture ensured the exercise of cultural rights to members of the groups which require particular care and measures of the state (normative, organizational and financial) due to their minority status, disadvantages or vulnerability, so that they can participate in cultural life in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities and fully exercise their rights and responsibilities to culture. The public interest in culture in the area of national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups and vulnerable groups includes: activities of cultural institutes established by the central organizations of the national communities; publishing and library services; preservation of mother tongues of the communities; activities in all other areas of culture; contacts with the country or nation of origin; international cultural cooperation between groups, communities and minorities; and mutual cooperation of groups, communities and minorities in the areas of culture, education, computerisation, research and support projects. The public interest towards vulnerable groups also includes measures to ensure access to culture to their members.

Cultural policy tasks will continue to focus on:

- The best possible cooperation between the Sector and other authorities, primarily at the state level and if necessary also at the regional and local levels, which share responsibility for implementing the rights of citizens;
- Maintaining the openness of the entire public sphere, both inwardly (support for cultural diversity) and outwardly (European exchange, cooperation, meetings);
- Maintaining openness to the participation of national communities and the Roma community in designing measures intended for them;

- Strengthening the mediation system aimed at preventing inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and other conflict situations, and reinforcing legal and other expert counselling services;
- The best possible cooperation with non-governmental organizations, which can provide valuable information for drawing up expert guidelines in this area;
- Paying particular attention to artists and potential authors of original works contributing to cultural diversity (special services of the Sector, scholarships);
- Participation in the implementation of the operative programme of the European Social Fund;
- The examination of possibilities to provide an adequate status to the library for the blind and partially sighted within the libraries network;
- The provision of equal opportunities for participation in cultural life to persons with disabilities and members of vulnerable groups;
- Projects for the implementation of the aforementioned tasks, which will form part of a special European integration programme aimed at:
 - Supporting contributions to cultural diversity;
 - Creating conditions for intercultural dialogue; and
 - Promoting and encouraging social inclusion, regardless of nationality or ethnicity or the level of vulnerability.

When implementing the National Programme for Culture, special attention will be paid to monitoring laws, executive regulations and international documents. Provision of information to communities recognised by the Constitution will aim at actively involving these communities in drafting legislation. The chapter *Priorities and objectives – measures – indicators* includes the sub-chapter *The two national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups, immigrants and vulnerable groups*. Under the objective *improvement of conditions for promoting cultural diversity*, measures are envisaged to support linguistic projects and provide specific support to authors originating from national communities, the Roma community, various minority ethnic groups, immigrants and vulnerable groups; support to professional projects aimed at improving linguistic capabilities is planned as well. The objective *improvement of conditions for intercultural dialogue* stipulates that particular care should be given to involving national communities in formulating measures intended for them. The objective *improvement of conditions for social inclusion* is focused on priority support for projects within a programme funded by the European Social Fund, which aims at resolving human resources difficulties and issues related to equipment for operations.

The Slovenian Ministry of Culture¹⁵ follows the policy of developed cultural pluralism and interculturalism, which is the opposite of assimilation. In order to implement it, the Ministry has developed three programmes, including specific normative, organizational and financial instruments, which together form the comprehensive policy of the Ministry towards minorities. The first, already mentioned, is the special programme intended to support integration and activities for preserving special identities. It supports a wide range of projects involving books, CDs, literary evenings, lectures and newsletters – all bilingual or in the language of the minorities. The next is an integration programme, which is incorporated into the artistic and other programmes of the Ministry according to equal criteria and represents a realisation of the principle of equal opportunities, as well as quality inclusion in the public cultural infrastructure. Let us cite two examples. One refers to a CD recorded by the Roma Society Amala and funded within the music programme of the Ministry; the other is the exhibition *Islamic Community in the Ljubljana City Museum* from 14 October to 2 November 2008. The third programme, set up in 2008, has focused on the development of minority human resources, their training and employment. The programme is funded by the European Structural Fund. The call for applications is rather demanding, but we hope to gradually build up the knowledge required for successful participation; we believe that the number of successful projects will increase. A substantial amount will be made available for funding by 2015. This programme is aimed at addressing the current problems of human resources and simultaneously accelerating the development of minorities. We have undertaken it despite the staff limitations of the Sector, as we understand the problems and needs of minority non-governmental organizations; the programme aims to create conditions for the cultural development of minorities as the best counterweight to their assimilation.

The number and quality of projects has been increasing; members of vulnerable groups – project holders – have assessed the professional management of the call for applications, responsiveness and help provided by the Sector for Minority Cultural Rights of the Ministry as very good. Based on the evaluation findings, the Sector is improving its annual calls for applications, tailoring them to the needs of the groups concerned and their inclusion into cultural life in Slovenia.

¹⁵ The instruments of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia: The Ministry has developed a dynamic model of protecting cultural rights of minorities, which is being constantly upgraded and improved on the basis of analyses of past experience. The model involves three types of instruments: normative, organizational and financial. This means that professional activities for minorities involve not only financing but also the active involvement in the creation of normative conditions and the development of the services of the Sector. The services provided by the Sector include:

- Interventions to amend Article 1 of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, which now explicitly stipulates that the heritage created by members of national communities and other citizens of the Republic of Slovenia of any ethnic identity is covered as well;
- Active participation in regulating the formal status of the Lendava Cultural Centre, established in an ethnically mixed area;
- Active participation in drafting Articles 74 to 79 of the Exercising Public Interest in Culture Act (availability of public infrastructure to minorities);
- Workshops as means of communicating expert information and analytical findings concerning the programme financed by the European Social Fund (this service of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia is subject to evaluation);
- Mediation for solving ethnic and other conflicts (also stated in the National Programme for Culture);
- Intervention for expert storage of financed materials in INDOK, since it involves a sustainably designed presentation of diverse cultural production in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia;
- An open-door day for minority artists (also noted at the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia).

Recently, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia has funded two research projects partly used by the Ministry as expert guidelines in its work; the Ministry also keeps track of other research projects and gives its opinion thereon in the light of practical experience and possibilities regarding recommendations of researchers. The Ministry has been cooperating with the Institute for Ethnic Studies and various experts who are members of a special expert group of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia for the selection of projects for funding. One of the co-funded projects is a study entitled *Perceptions of Slovenian Integration Policy* (the main researcher is Miran Komac, see above), the second is the Comparative Analysis and Examples of Good Practices in settling Roma cultural issues in European countries (the main researcher is Jaka Repic, PhD).

Data on the special programme and the programme of funding from the European Social Fund for the period from 2005 to 2009 can be found in the enclosures:

1. Special programme (Annex 1);
2. German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia for 2009 (Annex 2);
3. European Social Fund (Annex 3).

In July 2004, the **Public Use of the Slovene Language Act**¹⁶ was adopted. Article 1, paragraph 1, stipulates Slovene as the language of oral and written communication in all spheres of public life in the Republic of Slovenia, except where Italian and Hungarian are also official languages in accordance with the Constitution, and when the provisions of international agreements that are binding on the Republic of Slovenia explicitly allow the use of other languages. Article 3 stipulates that in the territories of municipalities where the Italian or the Hungarian national community lives, the public use of Italian or Hungarian as the official language is guaranteed in the manner as regulated by the Public Use of Slovene Language Act and in accordance with the provisions of individual sector-specific laws.

The Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy (2007) mentions, in several passages, the guaranteeing of a suitable status to the languages of autochthonous minorities in Slovenia and particularly the development of the Roma language.

Pursuant to Articles 24 and 37 of the Public Use of the Slovene Language Act, in October 2005, the Minister of Culture issued the **Instruction on the manner of organising public events in which foreign languages are used as well**,¹⁷ stipulating in Article 4 that at public events organized for the population of municipalities in which the Italian or Hungarian national community lives, the language of the respective national community must be used in accordance with the provisions of sector-specific laws.

In June 2008, the Rules on advertising medicinal products were adopted.¹⁸ In accordance with Article 10, paragraph 1, advertisements must be in the Slovene language; in the areas where the Italian or Hungarian national community lives, advertisements may also be in the language of the respective national community. Notwithstanding the provision of paragraph 1, literature enclosed with advertising material for the professional public may also be in the source language of an article. At international expert meetings in Slovenia, advertisements and advertising material may also be in the language of the event or languages of the participants of the event.

On 11 February 2008, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Cultural Heritage Protection Act,¹⁹ stipulating in Article 1, paragraph 2, that the term “heritage” means resources inherited from the past which Slovenians, members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community, as well as other nationals of the Republic of Slovenia, define as a reflection and expression of their values, identities, religious and other beliefs, knowledge, and traditions. The Republic of Slovenia has therefore undertaken to protect cultural heritage on its territory regardless of its ethnic origin.

Article 6

¹⁶ Ur. l. RS No. 86/2004

¹⁷ Ur. l. RS No. 93/2005

¹⁸ Ur. l. RS No. 105/2008

¹⁹ Ur. l. RS No. 16/2008

Promotion of intercultural dialogue, understanding, cooperation and protection of vulnerable groups

In autumn 2008, the Republic of Slovenia was the first among the EU Member States to initiate the awareness-raising campaign *Dosta! Go beyond prejudice, discover the Roma*, focusing on learning about and understanding Roma, their culture, way of life and, by conveying a positive message, seeking to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes about this population group. In Slovenia, the Government Office for National Minorities is the promoter of the campaign, responsible for its organization and implementation. To this end, it has established close cooperation with the Council of Europe Information Office in Slovenia. The interested public, including non-governmental organizations, societies, the expert public, institutions concerned (ministries, government offices, municipalities, etc.), and the Roma community were invited to participate. The Government Office for National Minorities provides the campaign's funding. In Slovenia, the campaign was officially launched on 17 November 2008 at a ceremony with Pavle Gantar, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, as the speaker of honour. In his address, he supported the campaign's objectives and messages and expressed the hope that it may contribute to establishing and maintaining intercultural dialogue as much as possible and that it may reach the hearts and minds of people.

In cooperation with the Council of Europe Information Office in Slovenia, the Government Office for National Minorities ensured that campaign documents drawn up by the Council of Europe were translated into Slovene and distributed. Since the campaign's official launch, numerous activities have been organized (round tables, discussions, events) to present the campaign, its purpose and objectives. *The Month of Roma Culture/Romano chon* is worth mentioning. It was organized in April 2009 and hosted numerous cultural and other events. The campaign materials (video spots, posters, leaflets, CDs, cloth bags) were distributed to the public on different occasions. The activities will continue in 2010. Numerous events will be organized by various state authorities and non-governmental organizations (workshops, seminars, round tables) with a view to eliminating prejudice and promoting tolerance, understanding and acceptance. Special attention will be paid to young people; therefore efforts will also be made to carry out the campaign in pre-school institutions, schools and other educational institutions.

The campaign and its messages were also very important during Slovenia's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (12 May to 18 November 2009), because its priorities were focused on minorities, Roma and Travellers. During the Chairmanship, numerous highly visible events were organized with a view to conveying messages of tolerance and coexistence of minorities in the Republic of Slovenia and, at the same time, providing information to the public on the *Dosta!* Campaign. To list just a few of them: an international conference on education for Roma (25 and 26 May 2009), a round table on the situation of minorities in Slovenia and Slovenians living abroad (16 June 2009), and the opening event of the Council of Europe project **Route of Roma Culture and Heritage** (7 and 8 October 2009).

The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia and the Police within the Police Academy's programmes – basic and **short-cycle higher education** for police officers – pay particular attention to themes such as police ethics, rights of minorities, acceptance of differences and diversity, identification and management of stereotypes and prejudice,

prevention of discrimination, work in a multicultural society and opening of dialogue with individual communities. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, representatives of non-governmental organizations, Amnesty International and the Police chaplain participate in the educational process, and a female police officer of Roma origin presents the history, culture and characteristics of the Roma community.

The Training Centre of the Police Academy has carried out the following trainings:

- *Respect for human dignity for border police officers*, a seminar organized in cooperation with the Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies;
- *Interviewing Illegal Immigrants*, in cooperation with UNHCR;
- *Policing in a multiethnic community: recognising and controlling stereotypes*, a seminar usually carried out in a local community in cooperation with local representatives; when a Roma community is involved, a female police officer of Roma origin also participates;
- Language courses of Hungarian, Italian and Romani;
- The international seminar *Community-Oriented Policing with an Emphasis on Work with Minorities* was organized within the European Police College (CEPOL).

In 2008, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia co-funded the project *Diversity is the Wealth of Society*. The project was submitted by the Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organizations in response to the call for applications under the PROGRESS Programme *National Awareness-Raising Activities*. In cooperation with six non-governmental organizations (Women's Counselling, Racio Social, Slovenian Philanthropy, Institute for African Studies, Society for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto, Association LEGEBITRA), the Federation carried out 46 different activities in October 2008 with a view to raising awareness among the public about the reasons, forms and consequences of discrimination on the basis of personal circumstances, race or ethnic origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Activities were organized throughout Slovenia. The Federation also issued two publications ("Where to turn, who to contact to get my problem solved", intended for the elderly, and a collection of national and EU laws and rules in the field of equal opportunities for all, also on DVD) and drew up the final financial and substantive reports. The Federation and the Ministry distributed the material to public institutions and communities, and to the professional and general public. It is also accessible at partners' respective websites.

The priorities of the new National Programme for Culture (page 87) include the activities of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia intended to improve conditions for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. The criteria for priority consideration within calls for applications include: cooperation between different minority groups, and cultural activities for children and refugees. We are pleased that invitations to such events have started to arrive; for example, one was sent by the Macedonian Cultural Society for the opening of an exhibition to mark 11 October, their national holiday. The exhibition was held at the Croatian Home – the premises of the Association of Croatian Societies in Slovenia. The number of such cases has been increasing. The establishment of a coordinating committee which includes members of different nationalities is one such example. An instrument of mediation has been developed; it is intended to address tensions which may develop into serious conflicts; unfortunately, the response of minority societies is not such as would be expected (the case of mediation of 17 September 2008).

In 2005, one mediation case was held on 13 April with the Serbian Community Society and one on 29 December with the Union of Macedonian Cultural Societies of Slovenia; in 2008, mediation was held on 17 September with the Mihajlo Pupin Cultural Society. In these cases, mediation achieved its objective and proved to be the most suitable means of addressing a misunderstanding or dispute.

Legislation and other general official documents relating to education on human rights and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between all who live in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia

With regard to education on human rights and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation between all who live in Slovenia, we would like to first mention amendments to two relevant acts.

The amended ***Organization and Financing of Education Act***²⁰ adopted in March 2008, includes two new objectives:

- Ensuring the optimal development of an individual, regardless of gender, social and cultural origin, religious belief, race, ethnicity, nationality, and mental or physical constitution or handicap;
- Education for sustainable development and active involvement in democratic society, including deeper self-understanding and a responsible attitude towards oneself, one's own health, other people, own and other cultures, the natural and social environment, and future generations.

In addition to the previous objectives concerning education for respect and understanding, accepting differences and tolerance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, fostering literacy and the competency to understand, communicate and express oneself in the Slovene language and, in the areas defined as ethnically mixed, also in the Italian and Hungarian languages, respectively, the amendments to the ***Primary School Act***²¹ adopted in October 2007 also include education for sustainable development and active involvement in democratic society, including deeper self-understanding and a responsible attitude towards oneself, one's own health, other people, own and other cultures, the natural and social environment, and future generations; it also stresses the development of abilities to communicate in foreign languages.

In July 2007, the Minister of Education and Sport adopted the ***Guidelines for education for sustainable development from pre-school to university education***. The main purpose of the Guidelines is to point out the importance of education for sustainable development and to present the possibilities for implementing it in formal, informal and occasional learning. They address pre-school institutions, schools, the Ministry of Education and Sport, and public institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations and local communities. Education for sustainable development in Slovenia includes the following priorities:

- Respect for universal human values,
- Active citizenship and participation,
- Intercultural dialogue and linguistic diversity, and
- Quality relationships and development of social competencies (non-violence, tolerance, cooperation, respect, etc.).

²⁰ Ur. l. RS No. 36/2008

²¹ Ur. l. RS No. 102/2007

Syllabi and curricula

In 2008, updated curricula for elementary and grammar schools were adopted, focusing on competencies and a cross-curricular approach. Cross-curricular dimensions, including **education for human rights and the rights of the child**, can be developed through:

- A comprehensive development plan, management and school ethos;
- A specially designed timetable (flexible list of subjects) with theme days, activity weeks and events focusing on one of the cross-curricular dimensions;
- Curricular projects with partner schools in Slovenia and abroad (innovative projects, eco schools, health-promoting schools, UNESCO ASP network, Comenius projects, etc.);
- School subjects and their links through common themes or issues;
- Activities within routine school work, e.g. organising exhibitions or working with parents;
- Educational visits, various meetings, learning outside school and inclusion of external experts; and
- A combination of all the above activities.

Cross-curricular dimensions are included into school curricula so as to reflect the school's specific needs and interests and take account of the personal needs of its students.

The development of social and civic competencies falls within the general goals of the syllabi for the following subjects: Environmental Education (1st to 3rd grade of elementary school – ISCED 1), Social Sciences and Natural Sciences and Technics (4th and 5th grades – ISCED 1), Geography (6th to 9th grade – ISCED 1 and 2), new syllabus for Civic Education and Ethics (8th and 9th grades – ISCED 2), History (6th to 9th grade – ISCED 1 and 2) and numerous elective subjects (7th to 9th grade – ISCED 2).

Education for human rights is strengthened within the subjects Sociology and History taught in secondary schools (ISCED 3). The grammar school syllabus (ISCED 3A) includes objectives relating to development of relations, practice, beliefs, and views. Furthermore, compulsory and non-compulsory electives may also include a range of social and civic competencies.

Research and development studies

Public calls for applications were published for the development of models in the areas concerned, for projects carried out by educational institutions, and for the training of professionals in education. The Ministry of Education and Sport funded the preparation of didactic materials, which were distributed to teachers free of charge. All activities are aimed at improving the effectiveness and constructive cooperation in social and professional life and the resolution of potential disputes, and are designed to adequately train individuals for full participation in civic life.

In cooperation with other ministries, the ministry responsible for science contributes to the formation and implementation of strategic objectives set out in documents on long-term development planning at the national and ministerial levels through target research programme as a special form of implementing and funding scientific and research activities.

In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Sport commissioned a research and development study on the effectiveness of bilingual education models applied in the ethnically mixed areas. The study was carried out by the University of Primorska Science and Research Centre and was concluded in 2008. A comparative analysis carried out in ethnically mixed areas was used to measure levels of knowledge of Slovene, Hungarian and Italian as the first and second languages on the one hand, and the level of foreign language competence in pupils attending the 8th grade of elementary school (ISCED 2) on the other hand; it also assessed the effectiveness of bilingual elementary education in attaining goals of socialisation of pupils in linguistically and ethnically mixed settings.

Within a set of target research programmes, the Ministry of Education and Sport announced several projects relating to social and civic competencies in 2008, namely:

- The impact of educational institutions on interpersonal relations, gender differences, and sexuality and related themes (i.e. health and violence);
- The development of the concept of intercultural dialogue in educational institutions;
- Civic education;
- The potential impact of education on responsible use of leisure time; and
- Expert groundwork for introducing intergenerational dialogue in the field of education.

Two projects relating to **education for intercultural dialogue** were selected. **The first one is a study, which is envisaged to contribute to theoretical discussion and broader political-cultural-educational analysis of the situation, as well as to the design of plans and strategies in the broader field of intercultural dialogue. The second one should draft proposals for conceptualising intercultural dialogue and the purpose of its introduction into education.** Within a **public call for applications for projects in the area of social and civic competencies**,²² the following topics relating to the development and implementation of models in educational institutions were selected in 2008: healthy lifestyle, identification and prevention of violence, and active citizenship. The projects started on 1 December 2008 and will be completed by 31 August 2010. A total of EUR 438,000 has been earmarked for all four projects.

Projects in educational institutions

The priorities in the area of education aim at encouraging educational institutions to open to their local, regional, national and international environment; including elements of **intercultural dialogue** in the curriculum; offering programmes of further professional training for professionals in education; and strengthening project work in educational institutions. Intercultural competence includes not only the knowledge and understanding of other cultures, but also the ability to be proactively engaged in effective communication between various cultures and their mutual enrichment, enabled by the diversity and variety of perspectives.

The National Education Institute has cooperated with peer institutions in Austria and Italy within the CROMO project (cross-border module) since 2005, with the aim of strengthening and evaluating intercultural and interregional experience in the border region, a meeting of the three countries. The CROMO project's main purpose is to strengthen intercultural dialogue and the communication potential of young people, while

²² The selected projects are co-funded by the European Social Fund.

raising awareness and educating teachers for efficient work in a multicultural environment.

In 2009, the National Education Institute²³ continued to carry out tasks related to the promotion of intercultural education in pre-school institutions and schools initiated in 2008. The priorities include: raising awareness among management and teaching professionals about intercultural dialogue between all involved in the educational process; promoting exchange of experience, with particular stress on multiculturalism, between teaching professionals in different subject areas; networking with providers of activities for the inclusion of children from other language and cultural communities who immigrated to Slovenia; and cooperating with governmental and non-governmental organizations and establishing links with institutions in other countries promoting intercultural dialogue.

Within the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008,²⁴ the Ministry of Education and Sport cooperated with the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth, which has been carrying out the school competition *Europe at School* for many years. Within this competition, an international conference entitled *Education for Intercultural Dialogue* was organized on 8 and 9 May 2008 in Nova Gorica; it hosted 152 participants from 12 countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, United Kingdom, France, and Italy). The conference concluded with the adoption of findings and recommendations, summarised in the document *Nova Gorica Declaration on Education for Intercultural Dialogue*:

http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/drugo/Novogoriska_deklaracija.doc.

In 2009, a call for applications was envisaged to support projects with objectives taking into account multicultural situations at school and promote multicultural dialogue.

Within the project *Teaching about Human Rights and History Lessons*, carried out by the National Education Institute and funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport, numerous activities were performed in 2006 and 2007:

- Two research projects on education for human rights in history lessons were conducted, one at the European and the other at the national level;
- Two conferences were organized for history teachers: in 2006 at the national level and in 2007 at the European level; the conferences were attended by approximately 250 teachers;
- Two collections of papers for teachers in the Slovene and English languages were issued, featuring contributions on education for human rights in history lessons, including numerous examples of good practice.

In the school years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, a call for applications for educational institutions titled **Hidden Treasure** was organized in the field of sustainable development; several projects on civic education were selected. Educational institutions

²³ Two publications issued by the National Education Institute should be mentioned, namely: Motik, Dragica and Veljic, Irma. *Getting to Know Myself, Yourself, Ourselves*. Handbook for Teachers and Parents. National Education Institute, Ljubljana, 2006.

Motik, Dragica and Veljic, Irma (ed.). *Kindergarten and School – Intersection Point of Cultures. Collection of materials for the promotion of intercultural dialogue*. The National Education Institute and the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana, 2008.

²⁴ All the objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue may be found at: http://www.mss.gov.si/si/evropsko_letno_medkulturnega_dialoga/.

prepared projects aimed at a deeper understanding of social processes essential to sustainable development and the pertaining values; and the development of skills such as provision of arguments, constructive settlement of disputes, and communication with the world outside school. The projects encouraged the cross-curricular integration of topics in the field of civic education with lessons in history, philosophy, religion, languages, geography, and the social and natural sciences.

Within a **call for applications for projects in the area of social and civic competencies**,²⁵ seven educational institution networks were selected in 2008. In the preparation and implementation phase of the projects, they had to establish links with external partners (faculties, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc.) which are engaged in the field of selected topic: identification and prevention of violence, active spending of leisure time and intergenerational harmony, environment and space in the light of sustainable development, active citizenship, and education for gender equality. The projects started on 1 December 2008 and will be concluded on 31 October 2010. Their total value amounts to EUR 714,000.

Furthermore, within the **UNESCO ASP network**, there are several other projects underway in which pupils learn to respect human rights. The priority themes and tasks of the network include education for sustainable development; peace and human rights; intercultural learning; combating HIV/AIDS and poverty; and attaining environmental sustainability objectives through information and communication technology. In the school year 2006/2007, there were 338 educational institutions participating in various national projects within the ASP network and 50 within the international UNESCO projects or those recommended by UNESCO.

The Ministry of Education and Sport has successfully cooperated with the following non-governmental and other organizations engaged in this field: UNICEF, Council of Europe, Umanotera and Sloga, to name only a few.

Further education and training of professionals in educational institutions

Continuing professional development of teachers is ensured through **professional training programmes** funded from the state budget through the Ministry of Education and Sport and published annually in the *Catalogue of Further Education Programmes for Teachers in Educational Institutions*. The programmes intended for the protection of national minorities were included in the catalogue under various thematic sets.

In the period from 2004 to 2008, the catalogue featured seven different programmes²⁶ in the duration from 16 to 48 hours, intended to train teachers for education in **social and civil rights and intercultural dialogue** :

- Civic education – educating for democratic citizenship;
- Reaching tolerance and understanding of diversity through play;
- Intercultural cooperation in the form of project work;
- European integration and tolerance;
- Intercultural learning – the challenge of our age or beyond;
- Promoting intercultural dialogue between pupils in modern society;
- Living together in a multicultural society.

²⁵ The selected projects were co-funded by the European Social Fund.

²⁶ The programmes can be repeated more than once in a year or over several years.

- The listed programmes were attended by 511 professionals; the Ministry of Education and Sport allocated EUR 3,583.48 for training according to these programmes.

In the school year 2005/2006, the following 16-hour programmes were provided under the thematic set **active citizenship, equal opportunities and prevention of social exclusion** in the teacher training programmes co-funded by the European Social Fund:

- Playgrounds for everyone: social sensitivity and education for tolerance and a multicultural society, provided by the National Sport Institute, Ljubljana;
- Strategies for learning democratic citizenship, provided by the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana;
- Educating for tolerance and acceptance of differences through youth literature, provided by the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

The listed programmes were attended by 121 participants; EUR 27,600 was allocated for their implementation.

A project provided by the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, *Professional training of professionals in education in the area of social and citizenship competences*²⁷ co-funded by the European Social Fund, was launched at the beginning of 2008 and included training in the fields of healthy lifestyle, active citizenship, intergenerational harmony, promotion of intercultural dialogue, equal opportunities, environmental protection and significance of space, recognising and preventing violence, etc. **In 2009, the seven-day training programme *Promotion of intercultural dialogue* was launched. It is envisaged to be attended by 550 participants over three years and will be allocated EUR 135,000. Preparation activities for training were carried out in 2008.**

Articles 7 and 8

In May 2006, a **new draft law on societies** (EPA-533-IV; second reading) was submitted to the National Assembly procedure for adoption. Considering the comments of the Commission for the Issues of the Italian National Community of the Municipal Council, Municipality of Izola, Article 10, paragraph 1, of the law reads as follows: “The name of a society shall be in Slovene. If a society is based in the area where the self-governing national communities live, its name may also be composed of a translation of the name into the Italian or Hungarian language. The name of the society shall differ from other societies’ names and shall not be misleading or insulting.” The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Societies Act at its session on 30 May 2006.²⁸

The representative of the Italian national community at the National Assembly, Roberto Battelli, proposed the initiation of proceedings before the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, challenging Article 10 of the Societies Act, which regulates the name of a society. The initiator believed that the Article was inconsistent with the Constitution and that the challenged statutory regulation constituted a deviation from the constitutional requirement of the “concurrent official nature” and “equality” of the Slovene language and the languages of the national communities in the geographical areas where they live. In its decision, the Constitutional Court took the stand that the languages of the national communities in the geographical areas where these communities live enjoy

²⁷ For more information about the project, please visit the website <http://usposabljanje.pef.uni-lj.si/>.

²⁸ Ur. l. RS No. 61/2006

a special constitutional status and protection and are, as such, not foreign languages. The challenged regulation stipulates that societies with a registered office in the area where the autochthonous national communities live must use a translation of the name of the society in the Italian or Hungarian language, whereas it does not stipulate the use of these languages alone; it is therefore inconsistent with the rights enjoyed by these national communities under Article 64, paragraph 1, of the Constitution. Thus the Constitutional Court decided that the challenged regulation is inconsistent with the aforementioned provision of the Constitution. The court set a one-year period for the legislature to remedy the established inconsistency.

In August 2009, the Act Amending the Societies Act (Ur. l. RS No. 58/09) took effect, which was passed by the National Assembly on 15 July 2009.

Article 1 stipulates as follows:

The second sentence of Article 10, paragraph 1, of the Societies Act (Ur. l. RS No. 61/06) shall be amended so as to read: “If the society has its head office in an area inhabited by national communities, the name of the society shall be in the official language of the relevant national community.”

The second sentence of paragraph 2 shall be amended so as to read: “The name of the society must contain a designation indicating the activity of the society.” The last sentence shall be deleted.

A new paragraph 3 shall be added, which reads as follows:

“(3) The name of the society may have an additional element specifying the designation of the society. The provision of paragraph 1 hereof relating to the use of the language does not apply to the additional element, provided that:

- It is in the Slovene language or the language of a national community;*
- It is the name or part of the name of an international union of societies of which the relevant society is a member, or of a foreign society that is the founder of a foreign society branch in the Republic of Slovenia;*
- It is a personal name of the person under paragraph 5 hereof;*
- It includes words in a foreign language, indicating the activity of the society, for which there is no corresponding expression in the Slovene language;*
- It is a dead language.”*

The current paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6 shall become paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Respect for association

The Slovenian Ministry of Culture respects the freedom of association. On 6 June 2006, the Minister of Culture received the Coordination Committee of “new minorities”, and a meeting with them was organized in the Prime Minister’s Office in April 2007, followed by a meeting with the Minister of Culture on 2 March 2009. On 12 January 2009, the Minister received a deputy of the Hungarian national community and also answered his questions in writing. Moreover, she received representatives of the Roma community in Slovenia.

Religious Freedom Act

In 2007 the Religious Freedom Act was passed (Ur. l. RS No. 14/07; hereinafter referred to as the Act), which provides for the normative regulation and exercise of religious freedom, establishes a register of churches and other religious communities, the criteria, conditions and procedure for the registration of churches and other religious communities, as well as the rights of registered churches and other religious communities and their members. The Act stresses in particular the importance of the principle of equal treatment

when laying down and enumerating the tasks of the relevant body.²⁹ “16. Particularly strive to exercise the principle of equal treatment within its area of work; 17. Create the terms and conditions for equal treatment of persons within its competences, regardless of religious belief, by raising awareness and monitoring the situation in this field and by regulatory and political measures.”³⁰

This project may be classified among those that have encouraged cultural diversity and contributed to non-discrimination and the cultural wealth of society, since it has established precise criteria for financing and registering churches and other religious communities. Churches and other religious communities are considered as organizations of general benefit. Upon drafting the law, consultations have been held with members of religious communities, and round tables have been organized. Statutory regulation provides a normative basis for guaranteeing religious freedom.

The Act contains no specific provisions on freedom of conscience and belief that would relate to national minorities. With regard to religious freedom, members of national minorities are treated in the same way as all other persons entitled to such freedom.

Even prior to the adoption of the new Act, other groups have registered churches or other religious communities; according to their national affiliation, these include Bosniaks, Muslims (mainly the ethnic basis of the Islamic Community in Slovenia and the Slovenian Muslim Community), Serbs (mainly the ethnic basis of the Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana), Macedonians (mainly the ethnic basis of the Macedonian Orthodox Community in Slovenia, “Saint Clement of Ohrid”) and members of the Hungarian national community (mainly the ethnic basis of the Reformed Christian Church of Slovenia); these were (like all other religious communities registered with the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Religious Communities) entered in the Register of Religious Communities as soon as the new Act came into force. Their status is equal to that of all other religious communities.

The Commission of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Solving Open Issues of Religious Communities

The purpose of the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Solving Open Issues of Religious Communities (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) is to deal with open issues of religious communities concerning the relation between the state and the religious communities. The Commission is in principle composed of ministers, and, according to the topic addressed, members of different religious communities are invited to participate in the session and present open issues, express their opinions and propose solutions.

In the last five years the Commission met with representatives of the Catholic Church, Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia, Pentecostal Church in the Republic of Slovenia, Serbian Orthodox Church, Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana, Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia, Jewish Community of Slovenia – Jewish Municipality of Ljubljana, Buddha Dharma – Union of the Buddhists in the Republic of Slovenia, Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling, and the Sacrament of Transition.

²⁹ In compliance with the Decision Amending the Decision on the Establishment of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Religious Communities (Ur. l. RS No. 22/2007), the relevant body is the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Religious Communities.

³⁰ Article 30 of the Religious Freedom Act, paragraph 1, items 16 and 17

The Commission provides the opportunity for religious communities to take part in seeking solutions of importance to them.

Consultations of representatives of religious communities

The Government Office for Religious Communities organizes, three to four times a year, consultations for representatives of religious communities on topics of interest to them. In this way, representatives of national communities gain an insight into legislation, their obligations deriving from such legislation, and the manner of exercising their rights. Special guests – experts in different fields – are also invited to such consultations to present a topic relating to their activity and to answer the questions of the participants. In the period until 6 July 2004, the Government Office for Religious Communities organized 16 consultations (including Ethical Issues of Contemporary Society, Trafficking in Human Beings, Hate Speech and Social Responsibility) attended by 20–40 representatives of Churches and other religious communities.

Providing expert assistance and informing representatives of Churches and other religious communities enable them to gain better knowledge of regulations in different areas relating to their activities. Consultations are also an important step towards tolerance, communication, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, encouraging cultural diversity and raising awareness of the significance of religious affiliation. These consultations have met with broad public response, since representatives of the media are also invited to participate. At the end of the consultations, the Government Office for Religious Communities provides the public with information on the event. The record of the consultation is forwarded to all representatives of Churches and other religious communities.

Meetings of representatives of religious communities

The Government Office for Religious Communities has organized, since 6 July 2004, three meetings of representatives of Churches and other religious communities. These meetings proved to be an important aspect of cooperation between the state, Churches and other religious communities, as well as between the latter two. They promote a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding and cooperation among all the participants. As they are widely publicised, they also attract the attention of the general public.³¹

³¹ JAVORCA KRN 2008

A meeting and hiking of representatives of religious communities for peace and co-existence took place on 16 and 17 July. It was attended by Buddhists, Jews, Muslims (including Mufti Nedžad Grabus), representatives of the Catholic, Reformed Evangelical and Unionist Churches, and employees of the Government Office for Religious Communities, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Defence. The event marked the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the International Year of the Earth. Three aspects were considered: the message of peace, the message of history and the message of the environment. The participants followed the same paths that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers – members of many European nations and religions – had to take during World War I at the Isonzo front in much harsher conditions. The starting point was at the memorial church of the Holy Spirit at Javorca, built in 1916 by Austro-Hungarian soldiers, which was listed under the European Heritage label in 2007. The participants climbed up the 400 m long and 100 m wide Batognica ridge over the Prehodci and Peski mountain passes. Batognica is a monument to military plans, human suffering and the prayer of members of many European nations and religions. They visited Austrian and Italian posts and walked with torches through tunnels dug into the rock. The following day, the participants climbed up the peak of Krn from the Gomišckovo Zavetišče mountain hut. After the descent to the village of Krn, they stopped in the native village of poet Simon Gregorčič and visited the Museum of World War I in the village of Drežnica. The event prompted considerations on history, the future and relations to the environment, as well as on the role of religious communities in their endeavours to attain peace and co-existence and to preserve the nature and identity of European nations in Europe and in the world at large. It was also a good exercise in overcoming physical efforts together, providing help, engaging in interfaith and intercultural dialogue, making acquaintances and coming together.

Pre-festive reception for representatives of religious communities

The Government Office for Religious Communities organizes, in December each year, a traditional pre-holiday reception for representatives of churches and other religious communities. (In 2008, there were 150 guests at the reception.) Various Churches and other religious communities have contributed to the programme of recent receptions: the Muslim ladies' choir sang Islamic spiritual songs (*ilahie*); a group of singers of the Macedonian Orthodox Church sang some folk songs; in 2008, marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of Primož Trubar, a Protestant reverend and writer, the choir of the Evangelical Church CANTATE sang some of Trubar's and other songs; and scouts brought Light and the Peace Message from Bethlehem and distributed it among the guests.

The pre-holiday reception provided an opportunity for representatives of certain state authorities and representatives of religious communities, as well as for representatives of religious communities themselves, to establish direct contacts. Such forms of cooperation and engagement by religious communities encourage their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.

Agreements with religious communities

ISTRA 2007

The event held on 18 April 2007 was attended by 32 representatives of 14 Churches and other religious communities: the Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling, Catholic Church, Christian Adventist Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Evangelical Church in the Republic of Slovenia, Hindu Religious Community, International School of the Golden Rosycross – Lectorium Rosicrucianum, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia, Macedonian Orthodox Community in the Republic of Slovenia "Saint Clement of Ohrid", Pentecostal Church in the Republic of Slovenia, Reformed Evangelical Church, Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana, and the Unionist Church. The initiative for organising such a gathering came from representatives of religious communities who took part in similar events in 2004 and 2005 and have kept fond memories of them.

The participants enjoyed nature, from the rough limestone terrain and limestone pavement of the Karst Ridge to the Sečovlje Saltpans plain, full of life, as well as church art from the fresco Dance of the Dead by Janez from Kastav to the new life by Fr. Marko Ivan Rupnik. A bus transfer was organized to the village of Dvori near the Croatian border, followed by a walk past the well-known cave shelters of the Karst Ridge to St. Kvirik. In Hrastovlje, the participants visited the Church of the Holy Trinity with well-known frescoes. In Koper, priests, accompanied by their church superiors, presented their respective communities: the Adventist community was presented by Rev. Stjepan Jurčič, together with superior Zmago Godina; the Serbian Orthodox community by the Paroch of Koper, Tomo Cirković, together with archiereical substitute Peran Bošković and the Islamic community by the Imam of Koper, Redžep Hodžić, together with Mufti Nedžad Grabus, who also organized a feast for the participants. All those present were acquainted with the activities, problems and plans of the communities concerned, which conveyed an important message of co-existence and constructive interfaith cooperation for the benefit of all believers (the Catholic Church gave the Orthodox Church one of its church buildings for permanent use; Muslim religious lessons are held on the premises of the Catholic parish; when raising funds for the Catholic Church of St. Mark, Muslims were the first to give a donation). The Secovlje Saltpans impressed the participants by the endeavours to protect the environment and with their diverse fauna and flora. The participants enjoyed the beauties of nature in pleasant company, and learnt more about history and cultural heritage while contemplating co-existence and intercultural and interfaith dialogue, which was also one of the highlights of the Slovenian EU Council Presidency.

KRN 2005

Climbing Krn was a two-day gathering of representatives of Churches and other religious communities held in an endeavour towards peace, the preservation of nature and familiarization with Slovenian history. It was guided by the Director of the Office for Religious Communities, accompanied by another representative of the Office and a representative of the Ministry of Defence. Other participants included representatives of the Christian Adventist Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Evangelical Church, Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia, Jewish Community, Roman Catholic Church, Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling, International Society for **Krishna** Consciousness, and the Unionist Church.

The underlying idea was to walk the trail (from Bohinj to Krn) that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers – members of many European nations and religions – had to walk at the time of the Isonzo front under much harsher conditions. The event took place despite bad weather conditions on the first day. All the participants were soaked to the skin, regardless of their religious beliefs. They could have changed their mind, but no one did; they all shared the same difficulties. This experience enriched them; on day two, which was the most beautiful day of the year, they were rewarded for their decision.

Programme: Departure from Ljubljana at 5:00. Walking past three important sites from the "Baptism at the Savica" by the most famous Slovenian poet, France Prešeren (the Isle of Bled, Ajdovski Gradec archaeological site, Lake Bohinj) to the Koča pri Savici mountain hut, Koča pod Bogatinom mountain hut, the Bogatin pass, Lake Krn (overnight stay and drying), Batognica, Krn, the Batognica pass, Lake Krn, Lepena, the Vršič pass, Kranjska Gora and Ljubljana.

The objective of this gathering was to raise awareness of the importance of the environment, peace and cultural values; moreover, respect and trust were established among the participants, who had to overcome difficulties together.

Since 6 July 2004, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia has signed agreements with three religious communities: on 9 July 2004, the Agreement on the Legal Status of the Serbian Orthodox Church with the Serbian Orthodox Church of the Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana; on 9 July 2007, the Agreement on the Legal Status of the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia with this community in the Republic of Slovenia; and on 4 July 2008, the Agreement on the Legal Status of the Buddhist Congregation Dharmaling with this congregation.

In the opinion of Ambassador Ömür Orhun, personal representative of the OSCE C-i-O on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, the Agreement with the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia is an excellent example of good practice, since Slovenia is one of the few European countries that have concluded such an agreement with the Islamic community. The 2008 Human Rights Report of the State Department on Slovenia is also mentioned in the Agreement: “In July 2007 the justice minister, who was the chair of the government Commission for Religious Communities, and Mufti Nedžad Grabus signed an agreement that acknowledged the Muslim community as an integral part of society, more clearly defined the areas of its activities, and facilitated the implementation of its programmes. It also gave the Muslim community the right to establish its own media and educational institutions, to preserve its historical and cultural heritage, and to conduct religious services in hospitals and for army and police forces, and placed Muslim charities on an equal footing with other charities. Negotiations on implementing the agreement were conducted until the end of the year.”

Muslims

Muslims are organized in two religious communities: the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian Muslim Community. The construction of a mosque falls within the competence of the Municipality of Ljubljana. The Government Office for Religious Communities endeavours, within its competence, to promote tolerance and respect for diversity and multiculturalism among the general public, e.g. by publicizing examples of good practice (the aforementioned Agreement, a report on positive cooperation at the local level – see Istria 2007, support for individual projects, e.g. education of imams, erection of Muslim tombstones on Muslim tombs from World War I), joint events (consultations, meetings and ongoing contacts) and positive messages to the public (e.g. expressing support for the project of construction of the mosque). The Government Office for Religious Communities has been cooperating with the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia, which has been registered in Slovenia since 1976 (under the first statutory provision on the entry of religious communities in the relevant list) and with the Slovenian Muslim Community since its registration in 2006. Cooperation has proved to be successful in all aspects. Representatives of Islamic religious communities meet regularly and take part in all forms of meetings organized by the Office for Religious Communities. Employees of the Office are frequently invited to events organized by the Islamic religious communities and take part in such events on a regular basis. The agreement concluded is yet another proof of successful cooperation.

Social security contributions and symbolic financial support

Registered Churches and other religious communities may, on behalf of their religious employees (priests, monks and certain lay persons) and under the conditions provided for by the Religious Freedom Act, apply for targeted state financial support from the national budget to cover social security contributions. The priests of the Islamic Community in the

Republic of Slovenia and of the Serbian Orthodox Church of the Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana are also eligible for such contributions.

These communities are also recipients of symbolic financial support from the state that may be allocated to any religious community. Financial support has been allocated to religious communities for the following purposes:

- Support for the issue of a prayer book in the Romani language – Catholic Church;
- Support for humanitarian, cultural and educational activities of the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian Muslim Community;
- Support for the construction of a cultural and pastoral centre, provided to the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Municipality of Ljubljana;
- Support to the Slovenian Reformed Christian Church operating in the ethnically mixed area of Prekmurje;
- Support to the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Slovenia “Saint Clement of Ohrid”.

Article 9

Radiotelevizija Slovenija³² (hereinafter referred to as RTV Slovenia) is a public institution of special cultural and national importance. It performs a public service in the area of radio and television activities as specified by the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, for the purpose of providing for the democratic, social and cultural needs of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenes around the world, members of the Slovenian national minorities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, and the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia, and other activities in accordance with the Act and with the Statute of RTV Slovenia, as well as with the Act regulating the media.

RTV Slovenia’s public service in the area of radio and television activities includes creating, producing, archiving and broadcasting one radio and television programme each for the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities, as well as radio and television broadcasts for the Roma community.

In its programming, RTV Slovenia ensures

- Credible and impartial informational broadcasts, whereby it provides comprehensive information regarding political events in Slovenia and in neighbouring countries, important events in other European countries, particularly EU Member States, and important world topics such that the content broadcasted guarantees objective public informing of Slovenian citizens, Slovenes around the world, members of the Slovenian national minorities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia, and the Roma community living in Slovenia;
- Fulfilment of the constitutional rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the area of public information via public radio and television, and promotion of ties between the national communities and their nations of origin, and incorporation of cultural and other achievements of the Italian and Hungarian nations into national community programmes.

³² In March 2005, the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Ur. l. RS No. 96/2005) entered into force. At its third regular session on 24 May 2005, the National Assembly’s Commission for National Communities perused the draft law on RTV Slovenia. The session was also attended by a representative of the proposers, Minister of Culture Dr Vasko Simoniti, who emphasised that the proposers had held a meeting with representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and tried to bring the text of the draft law in line with comments made by the above representatives. He also underlined that the draft law in no way limits the rights of the two national communities.

The terrestrial network of the national channel must cover an area inhabited by at least 90% of the population of Slovenia, while national community channels must be broadcast in 90% of the territory inhabited by the Italian and Hungarian national communities. A national community channel or part of it may be contractually leased to another radio or television organization or producer only with the approval of the relevant programme committee for a national community programme. The Director of Radio and Director of Television are appointed by the Director-General on the basis of a public call for applications after obtaining consent of the Programme Board. The Director of Radio and Director of Television organize and head the work of the radio and television respectively, and are responsible for the professional programming of radio and television respectively, except for that part of professional programming management relating to the national community channels, which are entrusted to two Assistant Directors-General appointed by the Director-General in agreement with the relevant programme committee.

The Programme Board is the supreme managing body of the public institution for matters relating to programme policy. In performing its work, the Programme Board represents and protects the interests of the public by conducting the programme policy in a manner which serves the interests of the entire population of Slovenia and which, in a spirit of equality of content, considers the majority and the autochthonous national communities, minorities and groups with special needs (principle of publicity). In line with the generally accepted standards of a free democratic society, the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, the Programme Board is responsible for continuously ensuring and promoting the level of democracy in its programme policy, in particular by providing that the radio and television programmes present a broad range of ideologically diversified information, opinions and discussions relating to public issues (principle of plurality). In exercising its powers, the Programme Board is bound to the principle of political independence of the public institution RTV Slovenia, both in relation to the state, as well as other formal and informal centres of political power (principle of independence).

The Programme Board notifies the Director General in writing of any failure to observe the above principles within RTV Slovenia, or of any inconsistencies in the implementation of programme standards, the programming plan, or other programme obligations. The Programme Board may not interfere in any individual parts of a programme prior to its broadcast, or adopt decisions or standpoints related to the broadcast of parts of a programme. The individual parts of a programme are to be in conformity with relevant programme standards and criteria. The Programme Board comprises 29 members, of whom one member is appointed by the Hungarian national community, and one member by the Italian national community. The Programme Board appoints a nine-member programme committee for the Italian and Hungarian national community programmes, respectively, except for members appointed by the self-governing national communities, or those elected by employees in the editorial offices of the national community programmes from amongst themselves. The Italian and Hungarian self-governing national communities in the Republic of Slovenia appoint to their respective programme committees two thirds of the members, for a term of four years.

One member is appointed to each programme committee by employees in the editorial offices of the radio and television programmes for the Italian and Hungarian national

communities from amongst themselves. The programme committees for the national community programmes grant their consent to the appointment of the respective managing editors for the national community programmes, and to the scope and programme profile, programme standards and programme scheme, which must be in line with the material capacities of the RTV Slovenia public institution and with the regulations governing its work.

The programme committees for the national community programmes:

- Address fulfilment of the programme profile and the programming plan, as well as the annual report of the RTV Slovenia public institution in the part relating to the national community programmes;
- Address the comments and suggestions of viewers and listeners of the national community programmes and indicate their position in this regard;
- Offer initiatives to the Programme Board for dealing with issues in the area of national community programmes;
- Perform other tasks in the area of national community programmes where so provided by the Statute.

No member of a national community programme committee may be a member of the Supervisory Board.

The Supervisory Board informs in writing the Programme Board and the programme committees of the radio and television programmes for the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the National Assembly of Slovenia and the minister responsible for the media of its findings. Where it detects irregularities, it charges the Director-General with eliminating them. The Supervisory Board has the right and duty in cases of established irregularities to propose to the competent authorities that they take steps within their competence.

The operations of RTV Slovenia are public. Its annual report is published in the manner provided by the Statute. It must also include an analysis of the costs of programme production by individual programme component or content. The annual report is published on the website of the RTV Slovenia public institution. Decisions and positions of the Supervisory Board and positions of the programme committees for the national community programmes relating to national community programme issues are also publicized.

That part of the national community programmes not financed from licence fees is financed from the state budget.

A positive development in the field of information activities for the Roma community is the production of radio and television broadcasts for Roma. These have been broadcast for several years at local radio and television stations, and lately also within the Slovenian national radio and television programmes: since December 2007, the weekly Roma show “Naše Poti – Amare Droma” has been broadcast by the national radio station, and since 23 March 2008, the fortnightly 15-minute show “So Vakeres? – Kaj Govoriš?” prepared by Roma authors has been broadcast on the national television.

Since 2003, the Roma Information Centre (ROMIC) has been operating within the Union of Roma of Slovenia. At the last call for applications of the Post and Electronic Communications Agency (the decision on announcing a call for applications for the assignment of radio frequencies for broadcasting was published in Ur. l. RS No.

118/2007), it was assigned a local radio frequency for the wider Murska Sobota area (97.6 MHz).

*Statute of the Public Institution Radiotelevizija Slovenija*³³

In performing their work, the programme committees represent and protect the interests of the public. They implement their programme policy in a manner which primarily serves the needs of the autochthonous national communities, ensures the exercise of constitutional rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities as regards radio and television public information, and enhances the integration of national communities with their nation of origin and the inclusion of cultural and other achievements of the Italian and Hungarian nations in national community programmes. In exercising their powers, the programme committees for the Italian and Hungarian national community programmes are, alongside the Programme Board of RTV Slovenia, committed to the principle of ideological plurality and political independence of the public institution RTV Slovenia in relation to the state, as well as other formal and informal centres of political power.

The programme committees inform the Programme Board of RTV Slovenia in writing of any inconsistencies in the implementation of programme standards and the programming plan in areas relating to the autochthonous national communities, as well as of any other violations of the principles from the previous paragraph that are related to their areas of activity. The Programme Board of RTV Slovenia takes appropriate action within the scope of powers granted to it under Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Statute, and assists the respective programme committee in monitoring the redress of violations and taking any further measures. The Programme Board may grant specific powers to a programme committee to eliminate a violation. The two programme committees may not interfere in individual parts of a programme prior to their broadcast and are generally not allowed to adopt decisions regarding standpoints related to a broadcast. The individual parts of a programme are to be in line with relevant programme standards and criteria.

RTV Slovenia may contractually lease a national community programme or part of it to another radio or television organization or producer only with the approval of the relevant programme committee.

The fundamental tasks of the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community are:

- To prepare and defend the programme profiles, programming schemes, and the annual programming plans within the scope of the programme and business plan of RTV Slovenia;
- To conduct and coordinate the implementation of annual programming plans and report to the Director-General on the fulfilment of programme, business and development plans;
- To manage and coordinate the organizational, business and other general affairs of national community programmes in regional centres;
- To decide and participate in decision-making on other issues related to their respective fields of activity and fulfil the obligations assigned by the Director-General;

³³ Ur. l. RS No. 106/2006

- To manage the professional programme activities of radio and television programmes in those areas relating to their respective national community programmes.

The Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community are members of the top management of RTV Slovenia in those areas relating to the national community programmes. In performing their tasks, they are required to observe the fundamental principles applicable to the work of the Director-General, the Director of Radio Programmes and the Director of Television Programmes (Article 42, paragraph 2, and Article 50, paragraph 3, of the Statute).

The Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community have their official seats within the national community studios, where they organize and manage their respective radio and television programmes.

The Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community are at the same time also the directors of studios for the Italian and Hungarian programmes, respectively.

The Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community are directly responsible for their work to the Director General of RTV Slovenia and to their respective programme committees for national community programmes.

The Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community are appointed by the Director-General with the consent of the Programme Committee for the Italian National Community Programme and the Programme Committee for the Hungarian National Community Programme, respectively.

The term of office of the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community is four years.

The term of office of the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Italian National Community and the Assistant Director-General for Radio and Television Programmes for the Autochthonous Hungarian National Community is linked to the office of Director-General, which means that in the event of the Director-General's dismissal, the two aforementioned directors continue to perform their tasks as acting assistant directors with full competences.

Managing editors³⁴ are responsible for the creation and production of television and radio programmes, as well as multimedia programmes, including the teletext, Internet and mobile portals. Moreover, they are responsible for the realisation of such programmes from the financial, programme, staff and production aspects. Managing editors are also responsible for the implementation of editorial policy and the utilisation of financial resources in line with the programme profiles and approved programming plan.

The job descriptions of managing editors are determined by the Director of Radio Programmes, the Director of Television Programmes, and the Assistant Directors-General for radio and television programmes for the autochthonous national communities, respectively, and are laid down in the document on the internal organization of the public institution. In performing their tasks, managing editors observe the principles of publicity, plurality and independence as specified in Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Statute.

Managing editors are responsible for their work to the Director of Radio Programmes, the Director of Television Programmes, and to the Assistant Directors-General for radio and television programmes for the autochthonous national communities, respectively, as well as to the director-general. The managing editor of the MMC programme unit is responsible to the head of MMC and to the directors of radio and television programmes, respectively. In performing their tasks, the managing editors and editorial offices of individual programme units are required to observe journalism standards, the Munich Declaration, the code of journalism ethics, and the relevant programme standards and criteria.

The public institution RTV Slovenia also comprises the programme and production unit Regional RTV Centre Koper (Centro Regionale RTV Koper Capodistria [PPU-RC KP]) and the programme-production unit Regional RTV Centre Maribor with a studio for the Hungarian programme in Lendava (Magyar Musorok Stúdiója Lendva).

A radio station broadcasting in the Italian language was established in 1949, and a TV station in 1971. The TV station provides information for the Italian community in Slovenia and Croatia. Daily radio and television programmes are produced within the public RTV Slovenia, at the Regional RTV Centre Koper-Capodistria (national RTV channel). There is 18 hours of radio programme daily, which amounts to 126 hours weekly, while television programmes are broadcast for 9 hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and for 7.5 hours on Mondays and Thursdays. Regional RTV Centre Koper-Capodistria has 155 employees working on radio and television

³⁴ A candidate for managing editor is required to have the following qualifications: be a citizen of the Republic of Slovenia; have a university degree; be fluent in the Slovene language; have a good command of at least one world language (for the national community programme, also a good command of the Italian or Hungarian language); have at least five years' work experience with references of achievement in cultural and artistic activities or activities related to the media; be acquainted with issues related to radio and television activities; possess organizational and managerial skills; not be a deputy of the National Assembly or an official of any political party; and not hold an equity stake or maintain permanent contractual relations with legal persons doing business with RTV Slovenia. Managing editors of the radio and television programmes for the autochthonous national communities are appointed and dismissed by the Director General, with the approval of the relevant programme committee for a national community programme, on the proposal of the Director of Radio or Television Programmes, who publishes public calls for applications for such positions. The term of office of managing editors of the radio and television programmes for the autochthonous national communities is four years. If the Director of Radio or Television Programmes for the autochthonous national community proposes to the Director General that a candidate who did not receive a positive opinion of the majority of employees in a particular programme unit be appointed managing editor, the majority of employees in such programme unit have the right to propose that the Director General appoint a candidate who has obtained their positive opinion, and notify the Programme Committee for the national community programme thereof. In such case, the Director General selects a candidate after obtaining the consent of the programme committee for the national community, which is required to discuss and decide within not more than 30 days after receiving notice thereof whether to give its consent to one, both or neither of the proposed candidates.

programmes for the Italian national community in Slovenia (57 on the radio programme, 97 on the television programme, and 1 in management). A further 24 people work under a permanent contract (3 for the radio programme and 21 for the television programme) and 106 under a temporary contract (39 for the radio programme and 67 for the television programme), while 13 people are employed through student employment services (6 for the radio programme and 7 for the television programme). Radio and television programmes for the Italian national community in the Republic of Slovenia are therefore produced by a total of 298 people. National community programmes are also co-financed by the state (Slovenian Government Office for National Minorities) pursuant to Article 30 of the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 96/05, ..., 105/2006).

Radio and television programmes for the Hungarian national community are produced within the public RTV Slovenia, at the Regional RTV Centre Maribor – Hungarian Programmes Studio Lendava. There are 18 hours and 15 minutes of radio programmes daily, including on Saturday and Sunday, while the television programmes comprise the TV series MOSTOVI-HIDAK (“Bridges”), which is broadcast by the national television (Programme I) and by the Maribor regional TV programme. Thirty-minute episodes of the MOSTOVI-HIDAK series are broadcast by the national television four times per week (with an additional rerun of each episode) through most of the year, and three times per week (plus reruns) in the summertime. The 30-minute episodes are also shown four times per week by the Maribor regional programme through most of the year, and three times per week in the summertime. To ensure the operation of this institution falling within the system of RTV Slovenia, a certain number of staff members have permanent employment, and some work on a permanent contract (a special fee is collected by the national TV for this purpose). In the studio for the Hungarian programme in Lendava, a total of 29 staff members are employed on a full-time basis at the radio and television programmes. A further 13 people work under permanent contract for both radio and television programmes, and 67 under temporary contract. One person is employed through student employment services. Radio and television programmes for the Hungarian national community in the Republic of Slovenia are therefore produced by a total of 110 persons. National community programmes are also co-financed by the state (Slovenian Government Office for National Minorities) pursuant to Article 30 of the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 96/2005, ..., 105/2006).

In addition to electronic media, the Italian national community also has at its disposal print mass media. The EDIT publishing house in Rijeka, along with the A.I.A. agency in Koper (the former is co-financed and the latter fully financed by Slovenia), are engaged in publishing the daily *La Voce del Popolo*. Cultural and information publications are also published in the ethnically mixed area: *La Città*, *Il Mandracchio*, *Lasa pur dir*, *Il Trillo* and other occasional editions. In addition to these, there is a range of publications issued occasionally (or in cooperation with other local print media) by cultural associations in the ethnically mixed area. The Republic of Slovenia supports the publishing of print media with financial grants. Due to the importance of Italian institutions, according to the 1993 agreement, the Republic of Slovenia co-finances Italian institutions in the Republic of Croatia (the EDIT publishing house in Rijeka,³⁵ the Italian Drama in Rijeka,³⁶ the Italian Union,³⁷ and the Historical Research Centre in Rovinj³⁸).

³⁵ EDIT publishing house: <http://www.edit.hr/>

³⁶ “Ivan Zajc” Croatian National Theatre: <http://www.hnk-zajc.hr>

³⁷ Italian Union: <http://www.unione-italiana.hr/>

³⁸ Historical Research Centre in Rovinj: <http://www.crsrv.org/>

The first step towards informing the members of the Hungarian national community in their mother tongue was made in 1956 when a supplement in the Hungarian language entitled *Népújság* was added to the local newspaper *Pomurski vestnik*. Since 1958 *Népújság* has been published as an independent weekly. It has a circulation of approximately 2000 copies, and about 1,600 subscribers. Every year the editors also prepare an almanac entitled *Neptár*. In 1986 the first edition of a special literary and cultural supplement to the weekly *Népújság* was published entitled *Muratáj*, which in 1988 became an independent literary magazine under the same name. All these publications are published by the Institute for Information Services of the Hungarian National Community, which was founded in 1993.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia is well aware of the importance of disseminating accurate information on the functioning and contributions of minority communities. For this reason, it has been financing bulletins, websites and publications of various minority societies and associations within a special protection programme. The publications financed so far are available at the INDOK library in Ljubljana, Metelkova 4, and through the online COBISS system. What is more, at the initiative of the Sector, on 15 July 2002 the Minister of Culture recommended that RTV Slovenija broadcast more programmes in minority languages. In line with the principle of media independence, the Ministry can only issue recommendations.

Linguistic projects and languages

For many years, minority linguistic projects have been given priority. Knowledge of different languages, including Hungarian, is an important factor in employing new staff at the Sector. The number of linguistic projects involving Roma in the special programme of the Ministry of Culture increased considerably in 2007 compared to 2006; there was a slight increase as regards the Hungarian national community, while for the Italian national community, their number remained approximately the same. The sharp increase may be due to the fact that the Romani language has not been standardised as yet; however, the linguistic identity of Roma is extremely important for experts and the Roma associations responding to the calls for applications alike.

Article 10

In March 2005 the **Decree on Administrative Operations** entered into force, replacing the Decree on Document Management by Public Administration Bodies (Ur. l. RS No. 91/2001) and other executive regulations. The Decree stipulates that all key events registered on the State Portal of the Republic of Slovenia must also be available in the Italian and Hungarian languages; the same applies to the basic information about the portal. Furthermore, online application forms and online information about administrative services of the relevant body must also be available in the Italian and Hungarian languages.³⁹

³⁹ Decree on Administrative Operations (Ur. l. RS No. 20/2005):

Article 172
(Envelopes)

...

(12) On the territory of municipalities where, in addition to Slovene, the Italian or Hungarian language is the official language, the text on envelopes shall also be in the Italian or Hungarian language.

...

Article 180
(Electronic service forms and notifications)

At the beginning of November 2005 the amended **Public Administration Act**⁴⁰ came into force. The amendment refers to Article 4, which now reads: “In those municipalities where Italian or Hungarian autochthonous national communities reside, the official languages of the administration shall also be Italian and Hungarian, respectively. In these areas, the administration shall also conduct business in the language of the national community. If the party to the procedure uses the language of the national community, the administration shall conduct the procedure in the language of the national community and issue legal and other acts in the procedure in the Slovene language as well as in the language of the national community. The party must be advised of this right prior to the beginning of the procedure.”

On 22 November 2007, the National Assembly adopted the **Act Amending the Lawyers’ State Examination Act**:

In Article 5, a new paragraph shall be added after paragraph 1, which reads as follows:

“In the area of jurisdiction of a higher court in which a lower court also operates in the Italian or Hungarian language, a certain number of trainee posts out of the total number of trainees employed at courts shall be reserved to trainees with advanced language skills in Italian or Hungarian residing in the territory of the higher court.”

In Article 7, new paragraphs 3 and 4 shall be added after paragraph 2, which read as follows:

“Applications shall include certificates required for the compilation of a priority list of traineeships under the provisions of this Act and for the filling of special posts under Article 5 of the Act. If the applicant obtained the professional title under Article 6 of the Act in the Republic of Slovenia, he/she shall not be obliged to enclose with the application professional title certificates and certificates for the compilation of a priority list of traineeships under this Act; instead, in order to establish the fulfilment of the conditions under Article 6 of the Act and to compile and issue a priority list of traineeships under this Act, the president of the higher court shall acquire this data from the institution of higher education at which the applicant obtained the professional title.

If the applicant obtained a professional title under Article 6 of the Act in the Republic of Slovenia, he/she is not obliged to enclose with the application a certificate of proficiency in Slovene. Advanced language skills shall be attested by an appropriate professional title in the Italian or Hungarian language, by equivalent studies concluded abroad, by an officially recognised certificate of advanced language skills in Italian or Hungarian obtained from an officially recognised education programme, or by a certificate attesting that the applicant is on the list of permanent court interpreters for either language.”

...
(3) *On the territory of local communities where, in addition to Slovene, the Italian or Hungarian language is the official language, the text on service forms and notifications shall also be written in the Italian or Hungarian language.*

...
Article 223

(Operations in the languages of the Italian and Hungarian national communities)

(1) *On the territory of local communities where, in addition to Slovene, the Italian or Hungarian language is also the official language, all forms, receipt stamps, seals and documents from official records shall also be in the Italian or Hungarian language.*

(2) *All features of official documents shall also be printed in the Italian or Hungarian language if they are used in areas where the Italian or Hungarian national community lives.*

(3) *All key events registered on the State Portal of the Republic of Slovenia shall also be available in the Italian and Hungarian languages.*

(4) *Online application forms and online information about administrative services of the relevant body shall also be available in the Italian and Hungarian languages.*

⁴⁰ Ur. l. RS No. 93/2005

In accordance with Article 5 of the Lawyers' State Examination Act, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the **Decision Determining the Total Number of Trainee Posts at Individual Courts for Judicial Trainees**.⁴¹

Higher courts are allocated the following number of posts for judicial trainees employed at courts:

- The Higher Court of Celje, 26 trainee posts;
- The Higher Court of Koper, a total of 30 trainee posts, including two posts for judicial trainees with advanced Italian language skills;
- The Higher Court of Ljubljana, 92 trainee posts;
- The Higher Court of Maribor, a total of 60 trainee posts, including two posts for judicial trainees with advanced Hungarian language skills.

In January 2008, the **Patients Rights Act**⁴² was adopted, stipulating in Article 19 that patients have the right to be addressed by medical and non-medical professionals in Slovene or the language of the national community in the area of local communities where, in addition to Slovene, Italian or Hungarian is the official language. The use of language is also specified in other health laws and regulations, with a view to ensuring safe and quality medical services, and protecting the consumer (**General Practitioner Services Act, Health Services Act, Rules Regulating Advertising of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices**).

Article 11

On 29 March 2008, the **Act Designating Areas and Naming and Marking Settlements, Streets and Buildings** took effect, stipulating in Chapter IV (Ordinance on the Designation of Settlement Areas and Ordinance on the Naming of Settlements), Article 17, paragraph 4, that prior to adopting any ordinance on the names of settlements in ethnically mixed areas, the municipalities concerned must obtain the consent of the relevant self-governing national community. This, in turn, gives its consent through members of the municipal council – representatives of the national community. Chapter IV of the Act applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the setting-up of the system of streets and the naming of streets.

The previous act governing this area, i.e. the 1980 Act Regulating the Naming and Registration of Settlements, Streets and Buildings, stipulated in Article 8 that municipal assemblies decided on the naming, renaming, merging, dividing and abolishing of settlements and streets, and on the designation of settlement areas. It further stipulated that in the areas populated by Slovenes and members of the Italian or Hungarian national community, self-governing interest communities for education and culture of the relevant national community should participate in the decision-making process referred to in the foregoing paragraph.

Article 12

See also Article 14 below.

Legislation

⁴¹ Ur. l. RS No. 25/2008

⁴² Ur. l. RS No. 15/2008

Legislation relating to education regulates mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country in the Organization and Financing of Education Act and the Elementary School Act:

- Organization and Financing of Education Act: Objectives of Slovenia's education system also include "developing linguistic abilities as well as awareness of the position of the Slovene language as the language of the Republic of Slovenia; in areas defined as ethnically mixed, in addition to the Slovene language also preserving and developing the Italian and Hungarian languages, respectively" and "education for sustainable development and active involvement in a democratic society, including a deeper knowledge of and responsible attitude towards oneself, one's health, other people, one's own and other cultures, the natural and social environment, and future generations".
- Basic general goals of elementary education (Article 2 of the Elementary School Act) are "to foster literacy and the competency to understand, communicate and express oneself in the Slovene language and, in the areas defined as ethnically mixed, also in the Italian and Hungarian languages, respectively", "to educate for sustainable development and active involvement in a democratic society, including a deeper knowledge of and responsible attitude towards oneself, one's health, other people, one's own and other cultures, the natural and social environment, and future generations", "to educate for mutual tolerance and respect for being different, willingness to cooperate, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" and "to foster comprehension of foreign languages", which is an important contribution to the respect, understanding and tolerance for regional or minority languages;
- Article 6 of the Elementary School Act on the language of instruction in elementary schools stipulates that in elementary schools in areas populated by Slovenes and members of the Italian national community and defined as ethnically mixed areas, "pupils in schools providing instruction in Slovene shall also learn Italian, and pupils in schools providing instruction in Italian shall also learn Slovene";
- Article 7 of the Elementary School Act defines the protection of special rights of minorities, which is regulated by law;
- Article 8 of the Elementary School Act is not limited to particular languages; it allows, for any language, that in accordance with international agreements the teaching of their respective mother tongues and cultures is organized for the children of Slovenian citizens whose mother tongue is not Slovene.

The formal education system

Syllabi and curricula

Within the **list of subjects** for the nine-year elementary school, which stipulates the annual and weekly number of lessons for individual subjects or subject areas and the minimum number of lessons required for the implementation of the syllabus, mutual understanding between all linguistic groups of the country is fostered particularly through the syllabi of the following subjects, where these topics are explicitly represented:

- Slovene (1st–9th grade of elementary school – ISCED 1 and 2);
- Geography (6th–9th grade of elementary school – ISCED 1 and 2),
- History (6th–9th grade of elementary school – ISCED 1 and 2);
- Social Studies (5th–9th grade of elementary school – ISCED 1 and 2);
- Civic Education and Ethics (8th and 9th grades of elementary school – ISCED 2); and
- the elective subject Civic Culture (9th grade of elementary school – ISCED 2).

Pupils belonging to the majority population are taught mutual understanding among all linguistic groups of the country, e.g. during Slovene language lessons, which also include respect for other languages and the command and use of individual forms of colloquial language (dialects/colloquial language of regions) among the general objectives for the first three-year cycle. The second three-year cycle introduces them to the special situation of the Italian and Hungarian languages in the Slovenian part of Istria and Prekmurje. Respect, understanding and tolerance for regional or minority languages are encompassed in other subjects in the social sciences and humanities areas of elementary education, both at the level of content and general objectives.

The content of **textbooks** is approved by the Council of Experts for General Education, after having been examined by the Textbook Commission. One of the conditions for approval of a textbook is its consistency with the objectives of the subject. The History syllabus in elementary school (ISCED 1 in 2) lists the following objectives:

Pupils shall:

- Learn about understanding and respecting different cultures, religions, races and communities;
- Learn about cultural heritage in general and in the national context, about accepting European cultural and civilisation values, and about the importance of preserving Slovenian cultural traditions through examples from local history;
- Through examples from history, learn to accept important values for independent group work and life in a plural democratic society (tolerance, acceptance, pacifism, openness to other opinions and substantiation of one's own opinions, cooperation and respect for fundamental human rights and dignity).

This shows that textbooks must contain elements developing democratic values, among them the respect for different cultures and communities, life in a multicultural society and mutual cooperation.

All elementary schools have established a system of lending out textbooks from the textbook fund for pupils. In the school year 2008/2009, free lending of textbooks from the textbook fund was introduced for all elementary school pupils (ISCED 1 and 2). In secondary schools (ISCED 3), textbook funds are optional; students pay a borrowing fee, which must not exceed one third of the price of the textbook paid by the school.

The informal education system

Recognition of professional qualifications

The Slovenian system of qualifications consists of three sub-systems: qualifications obtained at *formal education levels* through education programmes leading to a certificate, diploma or other proof of publicly recognised qualification; a certification system of *national vocational qualifications* (NVQ), which enables the achievement of vocational or professional qualifications and recognition of non-formal knowledge with a publicly recognised document; and *further and supplementary education*, by which individuals deepen their knowledge and develop competences for life, work, mobility and career promotion, and by which they obtain certification that may be required as a condition for employment or for continued employment.

In April 2006, the Slovenian government adopted the Decree on the Introduction and Use of a Classification System of Education and Training⁴³ (Klasius), which serves as a formal base for establishing the Slovenian qualification framework. It sets out eight levels for all three of the above groups of qualifications, from elementary school to the doctoral level, based on learning outcomes. Conceptual bases are being formed, and a working group has been appointed for the elaboration of a National Qualifications Framework. In setting up a National Qualifications Framework, the placement of individual fields and levels of education, e.g. vocational and technical education and training (VET), will have to be reconsidered.

*The National Vocational Qualifications Act*⁴⁴ of 2000 introduced in Slovenia a system of assessment and verification of NVQs which is based on learning outcomes, irrespective of how the knowledge, skills and abilities were acquired. Assessment and verification (certification) of NVQs is intended for adults and is carried out through practical demonstration of knowledge, skills and abilities, or on the basis of documents and other evidence in the individual's portfolio. In this way, the results of non-formal and informal learning are recognised. Advantages of the Act for the economy include responsiveness to changes in working processes, shorter and cheaper introduction of knowledge and competences, and practical testing and verification of candidates who must prove vocational competence.

In 2006, the Act was amended⁴⁵ in order to link formal and informal education and work experience, to ensure partnership and cooperation in the development and promotion of NVQs, to facilitate transfer between different fields and levels of education and training, and to guarantee transparency of certification procedures.

Participants in a separate NVQ programme obtain a publicly recognised document on national vocational qualification as a proof of professional knowledge and skills required for practicing a profession or individual professional tasks. The programme is aimed at all unemployed persons.

Article 13

Two private elementary schools have been established in Slovenia, i.e. the Waldorf School and the Alojzij Šuštar Elementary School.

In Slovenia, there are currently six private secondary schools carrying out the *gimnazija* (grammar school) programme and one secondary school with a concession, carrying out programmes of lower vocational education.

Article 14

Education for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities is an integral part of the education system in the Republic of Slovenia. The objectives and methods for it are stipulated by the following acts and executive regulations:

- Organization and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 16/2007 – official consolidated text and 36/2008);

⁴³ Ur. l. RS No. 46/2006

⁴⁴ Ur. l. RS No. 81/2000

⁴⁵ Ur. l. RS No. 118/2006; see also No. 1/2007 – official consolidated text

- Pre-school Institutions Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 100/2005 – official consolidated text and 25/2008);
- Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 81/2006 – official consolidated text and 102/2007);
- Gimnazije Act (Ur. l. RS No. 1/2007 – official consolidated text);
- Vocational Education Act (Ur. l. RS No. 79/2006);
- Matura Examination Act (Ur. l. RS No. 15/2003);
- Act Guaranteeing Special Rights to Members of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education (Ur. l. RS No. 35/2001);
- Rules on Norms and Standards for the Implementation of the Elementary School Programme in Bilingual Elementary Schools and Elementary Schools with Italian as the Language of Instruction (Ur. l. RS Nos. 75/2005, 85/2006, 68/2007, and 73/2008);
- Rules on Criteria and Standards for Bilingual Secondary Schools (Ur. l. RS Nos. 85/2003, 100/2007 and 67/2008);
- Rules on Criteria and Standards for Secondary Schools with Italian as the Language of Instruction (Ur. l. RS Nos. 85/2003, 103/2007 and 67/2008).

The following documents were adopted:

- Rules Defining the Education of Teachers in Nine-Year Bilingual Elementary Schools and Nine-Year Elementary Schools with Italian as the Language of Instruction (Ur. l. RS No. 35/2006).

The Rules define the required education for teachers in the nine-year bilingual elementary school and the nine-year elementary school with Italian as the language of instruction, provided they fulfil other conditions required by law, to carry out those parts of the programmes in which the lists of subjects of the nine-year bilingual elementary school and the nine-year elementary school with Italian as the language of instruction foresee other subjects than the list of subjects of the nine-year elementary school, or the law provides for different organization of classes than in the programme of the nine-year elementary school. The Rules also determine the subjects for which teacher training programmes are provided.

- Rules on Testing the Knowledge of the Language of Instruction in Ethnically Mixed Areas (Ur. l. RS No. 100/2006).

The Rules stipulate the extent, subject matter and form of testing the knowledge of the language of instruction for teaching in pre-school institutions and schools in the language of the national community or in bilingual pre-school institutions and schools for those teaching professionals who do not fulfil the conditions stipulated by the Act Guaranteeing Special Rights to Members of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education.

Italian national community

As a result of different historical and other influences, Slovenia developed two different models of education for members of Italian and Hungarian national communities. However, it has to be emphasised that both models have the same objectives: bilingualism and co-existence of both nations and cultures.

For the implementation of rights of members of the Italian national community in the field of pre-school, elementary, general secondary and secondary vocational education, in accordance with the legislation, in the areas defined as ethnically mixed, pre-school institutions and schools with Italian as the language of instruction are established. The

Slovene language is a compulsory subject in these schools. In pre-school institutions with Slovene as the language of instruction, children get acquainted with the Italian language. In these areas, there are three pre-school institutions, three elementary schools with affiliated schools, and three secondary schools with Italian as the language of instruction.

Data on pre-school institutions and schools in the ethnically mixed area for the school year 2008/09:

Pre-school institution	Number of classes	Number of children	Average number of children per class
Pre-school within the Dante Alighieri Elementary School, Izola	5	90	18.00
La Cocinella pre-school, Lucija – Giardino d'infanzia La Cocinella Lucia	6	104	17.33
Delfino Blu pre-school, Koper – Giardino d'infanzia Delfino Blu Capodistria	10	171	17.10
Total:	21	365	17.38

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

Elementary School	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Average number of pupils per class
Dante Alighieri Elementary School, Izola – Scuola elementare Dante Alighieri Isola	9	80	8.88
Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio Elementary School, Koper – Scuola elementare Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio Capodistria (total)	19	176	9.26
- Main school	10	116	
- Affiliated school in Semedela	3	19	
- Affiliated school in Bertoki	2	13	
- Affiliated school in Hrvatini	4	28	
Vincenzo e Diego de Castro Elementary School, Piran – Scuola elementare Vincenzo e Diego de Castro Pirano (total)	11	109	9.90
- Main school	5	51	
- Affiliated school in Lucija	3	36	
- Affiliated school in Secovlje	3	22	
Total:	41	365	9,48

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

Secondary School	Number of classes	Number of students	Average number of students per class
Antonio Sema Grammar School, Piran – Ginnasio Antonio Sema Pirano	4	41	10.25
Gian Rinaldo Carli Grammar School, Koper – Ginnasio Gian Rinaldo Carli Capodistria	4	61	15.25
Pietro Coppo Secondary School, Izola – Scuola media Pietro Coppo Isola	11	73	6.64
Total:	19	175	9.21

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

Students of the Pietro Coppo Secondary School may follow programmes qualifying for a sales assistant, economics clerk, cook, waiter, administrative assistant, mechanic, gastronomy technician, or mechanical engineering technician.

The Italian language and literature may be studied at the **University of Ljubljana** (Faculty of Arts, Department for Romance Languages and Literature) and the University of Primorska in Koper (Faculty of Humanities, Chair for Italian Studies within the Department for Applied Linguistics). Members of the Italian national community can also study at universities in Italy (particularly when they wish to study other, non-linguistic subjects in the Italian language) and in Croatia (Rijeka, Pula).

Students not attending a bilingual secondary school or a secondary school with Italian as the language of instruction who wish to continue learning Hungarian or Italian have the possibility to attend tuition-free lessons in their mother tongue even outside the bilingual areas. Optional courses in the language of the national community are provided if at least five students or apprentices wish to attend, and are tuition-free. A group of students or apprentices may also consist of students or apprentices studying in different education programmes in different schools in the same town. There is currently no interest in optional courses in the Italian language.

For secondary general, vocational and technical education, 20 validated education programmes to be carried out in the Italian as the language of instruction were adopted in the year 2007/08.

- Secondary vocational education: 15;
- Secondary technical education: 1;
- Vocational and technical education: 1;
- Vocational course: 1;
- General secondary education: 1;
- *Matura* course: 1.

Mention should also be made of the fact that learning both the language of the majority nation and that of the Italian national community is included throughout the education process. Material on Italian history, culture and geography has been added to the relevant Slovenian syllabi. Administrative procedures in schools, as well as relations with the

public and the students' parents, are bilingual. Documents issued by certain other school institutions are also bilingual.

Further education and training of teaching staff is carried out in accordance with the Rules on In-Service Training of Education Professionals (Ur. l. RS No. 64/2004). A catalogue of programmes is published every year, in which teachers and other professionals select a programme according to requirements and their own wishes.

Hungarian national community

In areas populated by Slovenes and members of the Hungarian national community, and defined as ethnically mixed areas, bilingual pre-school institutions and schools are established in compliance with the legislation, and the lessons are carried out in both Slovene and Hungarian. These pre-school institutions and schools are attended by children or pupils of Slovenian and Hungarian nationalities. Such a method of work enables the pupils to learn a second language in addition to their mother tongue and become familiar with the culture of the other nation. Educational activities are carried out in both languages. When learning the mother tongue and the second language, pupils are divided into groups, which enables them to learn their mother tongue at an advanced level. In these areas there are four bilingual pre-school institutions, five bilingual elementary schools with affiliated schools, and one bilingual secondary school.

Data on pre-school institutions and schools in the ethnically mixed area for the school year 2008/09:

Pre-school institution	Number of classes	Number of children	Average number of children per class
Pre-school within the bilingual Elementary School Dobrovnik	2	37	18.50
Pre-school within the bilingual Elementary School Prosenjakovci	2	15	7.50
Lendava Pre-school – Lendvai Óvoda	14	208	14.86
Moravske Toplice Pre-school	1	11	11.00
Total:	19	271	14.26

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

Elementary School	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Average number of pupils per class
Bilingual Elementary School Lendava I (total) – 1. Sz. Lendvai Kétnyelvű Általános Iskola - Main school	34 31	571 542	16.79

- Affiliated school in Gaberje	3	29	
Bilingual Elementary School Lendava II (total) (elementary school with adapted programme) – II. Sz. Lendvai Kétnyelvű Általános Iskola	3	21	7.00
Bilingual Elementary School Genterovci – Göntérházi Kétnyelvű Általános Iskola	9	71	7.88
Bilingual Elementary School Dobrovnik – Kétnyelvű Általános Iskola, Dobronak	9	75	8.33
Bilingual Elementary School Prosenjakovci (total) – Kétnyelvű Általános Iskola, Pártosfalva	10	87	8.70
- Main school	8	76	
- Affiliated school in Domanjševci	1	4	
- Affiliated school in Hodoš	1	7	
Total:	65	825	12.69

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

In 2004, investment in one of the most modern elementary schools with state-of-the-art equipment was completed in Dobrovnik; a total of EUR 2 587 214 was invested by the state through the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of the Information Society and the Municipality of Dobrovnik.

Secondary School	Number of classes	Number of students	Average number of students per class
Bilingual Secondary School Lendava – Kétnyelvű Középiskola, Lendva	20	315	15.75

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

In September 2005, a modern Bilingual Secondary School Centre was opened in Lendava, including a fully equipped sports hall with a surface of about 1,750 m² and with a capacity of 400 spectators. The investment also covered the corresponding infrastructure, including the construction of sidewalks and bicycle lanes. The construction of the centre was financed by the state in the amount of EUR 11,266,900.35. According to official data, in the 2004/2005 school year the centre, carrying out the *gimnazija*, economics and mechanical engineering programmes, as well as a vocational education programme, had 313 students.⁴⁶ The Lendava Bilingual Secondary School carries out the *gimnazija* (grammar school) programme; in addition, students may also follow other programmes qualifying for a shop assistant, economics clerk, technician in mechanical engineering, cook, mechanic, mechanical fitter, tile setter, electrical engineering technician or metal worker.

⁴⁶ Lendava bilingual secondary school official brochure (September 2005)

Members of the Hungarian national community may study the Hungarian language at the University of Maribor (Department for the Hungarian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts – composed of the Chair of Hungarian Language and Literature and a lectorship in the Hungarian language) and at the University of Ljubljana (lectorship in the Hungarian language at the Faculty of Arts) and, on the basis of a bilateral agreement between Slovenia and Hungary, at universities in Hungary (about 50 members of the Hungarian national community study in Hungary each year).

In the 2007/2008 school year, optional courses (see the Italian national community above) in the Hungarian language were attended by 23 students in Murska Sobota, Rakican and Radenci.

For secondary general, vocational and technical education, 20 validated education programmes to be carried out bilingually were adopted in the year 2007/08:

- Secondary vocational education: 15;
- Secondary technical education: 2;
- Vocational and technical education: 1;
- Vocational course: 0;
- General secondary education: 1;
- *Matura* course: 1.

Mention should also be made of the fact that the Slovene and Hungarian languages are present throughout the education process. Material on Hungarian history, culture and geography has been added to the relevant Slovenian syllabi. Most textbooks are bilingual. Administrative procedures in bilingual schools, as well as relations with the public and the students' parents, are bilingual. Moreover, the documents issued by bilingual educational institutions are bilingual.

Further education and training of teaching staff is carried out in accordance with the Rules on In-Service Training of Educational Professionals; moreover, further training of teachers working in bilingual educational institutions is guaranteed by and carried out in compliance with the **Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary**.⁴⁷

In the catalogue of **teacher in-service training programmes** for the period 2004–2008, aimed at ensuring co-existence with the Italian and Hungarian national communities, three seminars were listed in a duration from 24 to 48 hours. These programmes were attended by 315 teaching professionals:

- A seminar in the Italian language and culture;
- A Hungarian summer seminar;
- A seminar in Italy.

Roma

Slovenia has been investing significant efforts in the integration of Roma children into pre-school institutions, elementary schools, and institutions of further education.

Acts and executive regulations governing the rights of Roma in education include:

⁴⁷ Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary (Ur. l. RS-MP No. 6/1993).

- Organization and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 16/2007 – official consolidated text and 36/2008);
- **Pre-school Institutions Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 100/2005 – official consolidated text and 25/2008);**
- Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS Nos. 81/2006 – official consolidated text and 102/2007).

In December 2002, the Ministry of Education and Sport set up a special working group which analysed in detail the issue of Roma education. The analysis showed the need for a more effective and better-coordinated education policy. In 2004, a document entitled *Strategy for Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia* was drawn up and adopted by the highest professional authorities in the field of education in May/June 2004. The Strategy provides the basis for specific and coordinated further measures in education. The Union of Roma of Slovenia was **involved in the drafting of this strategic document and its implementation.**

The document provides for the following solutions:

- Early inclusion in the education system: inclusion of Roma children in pre-school institutions at least two years prior to their enrolment in elementary school, i.e. when they are four years of age at the latest. The principal purpose of Roma children's inclusion in pre-school institutions is language learning (both Slovene and Romani) and their socialisation in an educational institution, which provides experience and models for facilitating entry and integration of Roma children into elementary school;
- **Roma assistant:** The lack of knowledge of the Slovene language and unsuccessful integration of children may be surpassed or alleviated by a Roma assistant, who will help children overcome the emotional and linguistic barriers and represent a bridge between the pre-school institution and school on the one hand and the Roma community on the other;
- Adaptation of programmes in terms of substance: introduction of Romani language lessons in elementary school as an optional subject, learning the Slovene language, identifying objectives (e.g. multiculturalism) or knowledge standards in curricula which are to be achieved through contents taken from Roma culture, history and identity;
- Further education and training for professionals;
- Establishing specific forms of organization and material conditions to at least maintain the current standards; further financial support and assistance from the Ministry of Education and Sport;
- Non-segregation and inhomogeneous classes; forms of individualisation, internal and flexible differentiation, ability grouping provided for by the statute, should be applied;
- **Various forms of learning assistance;**
- Building confidence in school and the elimination of prejudices (a special school scheme defining activities of communication and cooperation with parents of Roma children, and a scheme for identifying and continuously eliminating stereotypes and prejudices about Roma pupils among the majority population);
- Roma pupils as an ethnic group are not pupils with special needs (poor school performance, which results from a lack of knowledge of the language of instruction or from the specific features of Roma culture, cannot serve as a basis for enrolling these children in programmes with lower educational standards);
- Adult education: the basic objectives of educating adult Roma are set out in the *National Programme of Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010* (to improve the general education level of the adult population, whereby four years of

secondary schooling is the basic educational standard; to increase the employability of adults and their participation in lifelong learning). Particular attention is devoted to the education of adult Roma, with a view to improving their level of education and developing human resources; establishing consultancy centres or networks in areas inhabited by Roma; introducing the institution of the Roma coordinator; introducing special norms and standards for programmes attended by adult Roma; and providing funds for participation in various programmes and for learning assistance, both available free of charge to the participants.

The objectives and measures included in the document are of a strategic nature and cannot all be implemented simultaneously. For this reason, the Ministry appointed in 2005 a special team for the implementation of the Strategy, headed by the President of the Union of Roma of Slovenia. Each year, the team draws up an action plan specifying activities for the current year. Action plans for 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 have already been drafted and implemented. Financial resources for the implementation of the action plan are provided from the state budget, and in 2008 also from the European Social Fund.

In this period, the following **activities and measures** were carried out:

- A normative act banned the establishment of classes exclusively for Roma pupils.
- A network of schools with Roma pupils has been established. Within this network, teachers exchange experience and good practices, as well as taking part in additional training at faculties, institutes and public institutes (e.g. National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia).
- The schools were provided with sufficient resources to implement projects and other activities to fulfil the objectives of intercultural dialogue. School projects and activities should help improve the knowledge of cultures (Roma and others) and consequently facilitate co-existence and the eradication of stereotypes.
- Several development and research projects were financed during this period. Such projects are part of evidence-based policy, as they provide the only basis for an effective education policy. Thus, e.g. the standardisation of the Romani language was carried out to provide the basis for the teaching of this language.
- Occupational standards for Roma assistants were developed, and in 2008 funds were earmarked for their inclusion in the school system.
- In 2008, funds were earmarked to increase the number of teaching staff in classes with Roma pupils.
- The Union of Roma carried out an independent evaluation of the education of Roma pupils and proposed specific measures based on it.
- Each year the Union of Roma (co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport) organizes a Roma camp with the main purpose of teaching the Romani language.
- During this period, particular attention was devoted to the inclusion of Roma pupils in schools for children with mild mental retardation.
- A project to develop a method (and teaching materials) for teaching Slovene as a foreign language was financed to enable faster and more successful learning.
- Publications of the Union of Roma and literary works by Roma authors were co-financed.
- The syllabus for a course in Roma culture was drafted and adopted.

The state devotes special attention to the education of Roma pupils, granting special concessions to schools they attend. It allocates additional funds for individual and group work with Roma pupils; sets lower standards for classes with Roma (the

number of lessons of a second teaching professional in 1st grade classes with at least three Roma pupils enrolled is 15 per 10–14 pupils, and 20 per 15–21 pupils); and finances meals, textbooks, excursions, etc.

Roma pre-school children are integrated in regular classes in the following municipalities: Beltinci, Brežice, Cankova, Dobrovnik, Jesenice, Kocevje, Križevci, Krško, Kuzma, Maribor, Puconci, Radovljica, Ribnica, Rogašovci, Semic, Šentjernej, Škocjan, Tišina, Turnišče and Velenje. A normative act abolished the norm for the establishment of classes for Roma pupils exclusively.

Pre-school classes attended exclusively by Roma children (homogenous classes) in the Republic of Slovenia, 2008:

PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTION	No. of classes	Average No. of children
Pre-school at the F. Prešeren Elementary School, Crenšovci	1	5.0
O. Župancic pre-school, Crnemelj	1	16.5
Lendava pre-school	1	15.0
Murska Sobota pre-school	2	21.3
Pedenjped pre-school, Novo Mesto	2	28.3
Trebnje pre-school	1	11.7
O. Župancic pre-school, Metlika	1	9.0
Total	9	106.8

Source: Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

In the 2008/09 school year, 1,862 Roma children were enrolled in elementary schools.

On the basis of the Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Education and Sport published in April 2008 a call for applications of the European Social Fund for the successful integration of Roma in education with a view to developing forms and methods of education, including mechanisms and instruments at the level of pre-school institutions and elementary schools, which will improve the effectiveness of integrating Roma into pre-school institutions and elementary schools.⁴⁸ **In addition, the curricula of schools and pre-school institutions attended by Roma children should provide for a consistent implementation of objectives contributing to the knowledge of Roma culture, history and identity. This may be accomplished in several ways: Roma culture classes (elective subject), classes in all other subjects, various school-related activities, and care for the school climate, which reflects acceptance of Roma pupils, sets them on an equal footing and eliminates prejudice. For this purpose, project teams should be set up, composed of both managerial staff and professionals in pre-school institutions and elementary schools, including Roma assistants. The successful work of project teams requires training and handbooks for**

⁴⁸ The Union of Roma of Slovenia participated in the drawing up of the Strategy. The President of the Union also chairs the working group on the drafting of annual action plans for the implementation of the goals contained in the Strategy. The Union co-ordinates the selected project of the European Social Fund for a more effective integration of Roma into education. The Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia would like to empower Roma to doing as much as possible and help improve the effectiveness of the integration of Roma in various forms of education in Slovenia.

managerial staff, teachers and Roma assistants, as well as teaching material and didactic tools for children and pupils. They selected a project coordinated by the Union of Roma of Slovenia, which will be concluded at the end of 2011, with a total value amounting to EUR 1,595,000. So far, 26 assistants have been employed.

Between the years 2004 and 2008, the catalogue published two programmes for the training of professionals for successful work with Roma children, comprising 40 and 24 hours, respectively:

- Integration of Roma children in the first grade of elementary school; and
- Education of Roma pupils at elementary schools.

The programme was attended by 55 professionals, and the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia spent funds amounting to EUR 895.28 for this purpose.

Within the project of the European Social Fund for the training of professionals in education, the Institute for Education and Culture Crnomelj has been selected as regards successful integration of Roma into education.⁴⁹ The project will be implemented from 2008 to 2011. In 2009, several seven-day professional training programmes began to be implemented for:

- 600 teachers and educators of Roma children (based on integrating Roma children into pre-school education, integrating the Romani language and culture into the curriculum and acquainting Roma children with the Slovene language and culture, assisting Roma children for a more successful education, promoting cooperation between the Roma community and school);
- 20 Roma assistants in two groups (Prekmurje, Dolenjska and Bela Krajina regions).

Funds totalling EUR 203,000 have been earmarked for the three-year project. In 2008, preparatory activities for the implementation of education were carried out.

In 2006 and 2007, the Ministry of Education and Sport co-financed the education of **adult** Roma primarily in Kocevje, Murska Sobota, Crnomelj and Novo Mesto, and to a lesser extent also in Trebnje, Velenje and Maribor. In 2006, the Ministry co-financed 22 education programmes worth EUR 18,360, and in 2007, 20 education programmes worth EUR 15,020.

The programmes focus on:

- Improving the social status of Roma (e.g. education and employment issues);
- The family and children (e.g. childcare and child raising, family health, housekeeping, cooking);
- Cultural issues (e.g. civic literacy, communication culture and performance skills, books – my friends, my language – my right, education for tolerance in traffic); and
- Practical issues (e.g. growing a vegetable garden, computer and the Internet).

In May 2008, young Roma intellectuals and students established the Roma Academic Club (RAK) society. Its statute includes the intention to raise awareness of members of the Roma and Sinti communities of the significance of knowledge and education.

Immigrants

⁴⁹ More information is available at <http://www.uvrvi.si/>

In May 2007, the Minister of Education and Sport adopted the Strategy for the Integration of Migrant Children and Primary and Secondary School Students in the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia. Its most important objectives include:

- Ensuring the conditions, possibilities and opportunities for the attainment of objectives and standards of knowledge, as defined in the curriculum for pre-school institutions and other institutes, as well as in exam catalogues;
- Successful integration of migrant children in pre-school, school, social and later professional settings;
- Development of the skill to present one's own culture, perception, understanding and acceptance of all that is different to overcome prejudices against other cultures, comparison of cultures, education for tolerance, preservation and development of one's own identity and culture;
- Sufficient knowledge of the Slovene language to be included in the educational system:
 - Developing language skills (successful communication in the environment, participation in the implementing curriculum or classes);
 - Developing social skills (expressing opinions, wishes, intentions; socialisation process);
 - Developing cognitive skills (broadening the child's world of understanding concepts).

In addition to the general principles of a child's best interests, non-discrimination, the right to participate, respect for cultural identity, access to information, training of staff, permanence (long-term benefits and well-being of a child) and timeliness, the Strategy is based on the following principles that are important for education:

- Accessibility of education;
- Flexibility of the curriculum, autonomy and expert responsibility of the educational institution and professionals;
- Equal opportunities, taking into account the differences between children (respect for the specific features of a child's culture), multiculturalism and interculturalism;
- Ensuring the conditions for attaining the objectives and standards of knowledge;
- Active learning and providing possibilities for verbalisation and other ways of expression;
- Cooperation with parents.

The Strategy provides for the following important measures for the effective inclusion of migrants in the education system:

- Laying down the scope, forms and methods of adapting the implementation of the curriculum to speed up and improve the quality of inclusion into the educational process.
 - Drafting an individual programme;
 - Laying down the number of lessons in Slovene as a second language;
 - Adapting the timetable;
 - Preparing the elements to test knowledge and assessment criteria;
 - Drawing up a child's portfolio;
 - Specifying the period of adaptation;
- Drawing up strategies for work with the parents of migrants and their inclusion in school life;
- Promoting intercultural learning and a positive attitude towards the understanding and acceptance of all that is different;
- Introducing Slovene as a second language;

- Ensuring the quality of teaching the languages of migrant children;
- Ensuring quality education and training for professionals.

Based on the Strategy, the Ministry of Education and Sport published in 2008 a call for applications of the European Social Fund for the successful integration of migrant children, pupils and students in education, with a view to providing conditions for the implementation of measures defined therein and developing mechanisms that would contribute to the more effective integration of migrant students into the school system and their better integration into society, and to improving their status in the labour market. A more effective integration into the system of education would also help raise the quality of life of migrant children and youth. The selected projects would also include proposals as to the scope, forms and methods of adapting the implementation of curricula for a faster and higher-quality integration of migrant children into the process of education, as well as a strategy for working with migrant parents, and their involvement. The projects will promote intercultural learning and a positive attitude towards the understanding and acceptance of all that is different in school. The total value of the call for applications amounts to EUR 444,764.00, and the projects will be implemented by the end of 2010.

Between 2004 and 2008, two programmes to train professionals for successful work with immigrant children and youth were carried out, comprising 16 and 24 hours, respectively:

- »A stay by Slovenian teachers in Switzerland and Germany for the purposes of education, and by Swiss and German teachers in Slovenia;«- Work with parents of immigrant children and youth in Slovenia.

These training programmes were attended by 62 professionals; the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia spent funds amounting to EUR 987.51 for this purpose.

Measures to foster communication with immigrant families and (additional) heritage language teaching.⁵⁰

- Foreign nationals who are conducting official business with public services may request that a translator or an interpreter be engaged; however, they must cover the expenses. In practice, this means that schools request families with immigrant parents or bilingual pupils at school to perform this task. This method is also recommended in the aforementioned Strategy for the Integration of Migrant Children and Primary and Secondary School Students in the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia.
- Learning the mother tongue of immigrants is possible on the basis of bilateral agreements (the Republic of Slovenia has concluded bilateral agreements with Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Russia, and Serbia) – the diplomatic missions of the countries of origin finance teachers, and the teaching is organized at schools (e.g. Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Macedonian). The Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport also finances the teaching of German, Finnish, Albanian, and Russian as an extracurricular activity during the first six years of compulsory education (ISCED 1). The teaching of the mother tongue is organized outside regular classes, and the number of lessons ranges from two to four a week.

⁵⁰ Source: Measures introduced in European school systems to foster communication with immigrant families and heritage language teaching for immigrant children, study material of the Eurydice Network, February 2009.

- Within the last three years of compulsory education (ISCED 2), immigrant pupils may opt for their mother tongue as an elective foreign language, e.g. German, Spanish, French, Italian, English, Croatian, Macedonian, Russian, and Serbian. The requirement of a minimum number of pupils to organize and teach the elective subject must be taken into account.

As for German, since 2006, additional classes in language and culture have been organized at one of Ljubljana's elementary schools on the basis of the Agreement on Cooperation in Culture between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.⁵¹

The curricula of the Slovenian elementary and secondary schools also include the possibility of learning German as the first foreign language from the 4th grade of elementary school (ISCED 1). The school year 2008/09 marks the beginning of the gradual introduction of a second compulsory foreign language in the third educational cycle of elementary school (ISCED 2), German being among them. To begin with, a second foreign language was introduced in 10% of Slovenian elementary schools (48 schools), most of which opted for German. Apart from that, it is still possible to opt for German as an elective subject in the last three-year cycle of elementary school.

Since 2004, the Kocevje grammar school has been included in a pilot project of European classes with a special emphasis on English and German, and therefore offers more lessons dedicated to the German language and the culture of German-speaking countries.

Croatian is an elective subject in elementary school – it is taught for three years two hours per week, i.e. 204 hours in total. Pupils can opt for this subject in the last three-year cycle of the nine-year elementary school (7th, 8th and 9th grades, ISCED 2). After a year or two of learning, they can quit the programme, and they can also enrol in the 8th or 9th grade, provided that they have adequate prior knowledge. They should be able to communicate in the Croatian language for different purposes, on various topics and in different communication settings. The course does not include only language learning (grammar, lexicology, pronunciation, orthography, stylistics, text linguistics), but also knowledge of the society (sociolinguistic and strategic competence). As pupils perform different roles in the communication process (listener, reader, speaker, writer, and translator), one of the goals of the elective subject is to develop language skills (listening, watching, speaking, reading, writing, translating). As language learning includes information on culture, another objective of Croatian lessons is getting to know Croatian culture and civilisation, which contributes to more effective intercultural communication and understanding. Additional lessons in Croatian have been organized at certain elementary schools in Slovenia by the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia.

The **Romani language** is taught in the framework of the elective subject “Roma culture” in elementary schools. It is also taught through school projects, which receive additional funds from the Ministry. Since 2008, it has co-financed the drafting of a Roma culture textbook, as well as other materials and teaching aids for teaching Romani language and culture. The relevant ministry also co-finances publications and Roma camps under the auspices of the Union of Roma of Slovenia; these focus on developing the Romani language. The camps are also attended by Romani language experts from abroad.

⁵¹ Ur. l. RS-MP, No. 9/1994

As regards the teaching of **foreign languages in general**, the following foreign languages are offered at public elementary schools (data for the 2008/09 school year, Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia):

- Foreign language as compulsory subject:
 - o English: 389 schools;
 - o German: 25 schools;
 - o English and German (pupils choose between the two languages): 34 schools;
- Foreign language as elective subject:
 - o English: 61 schools;
 - o German: 382 schools;
 - o French: 85 schools;
 - o Italian: 48 schools;
 - o Spanish: 58 schools;
 - o Croatian: 7 schools;
 - o Latin: 3 schools.

The syllabi for the Serbian and Macedonian languages have been approved; however, they are currently not being implemented, as these elective subjects have not been chosen by pupils.

Foreign languages in private school programmes:

- English – 6 schools (first or second foreign language);
- German – 5 schools (first or second foreign language);
- Italian – 1 school (second foreign language);
- French – 2 schools (elective subject);
- Spanish – 2 schools (elective subject);
- Latin – 4 schools (elective subject);
- Greek – 1 school (elective subject).

Statistical data on foreign language learning

Pupils, students and adults learning foreign languages during the 2006/07 school year

	According to the list of subjects		As elective subject	As optional subject
	Youth	Adults	Youth	Youth
In elementary schools				
English language	97,114	1,177	2,949	9,202
German language	7,006	134	18,116	3,489
French language	-	-	1,836	99
Italian language	-	-	1,443	170
Latin language	-	-	98	135
Spanish language	-	-	760	-
Other foreign languages	-	-	219	137
In secondary schools				
English language	85,981	13,193	-	22

German language	49,100	6,175	329	20
Italian language	3,822	1,300	1,778	50
French language	3,638	18	618	84
Spanish language	2,073	20	669	172
Russian language	88	-	51	110
Hungarian language	-	-	-	3
Latin language	-	-	1,229	64
Other foreign languages	-	-	42	-

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Pupils learning foreign languages and the languages of the environment within the scope of the list of subjects, at the end of the school year, annually

			2005	2006
			Classes TOTAL	Classes – TOTAL
SLOVENIA A	Elementary schools	Foreign languages and languages of the environment – TOTAL	105,619	109,766
		English language	90,494	97,114
		German language	7,665	7,006
		Slovene as the language of the environment	2,363	594
		Italian as the language of the environment	4,538	4,500
		Hungarian as the language of the environment	559	552

Pupils learning foreign languages as elective subjects, municipalities, Republic of Slovenia, end of school year, annually

		2005		2006	
		As the second foreign language	As the third foreign language	As the second foreign language	As the third foreign language
		Classes – TOTAL	Classes – TOTAL	Classes – TOTAL	Classes – TOTAL
Elementary schools	Foreign languages – TOTAL	26,220	656	24,990	431
	English language	3,435	43	2,948	1
	French language	1,824	143	1,779	57
	Italian language	1,529	65	1,417	26
	German language	18,510	318	17,850	266
	Spanish language	577	68	715	45
	Latin language	134	4	93	5

	Croatian language	211	15	188	31
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Pupils attending optional subject lessons in a foreign language and other subjects, by classes, end of the school year, annually

		2005	2006
		Classes TOTAL	Classes TOTAL
Elementary schools	Optional subjects TOTAL	13,380	15,734
	English language	8,756	9,202
	German language	2,326	3,489
	French language	75	99
	Italian language	227	170
	Latin language	170	135
	Other languages	29	137
	Computer science	1,681	2,476
	Other subjects	116	26

Classes and pupils in elementary schools with Italian as the language of instruction and bilingual elementary schools, annually

		2005		2006	
		Schools TOTAL	Children TOTAL	Schools TOTAL	Children TOTAL
Elementary schools	Italian	8	369	8	373
	Slovene and Hungarian (bilingual)	7	855	7	836

Pupils learning foreign languages and the languages of the environment within the scope of the list of subjects

		2005				2006			
		Classes – TOTAL	1 st grade of 9-year elementary school	2 nd grade of 9-year elementary school	3 rd grade of 9-year elementary school	Classes – TOTAL	1 st grade of 9-year elementary school	2 nd grade of 9-year elementary school	3. 3 rd grade of 9-year elementary school
Elementary schools	Foreign languages and languages of the environment – TOTAL	105,619	765	871	1,017	109,766	722	657	730

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Article 15

In May 2004, the **Act Amending the Consumer Protection Act**⁵² was adopted, stipulating in Article 2, paragraph 1, that companies must do business with consumers in the Slovene language, and in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community, they must also do business in the language of the respective national community. Furthermore, Article 5 stipulates that advertisements must be in the Slovene language; in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community, advertisements may also be in the language of the respective national community. The adoption of this Act extended bilingualism from the public to the private sector.

In the proceedings for the review of the constitutionality of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Consumer Protection Act, initiated at the request of Petrol, d.d., Slovenian energy company, Ljubljana, Poslovni sistem Mercator, d. d., Ljubljana, and others, the Constitutional Court unanimously decided (Constitutional Court Decision No. U-I-218/04-31 of 20 April 2006, published in Ur. l. RS No. 46/2006) that Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Consumer Protection Act (Ur. l. RS No. 51/2004), stipulating that companies must do business with consumers in the Slovene language, and in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community, they must also do business in the language of the respective national community, is not inconsistent with the Constitution. However, the Constitutional Court established that the Consumer Protection Act in its integrity was inconsistent with the Constitution, since it did not specify a time limit for the adjustment of the business operations of commercial operators. The National Assembly had to remedy the established unconstitutionality within a time limit of six months from the publication of this decision in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uradni list Republike Slovenije*). The application of Constitutional Court Decision No. U-I-218/04 of 13 October 2004⁵³ temporarily suspending the implementation of the challenged provision was extended until the expiry of the time limit.

On 17 December 2007, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the **Act Amending the Consumer Protection Act**.

Amendments relating to the national communities include:

Article 2, Paragraph 1 shall be amended to read as follows:

“(1) Companies must do business with consumers in the Slovene language, and in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community, they must also do business in the language of the respective national community. They must use the complete name of their respective firm and seat in any written communication relating to business. When marking products, companies must provide relevant information to the consumer, relating to the characteristics, sales conditions and intended use of the product. Such information must be provided in a language that consumers on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia understand. In marking products, companies may use text and/or generally used symbols and images.”

A new, second paragraph shall be added, which reads as follows:

“(2) Business processes in which companies in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community must use the language of the respective national community shall be specified by the minister responsible for the economy.”

⁵² Ur. l. RS No. 51/2004

⁵³ Ur. l. RS No. 117/2004

The current paragraphs 2 and 3 shall become paragraphs 3 and 4, respectively (Article 3 of the Act Amending the Consumer Protection Act).

(1) Companies doing business in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian or Hungarian national community must start doing business in accordance with the provision in the first sentence of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Act at the latest within twelve months after the adoption of the regulation referred to in Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Act.

(2) The minister responsible for the economy shall adopt the regulation referred to in Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Act within six months after the entry into force of the present Act (Article 24 of the Act Amending the Consumer Protection Act).

Pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Act Amending the Consumer Protection Act, on 15 July 2008 the minister responsible for the economy issued the **Rules on the use of national community languages by companies in doing business with consumers in the areas inhabited by the Italian and Hungarian national communities**. The Rules were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (Ur. l. RS No. 78/2008) of 30 July 2008. The Rules specify business involving the sale of goods and services in which companies in the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian and Hungarian national communities must use the Slovene language and the language of the respective national community. In the areas of autochthonous settlement of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, companies must use the Slovene language and the language of the respective national community when doing business with consumers; this refers specifically to:

- The provision of basic information about products or services concerning their characteristics, intended use, composition, instructions for use, and sales conditions;
- Price lists, if required by a special law;
- Opening times.

In October 2009, the **Act Regulating Development Support to the Pomurje Region in the Period 2010–2015** was adopted, stipulating in Article 3 (development support measures) the following:

(1) Development support measures are as follows:

1. A programme to foster the competitiveness of the Pomurje region in the period 2010–2015;
2. Employment incentives;
3. Tax relief on investment;
4. Priority treatment of programmes and projects in the Pomurje region competing for funds from national programmes, European cohesion policy and rural development policy programmes in the following areas:

- Setting up an inter-company educational centre;
- Setting up a regional economic centre;
- Investment in the restructuring and improving competitiveness of the agriculture, forestry and food processing industry, and diversification into non-agricultural activities; and
- Investment in drinking water supply infrastructure.

(2) In the definition and implementation of development support measures, the following long-term comparative advantages and development guidelines of the Pomurje region shall be particularly taken into account:

- Geothermal energy and other renewable energy sources;
- Sustainable and competitive agriculture and agro-food industry;
- Tourism.

(3) Development support measures shall be carried out in accordance with the rules on the use of the European cohesion policy funds, the European rural development policy and the allocation of state aid.

(4) Priority treatment of programmes and projects in the Pomurje region competing for funds from the European cohesion policy and the European rural development policy programmes shall be ensured through a direct approval by the authority responsible for the management of those regional projects that are included in operational programmes, in accordance with the rules on cohesion policy and additional criteria for the selection of projects in the Pomurje region in calls for applications, on the basis of the regulation referred to in Article 10 of this Act.

(5) In implementing development support measures, the specific needs of the ethnically mixed area in the region shall be taken into account, primarily with the aim of creating an economic basis for the Hungarian national community.

Participation in cultural life

With regard to Article 15 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a normative measure and provided in Articles 74 and 79 of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act the possibility for active participation in cultural life and the use of public cultural infrastructure. Furthermore, it consistently acquires the opinions of representative bodies of the national and Roma communities, as well as from societies and associations, in particular with regard to the measures affecting them. They are also given an opportunity to define priority projects in the framework of the available funds of the Ministry of Culture to best suit their cultural needs. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia gives applicants from minority communities an opportunity to express their opinion on proposed measures, in particular on those concerning project funding.

Article 17

Contacts with the nation of origin

With regard to Article 17 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia is well aware that preserving and developing special cultural identities require keeping and developing contacts with the nation of origin. This is an important chapter, representing an integral part of the special programmes of every national community.

This year, the second call for applications for the selection of cultural projects within a special programme aimed at members of the German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia, which will be financed in 2009 by the Republic of Slovenia with the budgetary funds earmarked for cultural activities, was published. The application pack also included "Principles, objectives, criteria and special measures applying to the (co-)financing of cultural programmes and projects with the budgetary funds earmarked for cultural activities of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, Roma community and other minority ethnic groups and immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia in 2009", stating that the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities is responsible for regular activities relating to contacts with the nation of origin. Applicants thus submit their projects to the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities, which cooperates with the Ministry of Culture; the latter will exceptionally (co-)finance only

those projects proven to be of special significance for the country as a whole or in which at least one well-established expert or artist will participate.

In the context of maintaining contacts with the nation of origin, the Ministry of Culture supports guest performances by the Italian Theatre in Rijeka, as suggested by the Coastal Italian Self-Governing National Community, as well as high-quality guest performances from Italy and Hungary, performances by the best groups of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in Italy, Croatia and Hungary, and cultural exchanges.

Article 18

Bilateral agreements

On the basis of the Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights to the Slovene Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia signed by the two states in 1992, the Mixed Slovenian-Hungarian Commission meets annually to assess the implementation of the Agreement and addresses its recommendations to the respective governments. The last meeting of the Mixed Slovenian-Hungarian Commission was held in Lendava on 17 November 2009.

The Republic of Slovenia and the Italian Republic are currently negotiating a new executive programme on cooperation in the fields of education and culture for the years 2009–2013, a part of which is devoted to cooperation in the fields of education and culture of the two national communities.

In 2007, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia laid the foundations for a new, additional type of programme under the separate budget item “Ethnic minorities under bilateral agreements”, which was launched in 2008 for the German-speaking ethnic group on the basis of a bilateral agreement with Austria, and a new programme under which the proposal for a new item, “Promotion of cultural diversity”, was adopted. Some additional activities will be necessary to fully implement the programme as an additional possibility for the communities with formal bilateral arrangements in place.

On the basis of a decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia of 8 May 2007, the starting points for the session of the Mixed Slovenian-Austrian Commission for harmonisation of the 2nd working programme on cooperation in culture, education and science between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria for the period 2008–2012 were adopted. The stated budgetary commitments for the implementation of the proposed solutions allocated an additional EUR 12,000. This amount fell within the new budget item “Minority groups under bilateral agreements”, which was aimed in 2008 only at specific cultural projects addressing the needs of the German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia.

Therefore, at the end of 2007, the Ministry of Culture, Sector for Minority Cultural Rights, published a call for applications for the selection of cultural projects within a special programme aimed at members of the German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia to be financed in 2008 by the Republic of Slovenia with the budgetary funds earmarked for cultural activities. The legal basis for the call for applications was the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science (Ur. l. RS No.

20/2002, MP5/2002), and Article 34 of the 2nd working programme on cooperation in culture, education and science between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria for the period 2008–2012, with EUR 12,000 allocated to this end. The call for applications (especially the basic and priority criteria) took into account the unique character of the programme of the Ministry of Culture.

The call for applications was open to cultural organizations with legal entity status, such as societies, unions and other non-governmental organizations. Apart from this call for applications, the organizations of the German-speaking ethnic group could also apply for the public call in the field of various other minority ethnic groups (as is the usual practice before the allocation of additional funds). All organizations of the German-speaking ethnic group (based on the records kept by the Sector for Minority Cultural Rights) which have to date participated in any way in the special programme of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia were notified in writing by the Sector on the possibilities within the mentioned public call and the new call for applications (which means that from now on there are two options).

Annex 1

Amounts allocated for specific budget items in the programme of cultural activities of special groups in the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2005–2009

Individual community	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Italian and Hungarian national communities	687,907	703,730	718,448	736,410	754,820
Roma community	93,118 (58,713.07 + 34,927.39 BUDGET REVISION, 2005)	81,410	83,363	85,447	87,538
Other minority ethnic groups and immigrants	174,708 (84,447.50 + 90,260.39 BUDGET REVISION, 2005)	193,110	197,747	202,691	207,758
TOTAL	955,733	978,250	999,558	1,024,548	1,050,116

Annex 2

German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia for 2009

Available and allocated funds: **EUR 12,000**

Funds applied for: **EUR 38,770 (3.2 times more)**

No.	APPLICANT	PROJECT TITLE	FINAL PROPOSAL OF THE EXPERT COMMISSION OR THE AMOUNT APPROVED BY THE DECISION (EUR)
1.	Cultural Society of German-Speaking Women Mostovi – Kultur Verein deutschsprachiger Frauen Bruecken	Christmas and New Year celebration “Archduke Janez-Erzherzog Johann and his work in Lower Styria” commemorating the 150th anniversary of his death	Declined
2.	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Nesselstal Koprivnik	Five photographers of the Kocevje Germans	1,000
3.	Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Nesselstal Koprivnik	The lost album of a photographer – Das Verlorene Album des Fotografen	Declined
4.	Apaško polje Cultural Association	Language courses of Slovene and German	3,500

5.	Society for the Preservation of the German Mother Tongue	Mach mit – Join	3,000
6.	Association of Kocevje German Settlers	Publication of the bulletin Bakh – Path, partly bilingual	1,000
7.	Cultural Society of German-Speaking Women Mostovi – Kultur Verein deutschsprachiger Frauen Bruecken	Publication – printing of the 2009 bilingual publication – yearbook “Ties between people – Zwischenmenschliche Bindungen”	1,500
8.	Association of Kocevje German Settlers	Preservation of the Kocevje dialect through workshops for youth, especially elementary school pupils	2,000

Annex 3:

The 2008 call for applications for the selection of development projects to improve the employability of vulnerable social groups in the field of culture and to support their social inclusion within the European Social Fund to be considered by the expert commission

List of selected beneficiaries

Available funds: EUR 2,058,751

Allocated funds: EUR 1,475,908.74

No.	APPLICANT	PROJECT	APPLIED FOR (EUR)	GRANTED (EUR)	SCORE
1.	AURIS – Intermunicipal Society of the Deaf and Hearing-impaired in Gorenjska	Training and employment of the deaf and hearing-impaired and their integration into the wider social environment through modern and traditional art	57,907.78	57,907.78	88.1
2.	Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto	Cultural integration – social integration of cultures of the ethnic groups and Roma community	66,711.11	66,711.11	87
3.	MOSAIC – Association for Social Inclusion	Pannonian village – the training of the disabled to work in the area of the preservation and creative use of cultural heritage	99,055.56	99,055.56	86.5
4.	Society of Allies for Soft Landing	Integration of Roma into public life through media	55,183.33	55,183.33	86.3
5.	Gorenjska cultural society Kranj Comedians	A suitcase of light and the nostalgic sound of a barrel organ – a cultural and	100,000	100,000	84.2

		business opportunity in my courtyard with my culture			
6.	Association of the Deaf and Hearing-impaired	Employment and training of, and assistance to, the deaf and hearing-impaired to work on Web television	99,744	99,744	83.6
7.	ACPC – Association of Creative People in Culture	Theory and practice: Training in arts and cultural management	57,150.52	57,150.52	82.6
8.	The Averroes Cultural and Educational Institute Ljubljana	Bosnians among us – training for the coexistence of cultures	78,523.04	78,523.04	81.1
9.	VITA – Slovenian Head Injury Association	The training of persons with head injuries to work in culture	98,394.58	84,979.36	80.8
10.	Maribor Student Radio – Radio MARŠ Institute	The training of vulnerable groups to work in the audiovisual area	83,166.67	83,166.67	77.8
11.	KITCH – Institute for Art Production	Documentary film school – my digital story	91,629.60	91,629.60	77.2
12.	Misija *S – Association for the Sustainable Development of Pomurje	Romano barvalijpe – Roma Wealth: The training of members of the Romano pejtaušago Kamenci society for active participation in the Council of Europe umbrella project “Cultural route of Roma Culture and Heritage”	88,063.33	88,063.33	72.6
13.	Radio Študent Institute	Culture and media – the training of members of vulnerable social groups in	81,111.11	81,111.11	72.2

		the fields of media, culture in media, cultural events and cultural management			
14.	Amala Roma Society	Music and cultural workshops for Roma semi-professional musicians	97,222.22	89,222.22	67.3
15.	Bosnian Cultural Union of Slovenia	Bosnian culture in Slovenia – from volunteering to professionalization	79,277.78	64,917.78	63.1
16.	CENTER – Autism Society	The establishment of the Centre for the Culture of Autism	98,694.44	98,694.44	61.3
17.	Vukova Zadužbina Foundation	Intercultural communication and creativity as the basis of the new cultural self-confidence of the Serbian community in Slovenia, and the strengthening of intercultural dialogue between Slovenia and Serbia	80,000	80,000	56.8
18.	Fabrika Fabijana Association	Practice makes perfect	99,848.89	99,848.89	55.6

The 2009 call for applications for the selection of development projects to improve the employability of vulnerable social groups in the field of culture and support their social inclusion within the European Social Fund to be considered by the expert commission.

Draft list of projects for co-financing by the expert commission

Status: Proposal by the expert commission

Date: 3 August 2009

Available funds: EUR 1,575,910

Allocated funds: EUR 1,575,910

No.	PROJECT	APPLICANT	APPLIED FOR (EUR)	GRANTED (EUR)	SCORE
1.	Roma cultural and tourist animator	Pušca Roma Cultural and Tourism Society	49,610	49,610	92.7
2.	Tracing the origin of Roma dances – the training of dance teachers and dancers in Indian and Spanish Roma dances for an active involvement of young Roma in the wider cultural community	NUR Oriental Association	63,630.56	63,630.56	92
3.	Course in cultural management – training in the management of cultural societies	Ljiljan Association of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Slovenian Friendship	71,533	71,533	91
4.	From a line to a cartoon – a course in fine arts	Izvor Association of Countrymen from Plav and Gusinje, Slovenia	72,094	72,094	90
5.	The establishment of an arts and culture training network for autistic people	CENTER – Autism Society	92,951.55	92,951.55	89
6.	Africans in Slovenian theatres	African Centre of Slovenia	99,913	99,913	87.7
7.	The Book – the training and employment of the disabled in the preservation of material and non-material cultural heritage in books	Dlan Institute, Maribor	47,454	47,454	87.3
8.	Living together – social integration of the cultures of	Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto	99,858	99,858	87

	ethnic groups and the Roma community				
9.	Minority culture in sound and picture – film production training for members of different minority communities	Bosnian Cultural Union of Slovenia	77,671	77,671	86.7
10.	The training of members of the Hungarian national community in traditional handicraft skills	Cultural Association Petöfi Sándor Dobrovnik	68,937	68,937	86.3
11.	African cultural expression – the promotion of African culture through the active participation of immigrants and their descendants in cultural education	Baobab Culture and Art Association	87,036.96	87,036.96	86
12.	Flour, honey, colorants – the key to the heart, knowledge and artistic heritage	Society for the Preservation and Development of Gingerbread Bakery	99,803	99,803	85.7
13.	Art of multiculturalism – A film and photography course for members of minority communities	The Averroes Cultural and Educational Institute Ljubljana	73,304	73,304	85.3
14.	The training of representatives of the Arab community in Slovenia for the organization of the Arab culture festival	The Rozana Cultural Centre	92,719	92,719	85
15.	Practice makes perfect II	Fabrika Fabijana Association	99,990	99,990	84.3
16.	A stage for all – theatre activities for the disabled	Nova Gorica Rotary Club	93,665	93,665	82.3
17.	Workshops for semi-professional Roma actors,	Amala Roma Society	99,880	99,880	80.7

	dancers and musicians on the organization of theatre, musical and dance performances, and on upgrading the Roma musical “Glass Apple”				
18.	Employment and training of the deaf and hearing-impaired in the field of the adapted information technology	Association of the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired	99,744	99,744	80.3
19.	Cultural network – the training of the disabled in the (self-)promotion of cultural activities through online media	The Golden Years Intergenerational Institute	99,930	86,115.93*	79.3