

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/SR/IV(2018)001

**Fourth Report submitted by Serbia pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities - received on
18 September 2018**

Republic of Serbia

**FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF
NATIONAL MINORITIES**

**The Fourth Periodical Report
Submitted to the General Secretary of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 25 of the Framework Convention**

Belgrade, September 2018

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I. Introduction

In accordance with Article 25 of the Framework Convention, the Republic of Serbia submits herein the Fourth Periodical Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for a period from 2012 to 2016, drafted on the basis of the Outline for State Reports which are to be delivered in the fourth monitoring cycle (ACFC-III (2013) 001), which was approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2013.

The Fourth Periodical Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention was developed at the Office for Human and Minority Rights, and the following State and provincial authorities took part in its development: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-government, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Administration for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities at the Ministry of Justice, the Co-ordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedje, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the Republic Geodetic authority of Serbia, the General Secretariat of the National Assembly, a competent unit of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities and the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Governance and National Minorities – National communities.

The Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Provincial Protector of Citizens - Ombudsman, the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media, Radio Television of Serbia and Radio Television of Vojvodina, contributed to the development of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention.

Data on the amounts of financial support used by public authorities at all levels are expressed in the tables of this report in RSD currency, unless otherwise indicated.

All the terms in this report used in grammatical masculine gender, include the male and female sex of the people they refer to.

II. Follow-up measures

- a. *Steps made to announce the results of the third monitoring cycle (opinions, State comments, resolution): publishing, distribution and translation into the official language or languages and minority language or languages, as needed*

Preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention, which are the basis of the monitoring, as well as the responses to the additional questions of the Advisory Committee and comments on the opinions of the Advisory Committee, are fully based on the principle of transparency. Such an orientation is expressed through the publication of all documents relating to the implementation of the Framework Convention.

The Third Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention has been published on the website of the Office for Human and Minority Rights and is available to the public at the web address: www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs. The results of the third monitoring cycle have also been published on the same website: The Third Opinion of the Advisory Committee, comments of the Republic of Serbia on this opinion, and the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Serbia. The findings of the Advisory Committee and the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers have been translated into the Serbian language.

As was the case with the earlier thematic comments of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention, and the fourth thematic comments "Framework Convention: A Key Instrument for Managing Diversity through Minority Rights - Scope of the Implementation of the Framework Convention", have been translated into the Serbian language, and together with the remaining thematic comments are available on the website of the Office for Human and Minority Rights.

- b. *Follow-up activities organized at the national, regional and local level, including activities organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe*

The Republic of Serbia has participated in the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe *Promotion of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities in Southeast Europe*. The aim of the project was to improve the access to the rights of national minorities at various levels of government based on the Council of Europe standards in this area, in particular the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. To the achievement of this overall objective three specific objectives have contributed: 1) giving support to local governments to encourage measures and capacities to implement recommendations on minority rights in practice; 2) identifying and sharing good practices among municipalities and developing flexible models that can be used by other municipalities in the region; 3) providing support to legislative and political changes at the central government level, in accordance with information received from the local level during the

implementation of the project and based on recommendations from the Council of Europe monitoring bodies.

Six local self-government units with multiethnic composition of the population were selected to participate in the project in the Republic of Serbia: Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Novi Pazar, Pančevo, Petrovac na Mlavi and Subotica. The implementation of projects in selected local self-government units have significantly contributed to the promotion of exercising of the rights of national minorities and to the implementation of a significant number of recommendations of the competent bodies of the Council of Europe.

Starting from the position that the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by the accession to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is a priority in the minority policy that is being implemented in the process of building a democratic State based on the rule of law, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia consider the findings of the Advisory Committee to be the basis for undertaking further measures and activities that are directed not only to the upgrade of highly assessed legislation in the area of protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities, but also to the consistent implementation of the established legislative and institutional framework. This is evidenced by the fact that the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on March 3, 2016, was prepared in accordance with recommendations from the Third Opinion of the Advisory Committee. This important strategic document was developed in cooperation with the representatives of the national councils of national minorities and various associations.

The Action Plan consists of 11 chapters:

- I: Personal status;
- II: Prohibition of discrimination;
- III: The field of culture and media;
- IV: Freedom of religion;
- V: Use of language and script;
- VI: Education;
- VII: Democratic participation;
- VIII: Appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities in the public sector and public companies;
- IX: National Councils of National Minorities;
- X: Economic status of persons belonging to minority communities;
- XI: International cooperation.

Each chapter contains a brief introductory part in the form of an overview of the situation in which the current normative framework for the given chapter is presented, a description of the current level of exercising of the rights and freedoms of national minorities, as well as the activities to be carried out, the bodies responsible for their implementation, financial resources and deadlines for implementation.

With the aim of engaging national minorities in the process of monitoring and achieving full coordination of the work of State bodies and ensuring the highest level of support for the implementation of the planned activities, monitoring of the implementation of activities from the Action Plan has been entrusted to the Council for National Minorities, which is a working body of the Government comprised of line ministers, competent State bodies directors and presidents of all national councils of national minorities. Professional and administrative-technical support is provided to the Council by the Office for Human and Minority Rights. The Action Plan has found that the Office for Human and Minority Rights quarterly collects data on the implementation of activities and drafts quarterly reports on the implementation of the Action Plan. The Office reports to the Council for National Minorities and the Coordination of National Councils of National Minorities. By the time this report was written, the Office for Human and Minority Rights had prepared and publicly presented seven reports on the implementation of this Action Plan. The first report on the implementation of the Action Plan has been translated into 11 languages of national minorities that, in addition to the Serbian language, are officially used in the Republic of Serbia.¹

c. Participation of minority organizations and other non-governmental organizations in the implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention by the authorities, as well as their involvement in the preparation of the Fourth Report

In addition to the participation of representatives of national minorities in phrasing and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan, it should be emphasized that the invitation for participating in the preparation of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention had been received by all national councils of national minorities and the Union of Jewish Municipalities of Serbia, as well as the following associations of citizens gathering persons belonging to national minorities or dealing with the protection of the rights of national minorities: the Human Rights Committee, Bujanovac; Albanian cultural association "Perspective"; Civil Resource Center-Bujanovac, Bujanovac; Cultural Center DamaD, Novi Pazar; Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Novi Pazar; Association "Urban-in", Novi Pazar; Cultural-Information Center of the Bulgarian National Minority, Bosilegrad; Association "Matica Bugara in Serbia", Bosilegrad; Bunjevac matica, Subotica; Association of citizens "Bunjevačko kolo", Sombor; Forum Vlaha, Bor; Association "Gergina", Negotin; Movement of Vlach union, Petrovac na Mlavi; Foundation "Laslo Sekereš", Subotica; Novi Sad Center for Hungarian Culture and Art, Novi Sad; Society for the Hungarian Language "Sarvas Gabor", Ada; Scientific Society for Hungarian Research, Subotica; Vojvodina Center for Methodology, Subotica; Association of Citizens of the Macedonian National Community in Jabuka "Ilinden-Jabuka", Jabuka; Association of Citizens of Macedonian

¹ Statistical overview of the effectiveness of the implementation of the activities of the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities for activities that come to the end of the fourth quarter of 2016 available at <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files> .

Nationality "Makedonium", Belgrade; Association of Citizens of the Macedonian National Minority of the Nishav District "Vardar", Niš; German National Alliance, Subotica; Association of Germans "Donau", Novi Sad; "Roma Information Center", Kragujevac; Roma Association "Napred", Bor; "Cultural Centre of Roma", Subotica; "Youth Forum for Roma Education", Bujanovac; Cultural Educational Association of Roma "Romano Suno", Deronje; Romanian Centre for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Novi Sad; Society for the Romanian Language of Vojvodina - Republic of Serbia, Vrsac; Romanian Society for Ethnography and Folklore, Torak; Literary Art Society "Tibiskus", Uzdin; Matica rusinska, Ruski Krstur; Society for Ruthenian Language, Literature and Culture, Novi Sad; "Association of Slovak Pedagogues", Bački Petrovac; Association of Slovak Journalists, Novi Sad; Association of Slovak Local Media, Bački Petrovac; Slovak in Serbia, Backi Petrovac; Society of Slovenians in Belgrade - Society Sava, Belgrade; Društvo Slovenca "Kredarica", Novi Sad; Society for Ukrainian Language, Literature and Culture "Prosvita", Novi Sad; "Croatian Academic Society", Subotica; Croatian Society for Assistance to Students "Bela Gabrić", Subotica; Matica Croatia, Subotica; "Czech word", Bela Crkva; Matica Czech Republic, Bela Crkva.

The invitation to participate in the preparation of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention was accepted by the national councils of the Hungarian, Ruthenian and Czech national minorities. Their reports in their original form are contained in the Appendix to this report. Their attitudes about the position of national minorities were provided by the following associations: Society for Ruthenian Language, Literature and Culture, Novi Sad; Association "Gergina", Negotin and Forum Vlaha, Bor. Their basic observations on particular issues of the position of national minorities were presented in the implementation of the relevant provisions contained in the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention. The attitudes and perceptions of the national councils and associations do not necessarily reflect the opinions and findings of the State bodies.

Invitation for participation in the preparation of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention was also sent to the following units of local self-government: Ada, Alibunar, Apatin, Babušnica, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bačka Topola, Bački Petrovac, Bela Palanka, Bela Crkva, Beočin, Bečej, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Vrbas, Vršac, Golubac, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Žabalj, Žagubica, Žitište, Žitorađa, Zrenjanin, Indija, Irig, Kanjiža, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kovin, Koceljeva, Kula, Kučevo, Lajkovac, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Majdanpek, Mali Idoš, Medveđa, Merošina, Negotin, Nova Varoš, Nova Crnja, Novi Bečej, Novi Kneževac, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Pančevo, Paraćin, Petrovac na Mlavi, Plandište, Požarevac, Preševo, Priboj, Prijepolje, Sečanj, Senta, Sjenica, Sombor, Srbobran, Sremska Mitrovica, Sremski Karlovci, Stara Pazova, Subotica, Surdulica, Temerin, Titel, Tutin, Čoka and Šid.

- d. *All other measures undertaken to promote the awareness of the Framework Convention among national minorities, civil servants and the public*

The Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality during the period from September 2015 to June 2017 jointly implemented the IPA 2013 twinning project *Support to the advancement of human rights and zero tolerance to discrimination* aimed at strengthening the capacities of relevant institutions and other key actors for the implementation of the relevant legislative framework in the area of human rights and the protection of minorities and the promotion of anti-discrimination policies at both the national and local levels. The project was realized with the professional support of the Ludvig Bolcman Institute for Human Rights from Austria and the Office for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia. One of the activities on the project was to provide support to the Office for Human and Minority Rights to train lecturers and to implement training programmes for civil servants from relevant institutions involved in the process of reporting and monitoring of the implementation of regional conventions on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. During the training, special attention was paid to the Framework Convention, especially in terms of the importance of the Convention in the work of civil servants, the interpretation and adherence to the last Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Serbia, and the preparation of the State Report.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government prepared a proposal for training civil servants under the title of *Rights of National Minorities* within the field of "Protection of human rights and data secrecy" with the aim of introducing students to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities which are guaranteed by positive legal regulations. The target group is all civil servants. The Human Resources Management Service accepted the mentioned training proposal and placed it in the Training Plan and Programme for 2016, the implementation of which began in the same year.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia in particular point out that the newly formed National Academy for Public Administration continued to implement training in this area in accordance with the Programme of General Continuous Professional Development of Civil Servants (Thematic Unit Protection of Human Rights and Secrecy of Data - Rights of Persons belonging to National Minorities), regulated by the Rulebook on Determining General Professional Training Program for civil servants from the state administration bodies and government services² adopted by the Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government.

² " Official Gazette of RS", no. 6/17.

III. Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers

In response to the Third Report of the Republic of Serbia, in accordance with Article 25, Paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention and based on the opinion of the Advisory Committee from 2013 Framework Convention, The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers passed on 1 July 2015 CM/ResCMN (2015) 8 Resolution on implementing the Framework Convention in Serbia.

The following positions contain the replies of the Republic of Serbia to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers from the mentioned resolution.

1. Roma status (recommendation 1)

Ensure that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to achieve the objectives fixed in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma 2012-2014 and that local self-government authorities and Roma representatives are directly involved in the evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy; put an end to forced evictions and continue efforts towards introducing in domestic law provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate housing and to be free of forced evictions; urgently address access to health care and the overall health situation of the Roma.

Ensuring the appropriate resources for the achievement of the objectives established in the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the improvement of the status of Roma and involvement of local self-government authorities and Roma representatives to evaluate the implementation of the Strategy.

In June 2013 the Government of the Republic Serbia adopted the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of Roma status by 1 January 2015. The competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia have taken significant steps in ensuring adequate human resources and financial resources for the achievement of the objectives established in the Action Plan and the Strategy.

Human Resources

In order to better coordinate policies in the field of Roma inclusion, in 2013 the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the Council for the Improvement of the Status of Roma and Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, which includes representatives of the Roma community.

Human resources were significantly engaged in the achievement of the specific objectives envisaged by the Strategy and the Action Plan.

In this respect, first of all, it should be noted that by the systemic solutions contained in the normative framework of the Republic of Serbia the issue of personal documents has been

solved for more than 25,000 persons of Roma nationality the implementation of which involved significant human capacities in different bodies.

With regard to education, there have been significant breakthroughs involving the engagement of certain human resources. There are 175 pedagogical assistants in local self-government units, who contribute to the inclusion and achievement of better results of Roma students in education, and 35 of them provide support to children in preschool institutions. With their support, enrollment into preschool institutions has also started, which is of particular importance, bearing in mind that until now attention has not been paid to the preparation for education, which has resulted in a high drop-out rate.

Although in the narrow sense the implementation of measures of affirmative action is not a part of human resources issues, it should be noted that by its application since 2003, 1,623 Roma students (51% of girls) have enrolled in universities and colleges and 6,104 Roma students (55% of girls) have enrolled in grammar schools, who in the future will represent significant human resources engaged in activities of importance for the improvement of the position of the Roma national minority.

In the field of health, it continued with the engagement of Roma health mediators. At the end of 2016 and in 2017, 60 health mediators were hired.

In the field of housing, human resources in the implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy were engaged in establishing records on the number and place of informal settlements in Serbia, which gives the possibility for funds to be directed to solving problems in this area according to the previously established plan.

When it comes to employment, the human resources engaged in the implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy were involved in the process of registering unemployed Roma (22,930 Roma were registered in the National Employment Service in 2016) and in their engagement in active employment policy measures.

After the expiration of the previous Strategy, in 2016, a new Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia was adopted for the period from 2016 to 2025³, and accompanying Action Plan for the period from 2017 to 2018 was adopted in 2017.

The mere process of drafting these documents was systematic, inclusive and transparent. Persons belonging to the Roma community were fully involved in the drafting of documents, through participation in an expert working group, and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (consisting of representatives of the ministries) was headed by the president of the National Council of the Roma National Minority.

Public debates were held throughout Serbia with the participation of associations, Roma networks, local self-government units, the National Council of the Roma National Minority, line ministries, professional public and other stakeholders so that full agreement on the text of the documents could be achieved.

The new Strategy is in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, with Operational Conclusions from the seminars that Serbia regularly has with the European Commission ("Social inclusion of

³ Official Gazette of RS", no. 26/2016.

Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia") and the Action Plan for Chapter 23 in the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union.

In addition to the Government, the Strategy entrusts local governments with authority and responsibility, for implementing measures related to the inclusion of Roma. The aim of such an approach is to involve local self-governments in a significant way in solving the problems of persons belonging to the Roma minority living in these local self-governments.

At the beginning of 2017, the Government of the Republic of Serbia established a Coordination Body for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025, with the aim of providing an adequate coordination of work of state organs, organs of local self-governments, public companies and other forms of organization established by the Republic of Serbia and the local self-government units, in the field of social inclusion. Further, within the jurisdiction of the Coordinating body is also the improvement of interdepartmental cooperation, giving recommendations for reaction in urgent situations which may result in additional vulnerability of members of Roma national minority, as well as suggestion of ways for the implementation of existing or additional measures which contribute to social inclusion of Roma men and women. As an operational support to the Coordination Body, an Expert Group was formed in charge of all expert tasks related to the current issues of social inclusion of Roma men and Roma women. Apart from the representatives of the state administration, within the Expert Group there are also representatives of the National Council of the Roma National Minority and representatives of associations, among which there are those dealing with issues of the improvement of the status of Roma. The work of the Expert Group may include representatives of other bodies and organizations in accordance with the needs and topics that are in focus.

Policies at the local level are monitored through a unified Database for Monitoring of Roma Inclusion, which is publicly available at www.inkluzijaroma.stat.gov.rs. The database was created as part of the IPA 2012 *European Support for Roma Inclusion Project –We are here together* and has been operating since 2016.

The project *We are here together - European support for Roma inclusion* is one of the most successful and most effective projects in the field of Roma integration that has been implemented in the last ten years and has been implemented in 20 pilot municipalities and cities in Serbia.

The project directly supported the implementation of the previous but also the new Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in key areas such as education, employment, housing, provision of services at the local level, while some of the results achieved certainly contributed to the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken by the Action Plan for the chapter 23 in the process of accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union.

By establishing mobile teams in 20 local self-government units, which is a special type of engagement of appropriate human resources, better cross-sectoral cooperation and the division of mandates and responsibilities between local actors dealing with Roma issues are ensured. Mobile teams were formed in the following local government units: Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Bujanovac,

Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kovin, Kragujevac, Kruševac, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Palilula, Pančevo, Prokuplje, Smederevo, Sombor, Valjevo, Vranje, Žitoradja, Zvezdara. For the first time, through these mobile teams special mechanisms were applied that had been established in the previous period in order to enable Roma citizens to exercise their rights more quickly and easily. Co-ordinators for Roma issues, health mediators, pedagogical assistants, representatives of social welfare centers and representatives of the National Employment Service participate in the work of mobile teams.

Mobile teams have been identified in the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025 as a model to be developed in other municipalities.

Additional 20 mobile teams have been established through IPA 2013 - *Technical assistance for the improvement of living and housing conditions among the Roma population presently residing in informal settlements in the Republic of Serbia*. These are the following units of local self-government: Požarevac, Šabac, Bačka Palanka, Kraljevo, Vlasotince, Kovačica, Lajkovac, Bor, Paraćin, Ruma, Niš, Vladičin Han, Stara Pazova, Zrenjanin, Beočin, Nova Crnja, Zaječar, Čukarica, Subotica, Pećinci.

Within the IPA 2016 project - *EU Support to Roma Inclusion - Empowering Local Communities for the Inclusion of Roma*, in 2018, the process of establishing mobile teams in the following local self-government units began: Arandjelovac, Bečej, Vršac, Doljevac, Lebane, Loznica, Mladenovac, Pirot, Smederevska Palanka and Surdulica.

In addition to supporting local self-government units in terms of institutional capacity building, additional support will be provided for the development of local action plans in the area of social inclusion of Roma men and Roma women, for the preparation of project documentation for the purpose of infrastructural improvement of living conditions, as well as for supporting civil sector.

During the reporting period, coordinators for Roma issues were supported in more than 50 local self-government units. Coordinators work in municipal administrations and help Roma to exercise their rights more quickly in the municipalities where they live. In the past period, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, as a form of support to municipalities and cities, has produced a uniform and standardized description of the work of the coordinators for Roma issues.

In 2015, the Network for Roma Issues was established, the members of which are 83 local self-government units in Serbia. This network connects cities and municipalities that address issues of Roma inclusion.

In cooperation with the Roma Coordinators Association, the Government of the Republic of Serbia carried out activities to advocate the adoption of local action plans for persons belonging to the Roma national minority. In the reporting period, 27 local self-government units adopted local action plans related to the improvement of the status of the Roma national minority. Following the expiration of the reporting period, as a result of advocacy activities for

the adoption of local action plans, another 18 local self-government units adopted such action plans.

In addition to the support provided to local self-government units, during 2015/2016. The Office for Human and Minority Rights provided the engagement of six advisors for Roma inclusion. One advisor was engaged at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Office for Human and Minority Rights, while two advisors were engaged at the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia are aware that ensuring the appropriate human resources for the implementation of the strategy and the action plan will require further efforts, but hold the view that by forming the network of Roma coordinators, health mediators, as well as the bodies which, both at State and local level, monitor the implementation of the appropriate political-strategic documents, an effective basis will be created for the achievement of the objectives and activities that are envisaged by these documents, and on this occasion they are expressing their strong intention to end the process, which is testified with measures and activities that have been taken so far.

Financial resources

The comprehensive assessment of ensuring adequate financial resources is to some extent difficult, given the complex structure of the source of financing certain objectives foreseen by political-strategic documents (whether they are financed from the State, provincial, local budget, or from the funds provided within international projects), and because of the fact that the documents stipulate a wide range of objectives, as well as the measures and activities for their achievement that can be followed by different parameters.

For example, by respecting all the complexity of monitoring the provision and consumption of funds for the achievement of objectives envisioned in political-strategic documents, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia emphasize that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in 2012 spent RSD 143,935,000.00 from the budget and EUR 5,881,924.00 from donations for the implementation of measures and activities foreseen by the Action Plan. For the activities conducted until 1 January 2015, the Ministry had provided funds amounting to RSD 295,925,000.00. In any case, this amount does not include the entire amount of funds that had been provided for the implementation of the objectives in the field of education and distributed at all levels of the political-territorial organisation of power.

Also, the Ministry of Health has spent 21,000,000.00 dinars from the budget and 82,914.00 euros from donations on measures and activities that, in support of health mediators, have been foreseen in the Action Plan. In 2013 and 2014, 29,750,000.00 dinars were allocated for the needs of other measures from the Action Plan, and donation funds in the amount of 10,000.00 euros were also provided. The planned health budget for 2016 was 32,131,000.00 dinars, out of which 27,000,000.00 dinars were spent for various purposes.

In the area of employment, the then Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy spent 29,017,000.00 dinars in 2012 from the budget for realization of measures and activities foreseen by the Action Plan, while funds in the amount of 66,504,000.00 dinars were provided for measures related to employment of Roma within the total planned funds transferred to the National Employment Service for active employment measures. The same Ministry spent in the field of social protection in 2012, 51,292,000.00 dinars from the budget for implementation of the measures and activities foreseen in the Action Plan. For 2013, 53,878,000.00 dinars are foreseen from the budget, and in 2014, 56,594,000.00 dinars are intended for support of the measures and activities foreseen in the Action Plan.

For the implementation of the part of the Action Plan relating to housing, which was the responsibility of the then Ministry of Construction and Urban Planning, until January 1, 2015, funds were provided in the amount of 50,000,000.00 dinars. Donor funds in the amount of EUR 5,109,750 were also provided.

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration in 2012 spent 100,000,000.00 dinars from the budget and 335,000 euros from donations for the implementation of the measures and activities foreseen in the Action Plan. In 2013 and 2014, funding included accommodation, food and heating services for Roma refugees and displaced Roma in the amount of 640,000,000.00 dinars. Donor funds in the amount of 340,000 euros were also provided for resolving housing problems and employment support. Within the total planned funds, funds for the integration of returnees under the readmission agreement were also planned to improve the position of Roma. In order to implement the measures and activities foreseen in the Action Plan for Integration of Returnees under the Readmission Agreement in 2012, funds in the amount of 3,600,000.00 dinars from the budget and 134,000 euros from donations were spent. Funds for 2013 and 2014 in the amount of 7,700,000.00 dinars were provided by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration intended primarily for maintaining accommodation capacities of existing reception centers, that is, the financing of accommodation and food services in the reception centers. Donor funds in the amount of EUR 32,000 were also provided for an information campaign for returnees.

For the subsequent entry of Roma in the registers, donor funds were provided in the amount of 317,464 euros.

The funds for the implementation of the Action Plan in the area of improvement of the status of women in 2012 were spent in the amount of 15,000,000.00 dinars and they were provided for 2013 and 2014 in the amount of 1,000,000.00 dinars. These funds were used for funding measures aimed at improving the participation of Roma women in political and public life, as well as for measures with the aim of encouraging tolerance and fight against prejudices and stereotypes. Donor funds were also provided in the amount of 30,000 euros.

The Ministry of Culture and Information has provided funds in the amount of 5,000,000.00 dinars for promoting information dissemination on the Roma national minority in print and electronic media, as well as through new technologies. In 2012, 1,000,000.00 dinars

were spent. The Ministry allocated funds in the amount of 1.300.000,00 dinars for the implementation of the Competition for promotion and preservation of Roma culture.

Funds in the amount of 4,000,000.00 dinars were allocated for activities aimed at increasing the awareness of persons belonging to the Roma national minority about political participation, as well as the measures envisaged for informing young Romamen and Roma women in that area. Funds from donations of EUR 260,000 have also been provided for the programme of internship of young Roma in state administration and local self-government and support to local Roma coordinators.

The Office for Human and Minority Rights within the budget of the Republic of Serbia provided funds for the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 that were on average annually about 20,000,000.00 dinars, as well as additional funds for conducting measures against discrimination.

In addition to the amounts presented, it should be noted that the engagement of individual human resources is funded by public sources, whether it is a State and/or local budget. In that sense, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia point out that the work places of all pedagogical assistants are financed from the national and local level, while the financing of the salaries of the Roma coordinators is not uniform in all units of local self-government and is implemented in different ways and from different sources of funding (budget, donor funds, volunteers, etc.).

Continued efforts for introducing into domestic law the provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate housing

The eviction of inhabitants from informal settlements is done with respect to all human rights standards. The Law on Housing and Maintenance of Apartment Buildings⁴ prescribes when, and under what conditions the eviction procedure is being implemented, legal protection in that procedure, as well as the possibility of moving to adequate accommodation, if persons do not have in their property other real estate, nor means to provide other accommodation. All obligations arising out of the ratified international human rights treaties have been incorporated into this law. This relates primarily to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Revised European Social Charter. By such legislation, the Republic of Serbia seeks to achieve high standards in the field of human rights protection, which have been established by international legal documents that form an integral part of the legal regulations of the member States of the European Union. In this regard, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia hold the view that the domestic law has fully incorporated provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate housing.

⁴ Official Gazette of RS", no. 104/2016.

General health situation of the Roma population and health care

In the reporting period, on the basis of data collected from the activities of Roma health mediators, which included a total of 58,837 visits, out of which 37,502 first visits to Roma families, the general health situation of Roma in the Republic of Serbia is described by the following data according to certain categories of persons:

INCLUDED AND REGISTERED DURING THE FIRST VISITS			
Total	Women	Men	Children
142,763	47,261	43,774	51,728

TYPE OF HOUSING		
Private house	Tenant	Emergency accommodation
98,041	9,370	34,655

DEGREE OF EDUCATION				
Without School	Primary School	Secondary school	Employed	Unemployed
21,496	56,762	9,763	9,644	72,405

DISEASES	
Mental diseases	1,661
Malignant diseases	1,034
Diabetes	2,259
Hemodialysis treatment	437
Muscular dystrophy	168
Cardio vascular diseases	9,298
Addiction diseases	678
Bronchial asthma	2,369
Other chronic diseases	9,377
Contagious jaundice	87
Other infectious diseases	344

WOMEN				
Pregnant women	Risky pregnancy	Women in their puerperal period	Generative period	Post generative period
9,756	743	4,880	32,910	14,430

WOMEN					
Gynaecological examination					
Gynaecological physical examination	19,867	Follow-up examination	5,250	Mammography	1,255
Gynaecological examination for pregnant women					
Performed examinations	5,408	Not having medical	4,348		

		examinations		
Doctor				
A selected doctor	39,555	Without a selected doctor	16,340	

INFANTS	
0-1 month	5,382
2-12 months	4,625

INFANTS					
Vaccination					
Complete	5,951	Incomplete	7,262	Without vaccine	1,013
Doctor					
A selected doctor	5,452	Without a selected doctor	5,590		
Nutrition					
Natural	5,661	Artificial milk	544	Mixed	1,366

CHILDREN			
1-5 years	6-9 years	10-18 years	the Young 19-26
17,076	12,792	14,825	4,066

CHILDREN											
Doctor											
A selected doctor	35,593	Without a selected doctor	12,367								
Vaccination											
Complete	29,803	Incomplete	14,625	Without vaccine	1,009						
Child Support											
Achieved	31,362	Not achieved	11,619								
Covered by educational system											
'Special' education	1,449	Regular Education	21,695	Incomplete Education	1,625	Part-time Education	288	Not included until the age of 10	2,273	Not included until the age of 18	2,655

The Young, 19-26 years old	
Studying	No data
Employed	165
Unemployed	4,697
Married	289

The results of the work of health mediators have led to a major progress in health care. Their work on health education of Roma men and Roma women is the most successful measure in public policies undertaken after the adoption of the Strategy for the Promotion of the Status of

Roma 2009-2015. Health mediators regularly help residents of informal settlements in improving health status and being included in the health system (scheduling regular examinations, obtaining health booklets, vaccinating children, etc.). According to the available indicators of the work of health mediators, they successfully continued their activities, so that by the end of 2017, within the project *Improving the availability of health care for the Roma population*, they completed a total of 460.125 visits, in the health centers they made appointments for a total of 35,718 examinations out of which 26,231 of different types of health examinations were performed, they helped with the implementation of health insurance for 60 people, helped with obtaining personal documents necessary for health care for 165 people, helped with obtaining Red Cross assistance for 2,414 persons and assisted in the implementation of one-time assistance to 219 persons. Also, during the reporting period, the mediators held 4,844 lectures attended by 3,117 persons and conducted 56,873 interviews. The mediators have also made influence on the improvement of health care for 4,500 pregnant women and women who have just given birth, and on 11,177 women to have selected their gynecologist, and on 12,617 to have been covered by physical examinations. The mortality rate of Roma children has been reduced by 50% compared to 2006.

2. Elimination of segregation of the Roma in education (recommendation 2)

Pursue efforts to eliminate segregation of Roma children in education and devise without delay measures to effectively increase access to mainstream education as well as to improve education outcomes for Roma children.

Normative framework for the elimination of segregation of Roma children in education

In the previous reporting periods the authorities of the Republic of Serbia informed the Advisory Committee about the solutions contained in the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination⁵ that determined the notion of discrimination and its forms of manifestation. In addition to the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, the normative framework for the elimination of segregation of Roma children is comprised by the Law on Primary Education⁶ and the Law on Foundations of Educational System⁷.

The Law on Primary Education pays special attention to inclusive education through provisions on enrollment in schools of children from vulnerable social groups. Article 55 of this Law stipulates that children from vulnerable social groups can be enrolled in school without proof of their parents' residence and required documentation. Additionally, if there is no possibility of examining a child for enrollment in a school in its mother tongue, the school shall engage an interpreter at the proposal of the national council of a national minority. Article 56 of the same Law prescribes the enrollment in the school for education of students with special needs. In the school for education of pupils with special needs, a child or pupil shall be enrolled

⁵ Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/2009.

⁶ Official Gazette of RS", no. 55/2013, 101/2017 and 27/2018 - other law.

⁷ Official Gazette of RS", no. 88/2017 and 27/2018 - other law.

according to the opinion of interdisciplinary committee for evaluation of the needs for providing additional educational, healthcare or social support, with consent of the parents, i.e. guardians.

Considering the importance of preventing and combating discrimination in society, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has prepared and adopted the Rulebook on more detailed criteria for recognizing forms of discrimination by an employee, child, student or a third person in an educational institution⁸. This Rulebook identifies segregation as a particularly difficult form of discrimination in the implementation of the educational process.

During 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development established an inter-ministerial working group composed of representatives of relevant ministries and institutions in this field, so that the improvement of the legislation in the field of responding to discrimination in educational institutions could be achieved. The working group drafted a proposal for a new Rulebook on the conduct of an institution in the event of suspicion or established discriminatory behaviour and held 10 working meetings and 5 workshops on the text of future Rulebook. The text of the Rulebook is in the final stage of drafting, which prescribes conduct when suspected or determined discriminatory behaviour, the ways of carrying out preventive and intervention activities, the obligations and responsibilities of the child, pupil, adult, parent or other legal representative, employee, a third party in an institution, the obligation and responsibility of the authorities and the institution bodies and other issues of importance for the protection against discrimination. It is especially important to emphasize that by the new proposal of the Rulebook segregation has been defined as well as preventive activities at the level of a local self-government unit in preventing segregation, the preventive activities of an institution in preventing segregation, interventions and desegregation measures and measures that apply to an individual child and student during the process of desegregation.

Although it does not apply to the reporting period, it should be noted that, for the sake of further development of the normative framework in the field of prohibition of discrimination in education and effective increase of access to inclusive education and improvement of educational outcomes, in 2017, a new Law on Foundations of Education was adopted which, like the Law on Primary Education, prescribes that a child and a student and an adult who are due to social deprivation, special needs, disability, learning difficulties, the risk of early school leaving and other reasons, which to a large extent can relate to children from the Roma community, in need of additional support in education, the institution shall provide the elimination of physical and communication barriers, by adapting the manner curriculum implementation and through the development, adoption and implementation of individual educational plan. This plan shall be developed by a team of additional support to a child, based on previously achieved, recorded and evaluated individualization measures and the pedagogical profile of a child, pupil and adult, and shall be implemented after given consent of the parents or the guardian. The team for giving additional support to a student at school consists of their class teacher, a teacher of subject teaching, their form teacher, an expert associate, the parent, or the guardian. Also, a teaching

⁸ Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/2016

assistant shall ensure assistance and additional support to a group of children and students in the institution, in accordance with their needs.

Measures taken for suppressing segregation of the Roma and enrollment in "special schools" in practice

Measures taken to combat the segregation of Roma and enrollment in schools for the education of students with special needs are related to the system of affirmative measures defined in the legislation. The application of affirmative measures for the enrollment of Roma students in secondary schools, and on what the authorities of the Republic of Serbia have so far reported to the Advisory Committee and what they are doing in this Report, greatly contributes to inclusive education. Moreover, the role of pedagogical assistants of whom there are currently 175 working in the Republic of Serbia contributes to the increase in the number of Roma children enrolled in one of the primary school grades. According to the available data, in the school year 2016/2017, in total, 1,538 Roma students⁹ were enrolled in different grades of primary schools with the support of pedagogical assistants.

With the aim of empowering members of interdisciplinary committees for assessing the needs for providing additional educational, health or social support during the enrollment process in schools, within the framework of the project *Promoting professional community support - an important step in the inclusion of children* implemented by the Centre for Social Policy, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team, training for members of inter-ministerial commissions was organized. The basic one-day training was attended by 449 members from 124 interdepartmental commissions, while a three-day "advanced" training was conducted by about 100 members from 27 inter-departmental commissions. Within the project, a "Guide for Interdepartmental Commissions" was also created.

During April 2017, relevant data from local self-government units were collected in which the coverage of children who had been provided with preparatory preschool programmes and enrollment in the first grade of primary school was below 90%. From preschool institutions in those local self-government units, operational plans of activities were collected in connection with the increase in the coverage of children from vulnerable social groups by preschool curriculum for 2016/2017 school year and follow-up reports. Based on these data, consultative workshops were conducted with representatives of preschool and other relevant institutions from the level of local communities. The aim of the workshops was to identify good practices, identify barriers and difficulties, based on the analysis of the situation, and draft proposals of measures and plans of activities for achieving full coverage of children.

Five consulting workshops were held in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Loznica and Čačak, attended by 137 participants. Participants were representatives of preschool institutions, primary schools, local self-government units, centres for social work and pedagogical assistants from

⁹<http://inkluzijaRoma.stat.gov.rs/sr/>

Novi Kneževac, Senta, Bačka Topola, Kikinda, Žitište, Alibunar, Sremska Mitrovica, Palilula, Barajevo, Sopot, Zvezdara, Zemun, Stara Pazova, Požega, Kosjerić, Mionica, Gornji Milanovac, Lajkovac, Ljig, Ivanjica, Arilje, Lučani, Loznica, Mali Zvornik, Vladimirci, Krupanj.

Efforts to overcome the segregation of Roma children have been taken also by independent institutions. The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality prepared a Manual for the Prevention of Segregation, the development of inclusive enrollment policies and the desegregation of schools and classes, where, *inter alia*, comparative desegregation models in some European countries were presented as well as concrete proposals for the implementation of the desegregation process in the Republic of Serbia. In cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development prepares manuals for students, educators and parents on the importance of combating discrimination in education, especially on the negative consequences of segregation.

In the previous period, two surveys were conducted¹⁰ indicating a decrease in the number of Roma students enrolled in schools for pupils with special needs.

Research shows that in 2015 the number of Roma students in special schools decreased (18%), compared to the school year 2008/2009 when it was 32%. The survey shows that in the school year 2014/2015 of the total number of students in special education, 18% were from Roma families. The results indicate that much has been done to increase the inclusiveness of primary schools, but also that it is possible to work even more on the implementation of existing education policies.

3. Participation of national minorities in electoral process and state administration (recommendation 3)

Promote the effective participation of national minorities, including numerically smaller ones, in electoral processes and take vigorous measures to address the under-representation of national minorities in public administration, particularly at State level; pursue efforts to create a multi-ethnic police force.

Effective participation of national minorities in the electoral process

The Second Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention (Sections 15.1 and 15.2) contains data on Constitutional and legal solutions allowing the representation of national minorities in representation bodies.

In the Republic of Serbia, the provisions of the Law on the Election of Parliament Members¹¹, the Law on Local Elections¹² and the Provincial Assembly Decision on the Election

¹⁰Institute for Open Society, *Roma children in "special education" in Serbia*, 2010 and UNICEF, IPSOS and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, *Education Quality Analysis in Schools and Departments for Education of Children with Disabilities*, 2015.

of Members of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina¹³ enable the implementation of the Constitutional provisions on the right to participation of representatives of national minorities in the management of public affairs and participation in representative bodies. Electoral legislation at all levels of government regarding participation in the distribution of mandates of the lists of political parties of national minorities in the period after the submission of the Third Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention has not been amended. In the reporting period, a new Provincial Assembly Decision on the election of members of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina has been adopted, which, instead of the former mixed electoral system, according to which the members were elected both by proportional and majority system, only a proportional system has been introduced, and it has been established that the members are elected in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, as one constituency. The provisions concerning the participation in the distribution of mandates of the lists of political parties of national minorities have remained unchanged, requiring political parties of national minorities and a coalition of political parties of national minorities to participate in the distribution of mandates even when they have received less than 5% of the votes of the total number of voters who voted.

The Law on Political Parties¹⁴, the provisions of which are presented in Section 5.2. of the Third Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention, regulates the notion of a political party of some national minority. Provisions providing for a lower threshold in terms of the number of statements made by the founders for the registration of a political party of a national minority were, *inter alia*, the subject of many initiatives for assessing the constitutionality of the Law on Political Parties. By a decision of 9 April 2015, the Constitutional Court rejected a request to establish the unconstitutionality of the provisions relating to the number of founders required to establish a political party of national minorities (1,000), stating that "there is a reasonable and legitimate justification for the legal solutions regulating the way of achieving the guaranteed freedom of political association, in a democratic society to encourage the establishment of political parties of national minorities and their functioning through the institutions of the political system, and what can be achieved, *inter alia*, by prescribing lesser number of founders of such a political party ", and that" it is not disputable that with this approach the legislator puts in a different, more favourable position the citizens who achieve the acquired freedom of political association by establishing a party of a national minority ", but, according to the belief of the Constitutional Court," such a distinction cannot be regarded as discrimination, but as a special measure introduced by the Republic of Serbia, in the sense of the provision of Article 21, Paragraph 4 of the Constitution, so as to achieve full equality of the national minority as a group of persons, which from the point of view of its number and specified

¹¹ " Official Gazette of RS", no. 35/2000, 57/2003 - decision of CC, 72/2003 - other Law, 75/2003 –amendments to the other Law, 18/2004, 85/2005 - other Law, 101/2005 – other Law, 104/2009 - other Law, 28/2011 - decision of CC and 36/2011

¹²Official Gazette of RS", no. 129/2007, 34/2010 - decision of CC and 54/2011

¹³Official Gazette of AP Vojvodina", no. 23/2014

¹⁴ Official Gazette of RS", no. 36/2009 and 61/2015 - decision US

needs in different fields of social life, is essentially in a different (unequal) position in relation to the general population - persons belonging to the majority of the Serbian people."¹⁵

When registering a political party of a national minority, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, which keeps the Register of Political Parties, estimates the fulfillment of the conditions prescribed by the Law, both in terms of the number of founders' statements required to establish a political party of a national minority (1,000) as well as whether the memorandum of association, the programme and the statute of a political party the registration of which is requested for regulated action, are especially aimed at representing the interests of a national minority and the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to that minority, regardless of whether its founders are persons belonging to any minority group or people belonging to the majority. This in fact means that all national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, including those whose number of members according to the population census is less than 1,000, can have their political parties which is illustrated by the following data.

There are 68 national minority parties registered in the Register of Political Parties: 7 political parties of the Albanian national minority, 11 Bosniak national minorities, 4 Bulgarian national minorities, 3 Bunjevci national minorities, 3 Vlach national minorities, 1 Gorani national minority, 7 Hungarian national minorities, 3 Macedonian national minorities, 7 Roma national minorities, 2 Romanian national minorities, 2 Ruthenian national minorities, 5 Slovak national minorities, 2 Croatian national minorities, 2 Montenegrin national minorities, 2 Greek national minorities and 4 Russian national minorities. Apart from Greeks and Gorani, other numerically small national minorities have not established their political parties.

The following paragraphs contain data on the participation of persons belonging to national minorities at the National Assembly sessions in the period 2012-2016.

For the elections for members of Parliament, held on May 6, 2012, political parties of national minorities, or coalitions of political parties of national minorities, submitted six electoral lists with candidates for MPs. According to the results of the elections, the following electoral lists have entered the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia:

1. VAJDASÁGI MAGYAR SZÖVETSÉG-PÁSZTOR ISTVÁN - THE ASSOCIATION OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS-ISSHAN PASTOR - 5 mandates;
2. THE PARTY OF THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION OF SANDŽAK - DR SULEJMAN UGLJANIN THE PARTY OF THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION OF SANDŽAK - DR SULEJMAN UGLJANIN¹⁶ - 2 mandates;
3. ALL TOGETHER: BDZ, GSM, DZH, DZVM, SLOVAK PARTY - EMIR ELFIĆ¹⁷ - 1 mandate;
4. NONE OF THE GIVEN REPLIES¹⁸ - 1 mandate;

¹⁵IUz-479/2014 - "Official Gazette of RS", no. 61/2015

¹⁶It represents the interests of the Bosniak national minority.

¹⁷Coalition of political parties of Bosniak, Croatian, Hungarian and Slovak national minorities.

¹⁸It has been registered as a political party of the Vlach national minority

5. COALITION OF THE ALBANIAN PREŠEVO VALLEY - COALITION AND SHQIPTARËVE TË LUGINËS SË PRESHEVËS¹⁹ - 1 mandate.

Also, some political parties of national minorities participated in coalitions together with other political parties. Within the electoral lists of the coalitions at the National Assembly, the following political parties of national minorities were represented: BOSNIAK NATIONAL PARTY, MACEDONIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ROMA PARTY, DEMOCRATIC UNION OF CROATS IN VOJVODINA and they won one mandate each.

In addition, according to the data available to the Administrative Committee of the National Assembly²⁰, 12 other MPs declared their belonging to national minorities, and they gained mandates on the lists of political parties that were not registered as political parties of national minorities.

In accordance with the above, at the Ninth Convocation of the National Assembly, of 250 members of the Parliament, there were 26 MPs of national minorities, as follows:

NATIONAL MINORITY	NUMBER OF PARLIAMENT MEMBERS
Hungarian	9
Bosniak	6
Vlach	3
Montenegrin	2
Romanian	1
Croatian	1
Ruthenian	1
Macedonian	1
Albanian	1
Roma	1
TOTAL	26

For the elections held on March 16, 2014, political parties of national minorities, or coalitions of political parties of national minorities, submitted seven electoral lists with candidates for MPs. According to the results of the elections, the following electoral lists entered the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia:

1. Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség-Pásztor István - Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians-Istvan Pastor - 6 mandates;
2. SDA Sandžak - Dr. Sulejman Ugljanin SDA Sandžak - dr. Sulejman Ugljanin - 3 mandates;
3. PARTY FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION - RIZA HALIMI - PARTIA PËR VEPRIM DEMOKRATIK - RIZA HALIMI²¹ - 2 mandates.

¹⁹Coalition of four political parties of the Albanian national minority

²⁰In accordance with Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the expression of national affiliation is free and no one is obliged to declare nationality.

²¹It represents the interests of the Albanian national minority.

In addition, another 12 MPs were persons belonging to national minorities, and they won mandates on the lists of political parties that were not registered as political parties of national minorities.

Accordingly, in the Tenth National Assembly's convocation, out of 250 MPs, there were in total 23 MPs, persons belonging to national minorities:

NATIONAL MINORITY	NUMBER OF PARLIAMENT MEMBERS
Bosniak	7
Hungarian	6
Vlachs	2
Montenegrin	2
Albanian	2
Ruthenian	1
Bulgarian	1
Slovak	1
Bunjevci	1
TOTAL	23

For the elections held on April 24, 2016, political parties of national minorities, or coalitions of political parties of national minorities, submitted eight electoral lists with candidates for MPs. According to the results of the elections, the following electoral lists entered the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia:

1. Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség - Pásztor István - Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians - István Pastor - 4 mandates;
2. MUAMER ZUKORLIĆ / MUAMER ZUKORLIĆ - BOJNJAČKA DEMOKRATSKA ZAJEDNICA SANDŽAK / BOŠNJAČKA DEMOKRATSKA ZAJEDNICA SANDŽAKA - 2 mandates;
3. SDA Sandzak - Dr. Sulejman Ugljanin SDA Sandzak - Dr Sulejman Ugljanin - 2 mandates;
4. GREEN PARTY²² - 1 mandate
5. PARTY FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION - ARDITA SINANI PARTIA PËR VEPRIM DEMOKRATIK - ARDITA SINANI - 1 mandate.

Also, some political parties of national minorities participated in coalitions together with other political parties that are not parties of national minorities. Within the framework of the coalitions' lists of the National Assembly, the party that entered this convening of the National Assembly is: THE DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION OF CROATS IN VOJVODINA, which won 1 mandate.

In addition, according to the data available to the Administrative Committee of the National Assembly, 10 other deputies declared their belonging to national minorities, and they won mandates on the lists of political parties that were not registered as political parties of national minorities.

²²Coalition of two political parties of the Slovak national minority.

Accordingly, in this convocation of the National Assembly, of 250 MPs, there are 21 MPs that are persons belonging to national minorities:

NATIONAL MINORITY	NUMBER OF NATIONAL DEPUTIES
Bosniak	6
Hungarian	4
Montenegrin	3
Slovenian	2
Romanian	1
Croatian	1
Vlach	1
Ruthenian	1
Albanian	1
Bunjevci	1
TOTAL	21

The following paragraphs contain data on the participation of political parties of national minorities at the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the period 2012-2016.

In the election process in 2012, the following parties and coalitions participated in the election of deputies to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina according to the proportional system as political parties, i.e. coalitions of political parties with the position of political parties of national minorities, i.e., coalitions of national minorities:

1. THE ALLIANCE OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS - VAJDASÁGI MAGYAR SZÖVETSÉG;
2. COALITION ALL TOGETHER: BDZ, GSM, DZH, DZVM, SLOVAK PARTY;
3. HUNGARIAN HOPE MOVEMENT-MAGYAR REMÉNY MOZGALOM;
4. MONTENEGRIN PARTY.

On May 6, 2012, in the elections for deputies to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, according to the proportional electoral system, only the electoral list VAJDASÁGI MAGYAR SZÖVETSÉG - PÁSZTOR ISTVÁN - ALLIANCE OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS - ISSTAN PASTOR, whose submitter ALLIANCE OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS - VAJDASÁGI MAGYAR SZÖVETSÉG won four mandates, while three candidates proposed by the ALLIANCE OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS - VAJDASÁGI MAGYAR SZÖVETSÉG, were elected to the Assembly of AP Vojvodina by the majority voting system.

In the election process in 2016, the following parties and coalitions took part in the election of deputies to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina as political parties, i.e. coalitions of political parties with the position of political parties of national minorities, that is, coalitions of national minorities:

1. Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians - Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség;
2. Coalition Democratic Community of Vojvodina Hungarians - Democratic Community of Croats;

3. GREEN PARTY Coalition;
4. SERBIAN RUSSIAN MOVEMENT;
5. TOLERANCE COALITION²³.

In the elections for deputies to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina held on April 24, 2016, Vajdasagi Magyar Szövetség - Pásztor István - the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians - Istvan Pastor, whose submitter the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians - Vajdasagi Magyar Szövetség, won six mandates, the electoral list Magyar mozgalom az autonómiáért - Dr. Korhecz Tamás - VMDK - Csonka Áron The Hungarian Movement for Autonomy - Dr Tamas Korhec - DZVM - Aaron Čonka, whose submitter Coalition Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians - Democratic Community of Croatia, won two mandates and an electoral list GREEN PARTY, whose submitter the GREEN PARTY Coalition, won one mandate.

The national composition of the deputies of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the convening of 2016 is contained in the table below.

NATIONAL MINORITY	NUMBER OF PROVINCIAL DEPUTIES
Hungarian	9
Croatian	3
Romanian	2
Slovak	2
Ruthenian	1
TOTAL	17

Information on the participation of political parties of national minorities in the assemblies of multiethnic units of local self-government in the period 2012-2016 is contained in the table below. The presented data relate to the participation of political parties of national minorities in the assemblies of local self-government units only, and they do not include councillors who are persons belonging to national minorities who have been elected in the assembly from a list of other political parties or coalitions. Bearing in mind the fact that in many units of local self-government listed in the table below, the percentage of the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the total population of a local self-government unit is high, it is clear that the number of councilors belonging to national minorities in representative bodies of such local self-government units is significantly higher than the number listed in the table.

		Number of Councilors elected from the lists of political parties of national minorities	Number of minority parties/groups of citizens	National affiliation of Councilors
1.	Ada	7	2	Hungarian
2.	Alibunar	No	/	/
3.	Apatin	2	1	Hungarian

²³The coalition of the Montenegrin Party and the Sandzak-Raska Party (representing the interests of the Bosniak national minority).

4.	Babušnica	No	/	/
5.	Bač	1	1	Hungarian
6.	Bačka Palanka	3	2	Slovak and Hungarian
7.	Bački Petrovac	2	1 – The party of Vojvodina Slovaks	Slovak
8.	Bačka Topola	16	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
9.	Bela Palanka	No	/	/
10.	Bela Crkva	No	/	/
11.	Bečej	9	2	Hungarian
12.	Beočin	2	1	Roma
13.	Bojnik	No	/	/
14.	Boljevac	No	/	/
15.	Bor	No	/	/
16.	Bosilegrad	No	/	/
17.	Bujanovac	30	4	Albanian
18.	Vladičin Han	/	1	Vlach
19.	Vranje	2	/	Roma
20.	Vrbas	5	/	Ruthenian, Hungarian
21.	Vršac	7	/	Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian
22.	Golubac	No	/	/
23.	Dimitrovgrad	5	1	Bulgarian
24.	Doljevac	No	/	/
25.	Žabalj	No	/	/
26.	Žagubica	5	/	Vlach
27.	Žitište	3	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
28.	Žitorađa	No	/	/
29.	Zrenjanin	1	2	Hungarian
30.	Indija	No	/	/
31.	Irig	No	/	/
32.	Kanjiža	26	2	Hungarian
33.	Kikinda	2	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
34.	Kovačica	4	2	Hungarian and Slovak
35.	Kovin	2	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
36.	Koceljeva	1	1	Roma
37.	Kula	1	1	Hungarian
38.	Kučevo	2	2	Vlach
39.	Lajkovac	No	/	/
40.	Lebane	No	/	/
41.	Leskovac	No	/	/
42.	Majdanpek	1	1	Vlach
43.	Mali Idjos	9-13	2	Hungarian and Montenegrin

44.	Medvedja	6-8	3	Albanian
45.	Merošina	1	/	Roma
46.	Negotin	2012-2014:2 2014-2016:1	1	Vlach
47.	Nova Varoš	1	Sdp	Bosniak
48.	Nova Crnja	3	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
49.	Novi Bečej	2	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
50.	Novi Kneževac	6	1 – Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Hungarian
51.	Novi Pazar	45	4	Bosniak
52.	Novi Sad	7	3	Roma, Hungarian, Vlach
53.	Odžaci	1	1	Roma
54.	Pančevo	1	1	Macedonian
55.	Petrovac na Mlavi	No	/	/
56.	Plandište	No	/	/
57.	Požarevac	No or No.	/	/
58.	Preševo	38 (all councilors)	5	Albanian
59.	Priboj	8	3	Bosniak
60.	Prijepolje	21	3	Bosniak
61.	Senta	15	2	Hungarian
62.	Sečanj	No	/	/
63.	Sjenica	28	3	Bosniak
64.	Sombor	6	3	Hungarian and Croatian
65.	Srbobran	No	/	/
66.	Sremski Karlovci	No	/	/
67.	Stara Pazova	No	/	/
68.	Subotica	24	5	Hungarian, Croatian, Bunjevci
69.	Surdulica	No	/	/
70.	Temerin	6	2	Hungarian
71.	Titel	1	/	Hungarian
72.	Tutin	31	3	Bosniak
73.	Čoka	9	1	Hungarian
74.	Šid	7	/	Ruthenian, Croatian, Slovak

The presented data indicate that the Republic of Serbia promotes the effective participation of national minorities in the electoral process.

Measures aimed at analyzing the insufficient representation of national minorities in public administration

The Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities adopted in 2016 in a separate chapter addressed the issue of adequate representation of persons belonging to national minorities in the public sector and public enterprises, which confirms the significance of this issue for the Republic of Serbia. The strategic objectives defined in this chapter are to undertake measures to collect comprehensive information on the representation of national minorities in the public sector and public enterprises at all levels, and especially at the state level, fully respecting international standards in the field of personal data protection and decisive measures implementation in order to achieve adequate representation of national minorities in the public sector and public enterprises. Also, the Action Plan envisages amendments to the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities in order to create the basis for prescribing affirmative measures in favour of persons belonging to national minorities by introducing provisions into special laws that regulate legal employment status of employees in the public sector, which will enable persons belonging to national minorities to get hired / be discharged under the same conditions, on the way to achieving the appropriate structure of public sector employees. This measure was implemented through the adoption of appropriate amendments to the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities²⁴ in 2018, as well as the adoption of the Law on Civil Servants²⁵, which will be provided in more detail in the forthcoming Report. Also, it should be kept in mind that in the reporting period in the Republic of Serbia, due to undertaking fiscal consolidation measures, in principle the prohibition of employment in the public sector was in force, and since 2015 the process of rationalization of public sector employees has been carried out on the basis of the Law on the method of determining the maximum number of employees in the public sector,²⁶ with the fact that, in relation to employed persons belonging to national minorities, this law contains protective provisions. Namely, the provisions of the Law on the method of determining the maximum number of employees in the public sector stipulate that the document on internal organization and systematization of job posts in an organizational form cannot determine a higher number of employees than the number defined in the act on the maximum number of employees for a specific organizational form, while within the number of employees envisaged by the document on the systematization of jobs, the national composition of the population shall be taken into account as well as the appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities and the knowledge of the language spoken in the area of public authority, public service, autonomous province or local self-government, which envisages application of affirmative measures for persons belonging to national minorities even in the implementation process of rationalization in the public sector. This Law ceases to be applied on December 31,

²⁴"Official Gazette of FRY", no. 11/2002, "Official Gazette of SCG", no. 1/2003 - Constitutional Charter and "Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2009 - other Law, 97/2013 - CC and 47/2018

²⁵"Official Gazette of RS", no. 113/17

²⁶"Official Gazette of RS", no. 68/2015 and 81/2016 - US

2018, after which, on the basis of amendments to the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities and the Law on Civil Servants, more effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the state administration will be enabled.

Efforts to ensure that the police forces reflect the national composition of the population

Recruitment process at the Ministry of Internal Affairs is managed in accordance with the Constitution, regulations of the Republic of Serbia, international standards and the National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020. In addition, special attention is paid to the recruiting of persons belonging to national minorities so that their full equality could be achieved.

Pursuant to Article 137, paragraph 3 of the Law on Police²⁷, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, when establishing a working relationship with new persons, takes into account the national composition of the population, the adequate representation of persons belonging to national minorities and the knowledge of languages and scripts that are in official use in the territory of the local self-government unit for which an organizational unit has been established where persons are employed, with the aim of achieving full equality between persons belonging to a national minority and citizens belonging to the majority.

According to the records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, among the employees there are 704 (1.64%) Montenegrins, 52 (0.12%) Croats, 239 (0.57%) Albanians, 293 (0.7%) Hungarians, 54 (0.13) Macedonians, 48 (0.11%) Bulgarians, 2 (0.02%) Czechs, 32 (0.08%) Romanians, 34 (0.08%) Rusyns, 86 (0.2%) Slovaks, etc.

Regarding recruitment in the police, it should be noted that the National Employment Action Plan, which sets out specific programmes and measures of active recruitment policy to be implemented, provides that unemployed persons in the category of hard-to-employ people take priority when joining programmes and measures of active employment policy or, for specific categories, specific programmes and measures of active employment policy are designed and implemented in order to improve employment, i.e. stimulate employment, which takes a significant number of years to get accomplished through campaigns, promotional activities, round tables, forums and the like.

A particularly vulnerable category of population consists of persons belonging to the Roma national minority, and the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 and the Action Plan for the implementation of this Strategy, in line with the EU framework defining the objectives of integration of Roma men and Roma women, one of the priority objectives is the employment of Roma. In this regard, the number of employees by organizational units, who declare themselves to be of Roma nationality, as of September 2014, was 30, which amounts to 0.07% of employees at this Ministry.

Bearing in mind that the ban on employment in the public sector is in force until December 31, 2018, in order to increase the participation of persons belonging to national

²⁷"Official Gazette of RS", no. 6/2016 and 24/2018

minorities in the police forces, special attention is paid to the training of candidates belonging to national minorities, in particular to the Bosniak national minority. In that sense, it should be pointed out that the number of persons belonging to the Bosniak national minority who completed the basic police training has increased, and has been trained to legally and efficiently perform the duties and tasks of a uniformed police officer in the job post of a police officer. Information on basic police training is given in Section IV. 4. in connection with Recommendation No. 106 of the Advisory Committee.

4. Revision of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities (recommendation 4)

Pursue work towards revising the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, in close consultation with representatives of all minorities and of civil society, in order to ensure the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in all matters affecting them, while taking into account the importance of respecting and protecting the vested rights of persons belonging to national minorities as exercised by National Councils, especially with regard to their powers, competences and financing, in accordance with the constitution.

The Republic of Serbia has continued to improve the legal framework pertaining to national minorities' national councils. On 12 June 2013, the Ministry in charge of state administration affairs established a special working group for the preparation of the text of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. The members of the working group were representatives of relevant public bodies, representatives of the national councils of the Hungarian and Romanian national minorities, proposed on behalf of the Coordination of National Councils of National Minorities, as well as representatives of international organizations. Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities has been prepared, *inter alia*, in accordance with the recommendations of independent public bodies. During the public debate on the Draft of this Law, all interested entities had the opportunity to submit their comments and opinions, and on December 1, 2013 in Vršac, a round table was attended by over a hundred participants: representatives of all national councils of national minorities, representatives of relevant public authorities, independent public authorities, representatives of the non-governmental sector, as well as other interested parties. The competent ministry has included the draft of proposals and suggestions aimed at improving the proposed text and which were in the spirit of the concept on which the law is based. The Government of the Republic of Serbia established the Bill on May 6, 2014, and the National Assembly passed the Law on May 24, 2014.

Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities²⁸ have improved electoral procedures, and the competence for holding elections for national councils has passed from the Central Election Commission to the Republic Electoral Commission, which solved the problem of the insufficiently professional nature of the bodies that conduct elections for Council

²⁸"Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2009, 20/2014 – CC and 55/2014

members. The law introduced administrative and legal as well as judicial protection against documents issued by the competent authorities in the process of election for national councils of national minorities. Problems concerning the constitution of national councils, the mandate period, as well as the election procedure, both direct and electoral, were also overcome. Respecting the recommendations of independent bodies, provisions have been improved governing the process of registering citizens in a Special Electoral Roll, protecting personal data and holding a constitutive session. Such improved method of selecting national councils as well as upgraded resolutions on status issues, contribute to the legitimacy of national councils, which is necessary in order to consistently implement the concept of national councils as an instrument of non-territorial self-government of national minorities.

In accordance with the amendments to the said Law, the Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government adopted the following bylaws: the Rulebook on the Manner of Maintaining the Special Electoral Roll of National Minorities²⁹, the Rulebook on the Format and Content of the Form Used for Collecting Signatures of Voters Supporting Electors³⁰, the Rulebook on the Manner of Registration into and Maintenance of the Register of National Councils³¹ thus completing the legal framework for conducting the elections of members of the national councils of national minorities, which are in accordance with the decision of the Minister held for all national minorities on the same day, 26 October 2014. In direct elections, 17 national minorities elected their members for national councils (Albanian, Ashkali, Bosniak, Bunjevci, Bulgarian, Vlach, Greek, Egyptian, Hungarian, German, Roma, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian, Ukrainian and Czech national minority), while 3 national minorities elected members of their national councils through electoral assemblies (Macedonian, Montenegrin and Croatian). The direct elections were conducted by the Republic Electoral Commission, and the Ministry conducted a check by applying the special electoral roll of 84 electoral lists of candidates for members of national councils of national minorities.

In co-operation with the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Serbia, a Collection of Regulations has been prepared in eleven national minority languages that are in official use, which regulates the election procedure for national councils of national minorities.

In order to promote and inform the public about the election and registration of voters, the Ministry organized several round tables, which resulted in the great interest of persons belonging to national minorities to exercise their rights to self-government in the field of culture, education, information and official use of languages and scripts, as evidenced by over 21,000 more national minorities registered in the special electoral roll of national minorities for the 2014 elections - 457,747 voters, compared to the elections in 2010 - 436,520 voters.

After the elections were conducted for the members of national councils of national minorities, all national councils (20) were successfully constituted within the deadline prescribed by the Law, passed their statutes and elected the bodies.

²⁹Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2014, 81/2014 - amended

³⁰Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2014

³¹Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2014

Twenty one national councils have entered the register of the national councils of national minorities, namely:

- National Council of the Albanian National Minority
- National Council of the Ashkali National Minority
- National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority
- National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority
- National Council of the Bosniak National Minority
- National Council of the Vlach National Minority
- National Council of the Greek National Minority
- National Council of the Egyptian National Minority
- National Council of the Hungarian National Minority
- National Council of the Macedonian National Minority
- National Council of the German National Minority
- National Council of the Roma National Minority
- National Council of the Romanian National Minority
- National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority
- National Council of the Slovak National Minority
- National Council of the Slovenian National Minorities
- National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority
- National Council of the Croat National Minority
- National Council of the Czech National Minority
- National Council of the Montenegrin National Minority
- Executive Committee of the Union of Jewish Municipalities of Serbia (acting as a national council, in accordance with Article 134 of the Law and was not constituted in the electoral process).

Bearing in mind that the mentioned amendments to the Law do not include the provisions of the Law which were by Decision of the Constitutional Court³² proclaimed unconstitutional, the Ministry has started preparations for amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, which is in accordance with the recommendation of the Ombudsman from its 2014 Report as well as recommendations of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee.

In this regard, with the support of the European Commission, an expert in minority rights, Professor Rajner Hoffman was engaged, who held numerous meetings with representatives of relevant ministries, representatives of national councils of national minorities, representatives of the Republic Electoral Commission, discussing the upcoming amendments to the Law.

On 23 November 2015, the Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government established a special working group for the preparation of the text of the Law on

³²IUZ-882/2010 - "RS Official Gazette", no. 20/2014

Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. The members of the working group were representatives of the relevant public bodies, representatives of the national councils of the Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, Bosniak and Bunjevci national minorities (proposed by the Coordination of National Councils) and the expert public.

With the aim of preparing amendments to the Law, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government prepared an Analysis of Legislation on National Councils of National Minorities, with a special focus on the financing of national councils of national minorities, which was presented at a round table held on December 18, 2015, with the participation of representatives of national councils of national minorities, relevant ministries and governmental services, independent public bodies, a large number of associations and international organizations.

The draft version of the Law was prepared with a special focus on: the role and legal status of national councils, the clear definition of powers and the strengthening of the institutional position of national councils, the reduction of excessive politicization of national councils, including the introduction of rules on the division of power in the management of national councils and the incompatibility of the functions of national councils, which is consistent with both the Constitutional Court Decision and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention.

About the draft version of the Law, during the period from November 29 to December 18, 2017, a public consultation process was held, within which six round tables were held (in Novi Sad, Novi Pazar, Bujanovac, Petrovac na Mlavi, Subotica and Belgrade).

In February 2018, an expert analysis of the working text of the draft version of the Law was prepared by Professor Rainer Hoffman. *The general assessment of the expert analysis is that the working text of the draft law is in line with the applicable European standards, especially in the context of monitoring the obligations of the member states under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.*

After considering all the comments and suggestions made during the process of public consultations and recommendations from the expert analysis, the text of the Draft of this law was prepared about which the public debate was re-conducted. On May 31, 2018, the Government established the Bill on Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, which was submitted to the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for consideration and adoption. The Law on Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities³³ was adopted on June 20, 2018.

More detailed information about the solutions contained in the revised Law on National Councils of National Minorities will be contained in the following report.

³³"Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2009, 20/2014 - US, 55/2014 and 47/2018

5. Flexible approach to the use of data from the latest census (recommendation 5)

Pursue a flexible approach in the use of 2011 census data for policy development affecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, in particular as regards Roma and in areas where a boycott by the predominantly ethnic Albanian population had a significant impact on the results of the census.

The census represents a legally regulated situation in which the freedom to express national affiliation can be exercised. The solutions contained in the Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings from 2011³⁴ and the Methodological Manual for the Implementation of the Census are fully in line with the International Recommendations for the Implementation of the 2010 Census, which foresees that information on ethnicity should always be based on free self-declaration which is included in the census, that there should be given a possibility for an open-ended answer on ethnic or national affiliation and that the census-takers should refrain from suggesting the answer to that question³⁵ and ensuring that the results of the census are considered to be the expression of the free will of individuals included in the census and choice to be treated as persons belonging to national minorities in the contexts in which the census results are legally relevant.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia periodically informed the Advisory Committee about the manner in which the aggregated data collected on the census were legally relevant for the enjoyment and exercise of certain rights and freedoms that persons belonging to national minorities exercise in a community with other members of their group or for the exercise of certain minority rights which the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia determines as collective rights. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia will continue to do so in this Report.

Respecting and applying the legal provisions referring, in appropriate contexts, to the application of the census results regarding the nationality for the authorities in the Republic of Serbia is an imperative that arises from the principle of constitutionality and legality as the basic mechanisms for ensuring the rule of law. In that regard, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia do not interpret the recommendations of the Advisory Committee as a request for violation and avoidance of the relevant provisions of domestic legislation referring to the application of the results of population census in terms of nationality affiliation, especially in the context of the number of members of national councils of national minorities, or in the context of funding the national councils of national minorities that persons belonging to national minorities are free to choose if they wish so. Those relevant provisions of domestic legislation are in all respects harmonized with the standards of the Convention because they are grounded in a freely expressed choice of every person belonging to a national minority to declare as a member of a specific national minority in the context of population census and legally relevant use of the results of population census. Moreover, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia use this

³⁴"Official Gazette of RS", no. 104/2009 and 24/2011

³⁵ Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing, UNECE/Eurostat, 2006. p. 96, par.425

opportunity to inform the Advisory Committee that the official results of the population census regarding nationality have not been reflected in the reduction of the level of acquired rights of persons belonging to national minorities in other contexts in which their significance is defined by the relevant provisions of domestic legislation, for example, the case with the official use of minority languages and scripts, even in areas where the boycott significantly influenced the census results.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia are aware of the difference that in relation to the data on the nationality of the population may exist between the data collected by the census and the actual state of affairs, both in respect of certain national minorities, especially the Roma and as regards certain areas in which the boycott of the census significantly affected its results and are ready to have a more flexible approach to this issue in order to create public policies of importance for national minorities. Such readiness, when it comes to Roma, is clearly expressed in the preparation of the Inception Study for the preparation of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Serbia in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, which explicitly emphasizes that the problem of collecting data on nationality and the use of rights based on Roma ethnicity is multilayered and that it is directly related to the policy of affirmative action and social relation towards Roma³⁶. In line with this definition, in the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and Roma women in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025, it has been pointed out that "the number and spatial distribution of Roma men and Roma women should ... be spoken of with caution" and that " it should be kept in mind that the estimation of the number of Roma in the Republic of Serbia range from 247,591 to 600,000³⁷." During the preparation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy relating to the period 2017-2018 for the creation of certain measures and activities data were also used from the Survey of Multiple Indicators of the Position of Women and Children in Roma Settlements in 2014 conducted by UNICEF and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

In the period prior to the 2011 census, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja engaged in fulfilling all conditions for the participation of persons belonging to the Albanian national minority in the population census. In this sense, all information for the enumerators, as well as the corresponding basic census forms were translated into Albanian. Also, the methodological manuals for the implementation of the census were also translated into Albanian, and a suitable promotional material was prepared and distributed in Albanian, by which persons belonging to that national minority are invited to take part in the census. Persons belonging to the Albanian national minority were equally involved in the formation of census commissions and the selection of instructors and enumerators.

As it is well known, political leaders of the Albanian national minority called for a boycott of the census. The result of the boycott of the census is that according to the official data

³⁶http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/fajlovi/polazna_studija_oktobar_2014.pdf

³⁷http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/dokument_file/strategija_za_socijalno_ukljucivanje_roma_i_ro_mkinja_2016_2025.pdf

of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 5,809 persons belonging to the Albanian national minority live in the Republic of Serbia. Considering that the data presented do not correspond to the actual state of affairs and in order to create appropriate public policy measures, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia made an estimate of the total number of inhabitants in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja for 2013, according to which in that year in the municipality of Bujanovac lived 38,132, in the municipality of Preševo 27,254, and in the municipality of Medveđa 7,235 inhabitants. Bearing in mind that the estimation of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia was only for 2013 and recognizing the importance and the need for a long-term solution of the open issue of the estimation of the number of inhabitants of the three municipalities in southern Serbia, in 2015, a new estimation of the number of inhabitants was made by foreign experts hired by the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Serbia, the US Embassy and the Delegation of the European Union on the basis of the methodology they established. The estimate referred to the resident population that is normally included in the census. The Government of the Republic of Serbia provided all requested information necessary for the assessment to the foreign experts (the number of issued unique master citizen numbers, the number of issued ID cards, the number of issued passports, etc.). On July 2, 2015, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted Conclusion 05 no. 90-7304/2015 on the acceptance of the Activity Report for the implementation of the process of estimating the number of inhabitants in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. In point 2 of this Activity Report it is stated that the results of the population estimate will be used in the Republic of Serbia until the implementation of a new population census. Bearing in mind that according to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the Government determines and maintains the policy, it is clear that the above Conclusion does not change the provisions of the relevant laws and that the use of data from the estimation of the number of inhabitants in these municipalities relates to public policies measures that are created by the Government, line ministries and state administration bodies. According to the results of the assessment, the municipality of Preševo has 29.600 inhabitants, the municipality of Bujanovac has 38.300 inhabitants, while in the municipality of Medvedja there are 7.442 inhabitants.

The mentioned results of the population estimates in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, were used during the reporting period when creating and implementing public policy measures in different areas of social life. In that sense, it should be noted that the level of transfer funds transferred from the budget of the Republic of Serbia to local self-government units, which, *inter alia*, depends on the number of inhabitants, increased for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, which means that even persons belonging to the Albanian national minority, regardless of their number reported in the results of the population census, were beneficiaries of projects and services of local self-government units whose level was improved by measures basically grounded in the use of alternative data sources on the number of inhabitants. Namely, the annual amount of the total earmarked funds transfer for local self-government units, in 2012 was determined in the amount of 33,204,288,796.00 dinars, and for the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medveđa and Preševo 2.94% of the total amount

was allocated. In 2013, the annual amount of the total transfer of earmarked funds was set at 35,298,710,000.00 dinars, and 2.94% of the total amount was allocated for the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medveđa and Preševo. In the period from 2014 to 2016, the amount of total transfer of earmarked funds for local self-government units was determined in the amount of 33.307.366.000,00 dinars per year, while for the municipalities of Bujanovac, Medveđa and Preševo 2.96% of the total amount of funds was allocated.

Also, the level of funds allocated from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for programmes of the exercise and promotion of social and minority rights and the special features of the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa have been increasing year by year, precisely bearing in mind the readiness of the competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia to have a more flexible approach to using data on the number of inhabitants in the areas in which the boycott of the census affected its results. In that sense, it should be noted that in 2012, 26,000,000.00 dinars were allocated for the needs of such programmes, in 2013, 36,750,000.00 dinars, in 2014, 43,750,000.00 dinars, in 2015, 43,018,000.00 dinars, while in 2016, 40,000,000.00 dinars were allocated for this purpose.

6. Implementation of recommendations of independent public authorities (recommendation 6)

Give rapid and complete follow-up to the findings and recommendations of the Ombudsman, Provincial Ombudsman and Commissioner for the Protection of Equality in all cases affecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and provide adequate support to these institutions to ensure the efficient handling of complaints received and that they are known and accessible to persons belonging to national minorities.

Data in this part of the report were obtained from independent public authorities.

Acting on the recommendations of the Ombudsman

In the previous period, the Ombudsman presented a number of recommendations and proposals related to the need for improvement of the legal framework for the exercise of the rights of national minorities, which have been acknowledged in the text of the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities within the negotiation chapter 23 for the accession of Serbia to the European Union.

In 2012, the Ombudsman received 347 complaints related to exercising of the rights of national minorities, and another 17 proceedings were initiated at the initiative of the Ombudsman.

In 2013, the Ombudsman in the field of the rights of national minorities received a total of 209 cases. Acting on the complaints from 2013 and previous years, a total of 17 recommendations were sent to the competent authorities concerning 30 cases.

In 2014, the Ombudsman received 146 complaints, and on his own initiative, he investigated 7 cases in the field of the rights of national minorities. The aforementioned 153 complaints constitute 3.14% of the total number of complaints received by the Ombudsman in 2014. The number of complaints in the mentioned year was reduced by 25.73% compared to the previous one.

In 2015, the Ombudsman received 115 complaints in the field of the rights of national minorities, and on their own initiative the Ombudsman investigated four cases. The aforementioned 119 complaints constitute 1.91% of the total number of complaints received by the Ombudsman in 2015.

In 2016, the Ombudsman examined 99 cases in the field of the rights of national minorities, of which 95 were citizens' complaints and 4 cases on their own initiative.

Data on issued recommendations by the Ombudsman and the number of recommendations that have been (not) acted upon in the field of the rights of national minorities are presented in the table below.

Year	Number of issued recommendations	Number of recommendations acted upon	Number of recommendations not acted upon
2012	54	27	27
2013	17	6	11
2014	17	10	7
2015	20	5	15
2016	9	8	1

In the period of 2012 - 2016, The Ombudsman also made several special reports with recommendations concerning exercising of the rights of national minorities.³⁸

In 2012, the Ombudsman submitted to the competent public authorities and local self-governments a *Report with recommendations on the displacement of an informal Roma settlement next to "Belvil"* and the *Report on the position of "legally invisible" persons in the Republic of Serbia*.

In 2013, a *Special Report of the Ombudsman for the National Assembly on the implementation of the Strategy for the Promotion of the Status of Roma* was submitted.

In 2016, a *Special report of the Ombudsman on information in the languages of national minorities after privatisation of the media* and a *Special Report on building the Concrete Wall around the Roma settlement "Marko Orlović" in Kruševac (published in 2017)* were submitted.

Acting on the recommendations of the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

According to the data of the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, in 2012, 1,248 cases were formed. In 2012, 64 recommendations, proposals and opinions were

³⁸Special reports produced by the Ombudsman are available at www.pravamanjina.rs and www.ombudsman.rs.

submitted to various bodies, institutions and public services, out of which 27 (42%) were implemented, 15 (24%) were partially adopted or implemented, 11 (17%) recommendations, opinions and proposals were unimplemented, in 6 (9%) cases, recommendations, opinions and proposals were due for implementation whereas for 5 (8%) recommendations, proposals and opinions the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina did not receive feedback.

Out of the total of 108 complaints that pertained to the rights of national minorities in that year, 22 complaints (40%) were lodged about nationality-based discrimination, 12 complaints (22%) were lodged about (in) effective participation of national minorities in public life, 9 complaints (16%) were lodged about the official use of language, 6 complaints (11%) were lodged about education in the languages of national minorities and 2 complaints (4%) were lodged about hate speech.

In 2013, the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina established 1,253 cases based on 1,217 complaints lodged by citizens and 36 cases on their own initiative. Out of 70 issued opinions and recommendations, 25 (36%) were implemented, 16 (23%) were partially adopted or implemented, 9 (13%) were unimplemented, 11 (16%) cases were due for implementation and for 9 (12%) cases the Provincial Ombudsman did not receive feedback.

In the area of protection of the rights of national minorities, in 2013, 67 complaints were lodged (15 rejected, 42 resolved and 10 were being handled), of which 30 (45%) referred to the official use of languages and scripts, 24 (36%) to discrimination on grounds of nationality, 7 (10%) on education, and 2 (3%) on culture, information and proportional representation.

In 2014, the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina established 1,078 cases, based on 1,043 complaints lodged by citizens and 35 on their own initiative. Out of 46 opinions and recommendations issued, 15 (32%) were implemented, 10 (22%) were partially adopted or implemented, 3 (6%) opinions and recommendations were unimplemented, and for 17 (37%) cases the Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina did not receive feedback.

In the area of protection of the rights of national minorities, 63 cases were established (26 were rejected, 7 were being handled, and 30 were resolved), of which most of them (48%) referred to the official use of languages and scripts, (24%) referred to nationality-based discrimination, (13%) referred to education, and (6% each) referred to culture and information.

In 2015, 920 cases were established, 886 on complaints lodged by citizens and 34 on their own initiative. Out of 886 complaints, 309 were immediately rejected, mostly due to lack of jurisdiction, but citizens received a written notification of regulations or legal advice on the possibilities of exercising their rights.

There were 55 cases relating to the area of protection of the rights of national minorities (6% of the total number of cases), 14 were rejected, 7 remained being handled, and 34 cases were resolved. Most cases (42%) concerned the official use of languages and scripts, nationality-based discrimination (36%), education (11%), information (7%), and culture and proportional representation of national minorities (2% each).

In 2016, the Ombudsperson established 831 cases, out of which 28 were initiated on their own initiative, and 803 on complaints lodged by citizens, based on which the Ombudsman initiated 489 investigations, and 221 complaints were rejected, but at the same time a legal advice was given on the possibility of exercising the rights. With no additional advice, 93 complaints were rejected. Twenty-six opinions, recommendations and proposals were issued to authorities, institutions and public services, of which 10 were implemented, one was unimplemented, while the Ombudsman did not receive feedback for five of them. Ten cases did not require a response about handling.

The number of complaints in the field of protection of the rights of national minorities that citizens lodged with the Provincial Ombudsman was 45. In 2016, the investigation was launched in 27 cases. The complaints in this area lodged by citizens in writing, or directly during field visits to inhabited places in which persons belonging to national minorities live in significant numbers, related mainly to the official use of languages and scripts (insufficient knowledge of or inability to use a language of a national minority by the employees in administrative bodies, especially in registrar services, lack of multilingual boards), as well as education (poor material-technical conditions in some schools, interpretation of regulations on employing teaching staff, etc.).

Dealing with the recommendations of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

Information on the number of complaints lodged with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality about discrimination based on nationality and ethnic origin are presented in the table below.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number / percentage of complaints per year	68 (17.2%)	81 (12.1%)	124 (18%)	119 (18.4%)	60 (9.4%)

Recommendations that the Commissioner issues are in most cases implemented. Opinions and recommendations of the Commissioner in the complaints procedure, as well as recommended measures by public authorities, are available on the Commissioner's website. Personal data in the published opinions and recommendations have been replaced or omitted in accordance with the Rules on data anonymisation. In percentage terms, acting on the issued recommendations ranges between 80% and 90% per year. In 2016, 76.7% of the recommendations and 93.9% of the recommended measures were acted upon.

In the reporting period, the Commissioner also initiated court proceedings for the protection against discrimination on grounds of nationality and ethnic origin.

Support to independent public authorities

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia provide appropriate assistance to independent institutions to ensure that they are known and accessible to persons belonging to national minorities, *inter alia*, through the constant increase of the budget available to them. The table below contains information on the budget funds allocated for the operation and functioning of independent bodies.

	2013.	2014.	2015.	2016.	2017.
Ombudsman	172,723,000	176,676,000	171,417,000	209,447,000	216,000,000
Commissioner for the Protection of Equality	77,862,000	68,955,000	72,634,000	81,255,000	104,166,000
Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection	142,843,000	162,695,000	168,224,000	190,705,000	203,000,000

Data on other forms of support to independent public authorities are contained in Section IV. 2. in connection with Recommendation No. 70 of the Advisory Committee.

7. Citizenship and identity documents (recommendation 7)

Pursue and strengthen the efforts to overcome situations of statelessness and lack of identity documents.

Citizenship

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, within its jurisdiction, decides on requests for admission into and termination of the citizenship of the Republic of Serbia, applying the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Serbia. In the period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016, 112,897 applications for admission into the citizenship of the Republic of Serbia were resolved, where 88,108 resolved applications had been submitted by persons from the former republics of the SFRY.

Overcoming the shortcomings of identity documents

Systemic solutions contained in the normative framework that was presented in Section 2.3.1. of the Third report enables each person born in the territory of the Republic of Serbia to be registered in the register of births, respecting the legality of the procedure and the legal security of the registration in the registers of births. In the aforementioned section, legislative changes regarding the registration of residence and issuance of ID cards were also presented, which facilitated the procedure for registration of residence, which is a prerequisite for issuing personal

documents. The aforementioned legislative changes, as well as all other implemented measures, significantly contributed to the reduction of the number of persons without personal documents.

The scope of the undertaken activities and the achieved results can be illustrated with data on the number of requests for the subsequent registration of birth in the birth register which were received and resolved during the reporting period. In 2012, 1,552 requests for the subsequent registration of birth in the birth register were resolved, in 2013, 784 requests, 419 requests in 2014, 1,072 requests in 2015, and in 2016, 1,330 requests for the subsequent registration of birth in the birth register were resolved. Other entries in the register of births in the said years were made within the legal deadline for entering this fact.

A certain number of persons acquired the right to register in the register of births in accordance with the provisions of the Law on extra-judicial proceedings³⁹ (determining the time and place of birth). According to data obtained from the Ministry of Justice, in 2014, 149 proposals for determining the time and place of birth were resolved, in 2015 - 264 and in 2016, 291 proposals for determining the time and place of birth were resolved.

In addition to the improved normative framework that secured the exercise of rights in this area of personal status in a systematic manner, the resolution of this issue was significantly contributed to by the activities in the implementation of the Agreement on Understanding between the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ombudsman and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Representation in Serbia, on the basis of which cooperation of all competent public authorities, non-governmental sector and international organizations was achieved, which significantly improved the exercise of the right to register in the registry of births, but also other rights concerning personal status (such as the right to nationality, the right to a personal name, identity card, registration of residence, etc.). The agreement was signed in 2012 and was implemented by December 31, 2016.

Numerous activities were carried out in the framework of the implementation of the said agreement, which relate to training of employees in competent public authorities (judges, registrars and deputy registrars, employees of social work centres and employees in police administrations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs); the identification of children without parental care placed in institutions for the accommodation of children without parental care or foster families who have not been registered in the register of births in order to initiate the procedure for registering in the mentioned register; visits to informal settlements inhabited by persons belonging to the Roma national minority in order to get acquainted with the manner of exercising the right to register in the birth register and to examine their needs and to identify persons not registered in the register of births to initiate a procedure for the subsequent registration of birth or a judicial process of determining the time and places of birth; providing free assistance to persons belonging to the Roma national minority in the procedure of subsequent registration of birth data in the birth register and procedure for determining the time and places of birth; media

³⁹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 25/82, 48/88, 46/95 – other Law, 18/05 - other Law, 85/12, 45/2013 - other Law, 55/2014, 6/2015 and 106/2015 – other Law

campaign and organization of roundtables with representatives of civil society, Roma coordinators and health mediators, etc.

Within the work of the Technical working group established on the basis of this agreement, during 2014, 2015 and 2016, a number of training sessions were organized in several towns in the Republic of Serbia for police officers, registrars and deputy registrars and employees in centres for social work related to registration in the register of births, registration of residence and issuance of personal documents for persons who have not been registered in the register and do not have issued personal documents.

During 2013 and 2014, a number of meetings were held on the topic of *News in the field of registration in birth registers, registration of residence and obtaining personal documents*, where representatives of Roma associations were informed about the changes in the legislation that has enabled citizens of the Republic of Serbia whose legal status has not been acknowledged by entering birth data in the birth register, among whom most of them are Roma, to register in a faster and simpler manner, and then regulate the citizenship of the Republic of Serbia, registration of residence in the territory of the Republic of Serbia and personal documents.

In the Regular annual report of the Ombudsman for 2016, a positive assessment of the exercise of the right to register in the register of births was made, as well as the general conclusion that the agreement reached a determined objective, which is supported by the fact that the Ombudsman has since 2014 received only three complaints of "legally invisible persons".

The Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government has established electronic procedures in the management of the birth register and in the framework of the implementation of the project *Welcome to the world Baby*. Most municipal, or city administrations in the area of which there are maternity wards, have completely switched to the work of electronic registration of facts and data in the register of births within the Central System for Electronic Records Management. In this way, improved coordination between the competent authorities and institutions has been achieved, as well as the lawful and effective exercise, *inter alia*, of the right to register the facts of birth in the birth registers for persons born within the prescribed deadline for reporting that this type of facts.

A positive assessment of the situation in the area of exercising the right to register in the birth register is contained in the European Commission's Annual Progress Report of the Republic of Serbia for 2015, stating that "good progress has been made with regard to record-keeping of citizens' data" that "subsequent registration of unregistered citizens has led to a decline in the number of "legally invisible persons" and that "systemic solutions have been found to prevent the recurrence of such cases in the future".⁴⁰

At the same time, the Ministry of the Interior actively participated in the implementation of the action plans and the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 in the field of issuing personal documents needed for the exercise of social, health and other rights.

⁴⁰http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/godisnji_izvestaj_15_final.pdf, page 69

During the reporting period, with a view to the application of the Law on Permanent and Temporary Residence of Citizens⁴¹, the Rulebook on the application form of the permanent residence at the address of the institution or centre for social work⁴² was adopted, as well as the following document: The Rulebook on procedure of registration and de-registration of permanent and temporary residence of citizens, registration of temporary stay abroad and return from abroad, passivation of permanent and temporary residence, form and manner of records keeping.⁴³

The aforementioned law and rulebooks stipulate that all citizens of the Republic of Serbia who do not have permanent residence on any legal basis, shall be enabled to get a registration of residence by a decision being issued on determining the place of residence at the address of the centre for social work in whose area a citizen is located or the institution in which a citizen is permanently placed, with the application submitted to the institution i.e. centre for social work that his/her address will be at the address of the institution or centre.

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans' Affairs and Social Affairs has issued binding manuals for the handling of the guardianship authority in cases of initiation of court proceedings for determining the time and place of birth, in cases of determining the personal name and registration of residence at the address of the centre for social work, i.e. the institution of social welfare for the accommodation of users. In the process of registration of residence, the responsibility of the centre for social work is to issue consent after the competent organizational unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has determined the fulfillment of the legally prescribed conditions for registration of residence. All procedures related to resolving the status issues of persons belonging to the Roma national minority have priority in handling.

A special record is kept of the issued forms of registration of residence at the address of the institution or centre for social work, containing the first and last name, the unique registration number of citizens, the date of the issued form and the time period in which the person is obliged to report to the institution or centre for social work in order to receive the written and other documents sent to the registered address.

Since the entry into force of the Rulebook on the registration form of residence at the address of the institution or the centre for social work until 31 December 2016, having adopted necessary decisions the Ministry of the Interior determined residence for 1,944 persons, most of whom live in informal settlements, at the address of the relevant centres for social work, after which they were issued with personal documents. Bearing in mind that the number presented does not imply exclusively persons of the Roma nationality, the next section will address the resolution of this issue for persons who lived in certain informal Roma settlements.

In cooperation with the City Administration of the City of Belgrade and the Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade, the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted 489 residence registrations, i.e. issued 199 ID cards and 137 travel documents for persons displaced

⁴¹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 87/2011

⁴²"Official Gazette of RS", no. 113/2012

⁴³"Official Gazette of RS", no. 68/2013, 106/2013 and 3/2016

in newly formed settlements in the territory of the municipalities of Čukarica, Surčin, Rakovica, Mladenovac and Barajevo, living below the Gazela bridge and in the settlement Belville.

For citizens from the part of the informal unhygienic settlement "Belvil-Trasa", who were displaced to "Orlovsko Naselje", the Municipality of Zvezdara after December 5, 2014, 103 residence registrations were conducted and 20 ID cards and 14 travel documents were issued in the period up to December 31, 2016.

For citizens who were displaced in the "Jabucki Rit" settlement in the Municipality of Palilula after October 12, 2015, 137 residence registrations were conducted, i.e. 27 ID cards and seven travel documents were issued in the period until December 31, 2016, while for the citizens who, after 4 May 2016, were relocated mostly from the territory of the municipalities of Rakovica and Čukarica to the village of Mislodin, the municipality of Obrenovac, 121 residence registrations were conducted and 22 ID cards and three travel documents were issued in the period until December 31, 2016.

For citizens who were also relocated from the territory of Rakovica and Čukarica to Kamendin, in Zemun municipality, after 11 July 2016, 26 residence registration were conducted and two ID cards were issued, in the period until December 31, 2016.

In cooperation with the City Administration of the city of Pančevo in the period from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2016, 319 ID cards were issued to socially vulnerable citizens of the Roma population, for which the City Administration paid the fees for issuing this document.

During 2016, the new system of administrative procedures related to the birth of a child, which applies to all newborn children, including children from socially vulnerable groups, started in the Republic of Serbia. The essence is that the parents of newborn children can determine the personal name of their child and that without the parents visiting the registrar the registration of the newborn child in the birth register and records of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia is entered, if the conditions for the newborn child to acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Serbia by origin have been fulfilled. In addition, by determining the unique registration number of the citizen for a newborn child, residence registration of the child and health insurance registration of the child during its stay in the health institution - maternity ward are conducted as well.

In this regard, in 2016 the Ministry of the Interior adopted the Rulebook on amendments to the Rulebook on procedure of registration and de-registration of permanent and temporary residence of citizens, registration of temporary stay abroad and return from abroad, passivation of permanent and temporary residence, form and manner of records keeping⁴⁴ which enables that the determination of the unique registration number of citizens for a newborn child whose parents are citizens of the Republic of Serbia and who have registered residence at the same address is considered automatically registered at the address of its parents, and that parents who have different addresses of their registered permanent residence, can carry out residence

⁴⁴"Official Gazette of RS", no. 68/2013, 106/2013 and 3/2016

registration of a newborn child at a medical institution - the maternity ward, by filling out the application form for residence registration of the child.

8. Equality in the application of regulations and practices with respect to the rights of national minorities (recommendation 8)

Take steps to ensure that regulations and practices with respect to the rights of the persons belonging to national minorities are applied equally in respect of all areas where minorities live in substantial numbers and to ensure inclusiveness and full participation of representatives of all national minorities in the decision-making process concerning their minority rights.

The Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia clearly states that the citizens adopted the Constitution, *inter alia*, starting from the equality of all citizens and ethnic communities in Serbia. The equality of national communities in the Republic of Serbia is consistently regulated. The laws regulating the manner of achieving individual rights, guaranteed minority rights by the Constitution, are valid in the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia and, in that sense, on a normative level, there is no difference in the legal position of national minorities in different parts of the country. In accordance with the Constitution, on the basis of the law, by provincial regulations, additional rights of persons belonging to national minorities can be established. In the context of the mentioned constitutional provision, it should be noted in particular that the regulations adopted by the AP Vojvodina have lesser legal force than the law, that they are adopted on the basis of the law, and that they cannot create a legal regime leading to the unequal legal position of national minorities in different parts of the country.

The differences that exist in practice in part regarding the official use of languages and scripts of national minorities are not solely due to the existence of political-territorial autonomy in part of the territory of the state, as the field of official use of languages and scripts is partly within the competence of local self-governments. In other words, even if there are some differences in terms of the official use of languages and scripts, these differences can be the result of acquired rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities in that area of social life, or as a result of the percentage-based participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the total number of inhabitants of individual local self-government units. The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities stipulates that minority languages are introduced into the official use in certain local self-government units if persons belonging to national minorities participate with more than 15% of the total population of the municipality, but also that *a local self-government unit can introduce into the official use a language of a national minority and for a minority of persons belonging to the national minority and that in official use, minority languages will remain in those units of local self-government in which they were at the time of adoption of the Law, regardless of percentage-based participation in the total population of the local self-government unit.* In this context, it should be noted that the provision

of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia stipulates that the achieved level of human and minority rights cannot be reduced. Given the solutions presented, it is clear that even if there are differences in the official use of languages and scripts regarding the introduction of certain minority languages into official use in the territory of the whole local self-government unit and the percentage-based participation of persons belonging to minorities in the total population in the territory of the local self-government unit, these differences should not be seen or interpreted as unequal application of regulations. In some cases, such differences may be due to the fact that some languages, such as the Vlach language, are not standardized and that, as such, as long as they do not get standardized, they cannot be used in official use. Moreover, although they hold the view that such differences are not dramatic or highly significant, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia, with amendments to the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts⁴⁵ and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities that occurred in 2018, and what will be more addressed in the following report, made it possible to establish the validity of the Decision that was applied in the territory of AP Vojvodina in terms of the official use of languages and scripts of national minorities in the inhabited areas, in the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia. According to these changes, in settlements of local self-government units, whose territory is determined in accordance with the law governing the territorial organization of the Republic of Serbia, in which the percentage of persons belonging to a particular national minority in the total number of inhabitants in the territory of the inhabited place reaches 15% according to the results of the last census, the names of the authorities exercising public authority, the names of local self-government units, settlements, squares and streets and other toponyms are also written in the language of the respective national minority, according to its tradition and orthography and even in the case that the language of that national minority is not in official use on the territory of the local self-government unit.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia especially emphasize that all the differences that possibly existed in practice between the areas where persons belonging to national minorities live in substantial numbers regarding the exercise of their rights in the field of education, and which the Advisory Committee has indicated in their previous findings and opinions. In this sense, it is pointed out that the Bosnian language is fully introduced into the educational process, and that significant efforts have been made in the process of standardization of the Vlach language and enabling the study of this speech in the educational process in eastern Serbia. Learning of the Romanian language with elements of national culture is also enabled in the area of eastern Serbia. The Romani language that was available for years in the educational process only in the area of AP Vojvodina was introduced in the reporting period in primary education and in other areas of the Republic of Serbia. Information on the availability of languages and scripts of national minorities in education is also contained in Section III.14.

Operationalization of the Budget Fund for National Minorities, for which more information is contained in Section IV.3. in the part relating to the support of national minorities'

⁴⁵"Official Gazette of RS", no. 45/1991, 53/93, 67/1993, 48/1994, 101/2005 - other Law, 30/2010, 47/2018 and 48/2018 - amended

cultures, makes it possible for overcoming possible differences in financial assistance provided to national minorities in the field of culture and information.

9. Strengthening interactions between communities and prosecuting hate-motivated offences (recommendation 9)

Intensify efforts to strengthen interactions between the various communities living in Serbia; ensure that the criminal justice system adequately addresses hate crimes and intensify efforts to raise the awareness of all relevant actors of the criminal justice system as to the importance of prosecuting hate-motivated offences as such.

Efforts to strengthen interactions between the various communities living in the Republic of Serbia are presented in Section IV. 4. in connection with recommendation no. 97 of the Advisory Committee.

Hate-motivated offences

Measures to ensure that the criminal justice system is appropriately considering hate-motivated offenses began with the amendments to the 2012 Criminal Code.⁴⁶ Article 54a of the Criminal Code introduces a special circumstance for imposing a punishment for a hate-motivated offence insofar as it is prescribed that if a criminal offence is committed from hate based on race or religion, national or ethnic affiliation, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity of another, the court shall consider such circumstance as aggravating except when it is not stipulated as a feature of the criminal offence.

Although hate speech is not incriminated as an independent offence, national legislation allows effective prosecution of hate speech. Namely, the speech that provokes, spreads, advocates or instigates hatred, is sanctioned and represents the act of committing crime Violation of reputation for racial, religious, national or other affiliation from Article 174 of the Criminal Code; Instigating national, religious or racial hatred and intolerance from Article 317 of the Criminal Code; Violent behaviour at a sports event or a public gathering from Article 344a of the Criminal Code and Racial and Other Discrimination from Article 387 of the Criminal Code. Hate speech is explicitly banned in Serbia, in accordance with the provisions of Article 49 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Article 11 of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination and Article 75 of the Law on Public Information and Media.⁴⁷ The Special Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime undertakes all available measures and activities in the fight against hate speech on the Internet.

⁴⁶"Official Gazette of RS", no. 85/2005, 88/2005 - amended, 107/2005 - amended, 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014 and 94/2016

⁴⁷"Official Gazette of RS", no. 83/2014, 58/2015 and 12/2016 - authentic interpretation

In the period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016, public prosecutors started the investigation against 193 persons in relation to criminal offences motivated by hate against persons belonging to national minorities. Courts pronounced convictions against 98 persons.

The Programme and Work Plan of Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia stipulates that this prosecution will monitor the actions of the competent public prosecutor's offices in cases of broader social importance or in which the public is interested, including cases concerning violations of human rights and all forms of discrimination. In December 2015, Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Serbia issued the General obligatory manual on keeping special records of certain criminal offences, *inter alia*, and hate-motivated criminal offences.

Raising awareness about the importance of prosecuting hate-motivated criminal offences

In order to carry out an effective investigation of inter-ethnic incidents, especially those which acquire the features of criminal offences, racial, national and religious hatred and intolerance, the training of public prosecutors and deputy public prosecutors on this topic is being carried out.

At the end of 2015, in cooperation between the Judicial Academy and the Office for Human and Minority Rights, with the support of the Department for Democratization of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, the Pilot Programme *Hate Crimes - Training for Representatives of the Judiciary* was launched. Training on hate crime legislation was held in the period 2015-2016, with the participation of the Deputy Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Serbia, a judge of the Supreme Court of Cassation, a representative of the Office for Human and Minority Rights who is the national contact person for the fight against hate crimes and a representative of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, as a lecturer, and included 8 one-day seminars. The main objective of the training was that the participants acquire specific knowledge related to the concept of hate crime, which included, *inter alia*, the definition of this concept, and familiarization with the specificities of the concept of hate crimes, relevant international legal provisions, as well as the practice of the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Committee. In addition, representatives of the public prosecutor's office took part in the seminar *Hate Crimes*, which, with the support of the US Embassy in Belgrade, was held from October 3 to October 7, 2016 at the International Police Academy (ILEA) in Budapest. Also, on September 15, 2017, in Belgrade, an international conference on hate crime and hate speech was held in Belgrade, where representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia took part. In addition, the Guidelines for the Prosecution of Hate Crimes in the Republic of Serbia have been developed. Representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia, the civil sector and the OSCE Mission in Serbia worked on the drafting of the said document. The Guidelines are an attempt to raise awareness in public prosecutors of the importance of the notion and the standardizing of hate crimes, as well as on the most important issues concerning legal regulations and dilemmas regarding hate crimes. The aim of the Guidelines is to help public prosecutors to recognize and better understand the problem of criminal offences motivated by hate, as well as to indicate their

duty to conduct an efficient and effective investigation into the detection and prosecution of the perpetrators of these acts in accordance with international standards. In addition, the Guidelines make recommendations for further improvement of the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, point to the differences between criminal offences committed out of hate and criminal offences which are characterized by hate as an important feature of a criminal offence, i.e., the differences between crimes committed out of hate and hate speech.

Bearing in mind the negative regional heritage that can have an impact on hate crimes and respecting the need for regional inter-ministerial cooperation in the prosecution of such crimes, the regional OSCE Mission to the Western Balkans and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) jointly organized the holding of regional conferences *Inter-ministerial cooperation and prosecution of hate crimes in South-East Europe*, held in 2012 in Skopje, 2013 in Sarajevo, 2014 in Belgrade, 2015 in Sarajevo and 2016 in Budva. The purpose of organizing these conferences was to provide competent public authorities and national contact persons for the fight against hate crimes with the possibility of regular exchange of experiences, examples of good practice and effective implementation of legislative solutions in the fight against hate crimes in the region.

Efforts to raise awareness of the actors were also directed at police officers and persons who were engaged as lecturers at the Centre for Basic Police Training. The Office for Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Ministry of Internal Affairs within IPA 2011 project, held two workshops in October 2013: *Improvement of Training Plans in Police Training Centres*, which was intended for the trainers of the Centre for basic police training in Sremska Kamenica and the Administration of Education, Professional Development and Science (total 26 participants) and *Capacity building of police officers to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of anti-discrimination policies / fight against hate crime and hate speech*, which was held for 22 lecturers of the Centre for Basic Police Training in Sremska Kamenica and the Administration of Education, Professional Development and Science, as well as for 33 police officers from selected 11 local self-government units. In the period 2013-2014 the Office for Human and Minority Rights, in cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, within the IPA 2011 project, *Implementation of Anti-Discrimination Policies*, organized a series of round tables on "hate-motivated graffiti", as part of the promotion of the fight against discrimination at the level of local self-governments in the Republic of Serbia in order to draw the attention of the competent local authorities to the links between hate crimes, hate speech and "hate-motivated graffiti" as a special kind of hate speech. These activities were implemented in 11 local self-government units (Bor, Vranje, Novi Pazar, Žitište, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Kosjerić, Leskovac, Loznica, Odžaci and Prijepolje). Police members also took part in round tables. As part of the activities funded by the EU Delegation within this project, a manual has also been prepared: *Hate crime, hate speech and hate graffiti - understanding of the linkage, answers to threats*.

Also, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, organizes Coordination meetings of representatives of competent state authorities and

civil society organizations in order to prevent hate crimes in the Republic of Serbia. These meetings are organized twice a year and ten have been held so far.

10. Worship services in the languages of national minorities (recommendation 10)

Take active steps – while respecting the principle of separation between the State and religion – to promote pragmatic solutions to overcome difficulties in access of persons belonging to national minorities to worship in their mother tongue.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia recommend to churches and religious communities, that in accordance with their internal religious rules, they do their utmost to conduct worship services and rituals in the languages of national minorities. In the Republic of Serbia, many churches and religious communities conduct worship services in the languages of national minorities:

- Serbian Orthodox Church, under whose constitution there is the possibility that languages other than Serbian are used in worship services too, in its Timocka and Braničevska eparchies performs parts of worship in the Vlach language⁴⁸, in the parts of the Vranjska eparchy in the Bulgarian language (in Bosilegrad, Donja and Gornja Ljubata, Rajčinovci, Bresnica, Bistra, Bistri Izvor etc. - we point out in particular the fact that part of the worship in the temples of the Serbian Orthodox Church is performed in the Church Slavonic language which is understandable to the persons belonging to the Bulgarian national minority), in a Belgrade monastery where the representatives of the diplomatic corps of Hellenic countries gather, in the Greek language, as well as in the Romani language in some parishes of the Bačka eparchy, where liturgical books have already been translated into the mentioned language.
- The Catholic Church with the Apostolic Exarchate for the Greek Catholics conducts services in Hungarian (in Subotica and Zrenjanin dioceses), in Croatian (Srem and Subotica dioceses), as well as in Serbian and Slovenian (Archdiocese of Belgrade and some parts of the aforementioned dioceses). Within the Egzarhata for Greek Catholics, the service is performed in Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Church Slavonic and Romanian.
- The Islamic Community conducts services in the Serbian, Bosnian, Roma, Albanian, Turkish and Arabic language.
- The Jewish community in Serbia conducts services in the language of the Jewish community with parts in the Serbian language.
- The Slovak Evangelical Church conducts services in the Slovak and German language, and the Reformed Christian Church and the Evangelical Christian Church in the Hungarian language.

⁴⁸According to information provided by the Association "Gergina", the performance of parts of the worship service in the Vlach language were preceded by conversation of the representatives of the National Council of the Vlach national minority and the Association "Gergina" with the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church about the beginning of worship in the Vlach language.

- The Romanian Orthodox Church conducts services in Romanian in 39 parishes of its Eparchy "Dakia Felix", based in Vršac (Vršac, Pančevo, Mramorak, Veliki and Mali Torak, Bela Crkva, Jankov Most, Uzdin, Straža, Orešac, Kovin, Nikolinci, Omoljica, Jabuka, Gloganj, Deliblato, Središte, Markovac, Grebenac, Vlajkovac, Margita, etc.), led by 27 Romanian priests (3 Romanian citizens).

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia remind that Article 23 of the Framework Convention stipulates that the rights and freedoms deriving from the principles contained in the Convention, to the extent that they are the subject of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms or in the Protocols thereto, shall be understood in accordance with the provisions of this Convention. Since the freedom of religion is guaranteed by Article 9 of the European Convention, it is clear that the provisions of the Framework Convention must be understood in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In that regard, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia in their activities adhere to the understanding of the European Court of Human Rights, which in one case held the view that "since religious communities traditionally exist in the form of organized structures, Article 9 must be interpreted in the light of Article 11 of the Convention protecting ... from the unjustified interference of the state," and that "the autonomous existence of religious communities ... is a question which is at the core of the protection afforded by Article 9".⁴⁹ Article 9 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is interpreted in the judicial practice that, in the event of a conflict between the individual and collective aspect of Article 9, it is desirable that the collective rather than the individual manifestation of the belief prevails because "a church is an organized, religious community based on identical or at least essentially similar views" and is therefore "protected in its own right to manifest religion, organize and perform prayers, preaching, customs and rituals, and is free to act in a uniform manner and to impose uniformity in all these issues." Bearing in mind this understanding of the Court, it is clear that active steps to improve pragmatic solutions to overcome the difficulties in access of persons belonging to national minorities to worship in their native languages, which the state can make, respecting the principle of separation of the state and religion, can be reduced only to recommendations to churches and religious communities and encouraging dialogue between stakeholders and that the State's abstention from any arbitrary interference in the matter of the language in which the worship is performed is fully in line with the international standards of freedom of religion.

⁴⁹*Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia v. Moldova*, no. 45701/99

11. Ensuring the viability of media in the languages of national minorities (recommendation 11)

Ensure sufficient and stable funding in order to guarantee the viability of media in minority languages and review the impact of privatisation and the introduction of digital television broadcasting on minority media, in consultation with all national minorities.

Funding provision for media in minority languages

The public information system in the languages of national minorities consists of different segments, and therefore the viability of this system must be seen in the context of financing: media content in one or more minority languages of privately owned media, basic activities of public media services and media whose indirect founders are national councils of national minorities.

Legal framework

Law on Public Information and Media for the first time stipulates an obligation for all levels of public authorities to announce a competition each year to raise the quality of information for persons belonging to national minorities. This allowed media in minority languages to be financed from the budget through project co-financing. Transparent and non-discriminatory procedure for the allocation of these funds is prescribed by the Law, as well as the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the decision-making process. Namely, for projects aimed at raising the quality of information for persons belonging to national minorities, the bodies responsible for public information are obliged to obtain the opinion of national councils of national minorities. In this way, through project co-financing, the state encourages and facilitates the regular broadcasting of programmes in national minorities' languages, without, however, affecting the establishment of private radio and TV stations, or interfere with their editorial policy.

In addition to allocating funds for the financing of media and media content in minority languages, the Law on Public Media Services provides protection of the rights of national minorities to information through the programme content of public media services, such as: public media institution "Radio Television of Serbia" and public media institution "Radio Television of Vojvodina". This law guarantees and provides a sufficient and stable source of financing public media services,⁵⁰ and the manner and conditions for securing funds for financing activities must not affect their editorial independence and institutional autonomy. The obligation of the public media services is to achieve a public interest through their programme content which implies, *inter alia*, satisfaction of citizens' needs for programme contents that

⁵⁰Public media service is financed from: 1) fees for public media service; 2) the budget; 3) net benefits from commercial exploitation of content produced within the core business; 4) commercial income and 5) other income.

ensure the preservation and expression of the cultural identity of national minorities, taking into account that national minorities follow certain programme units in their native languages and scripts.

Provincial Assembly Decision on securing funds for co-financing newspapers that publish information in the languages of national minorities⁵¹prescribes for which languages, or for which newspapers, funds are provided from the budget of the AP Vojvodina. This decision stipulates that the newspapers of provincial importance are those whose issuer is a legal entity over which the founding rights of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina have been transferred, as well as newspapers significant for national minorities, which have the seat of the national council on the territory of AP Vojvodina.

Strategic Framework

One of the main strategic objectives referring to media in the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities is the improvement of the situation in the media and the development of media content of importance for persons belonging to national minorities, by providing qualitative, quantitative, geographical accessible and, with the obligation of the state, financially sustainable information in the languages of national minorities. For the media, a total of 11 sub-chapters have been defined out of 13. They encompass 25 different individual activities and measures covered by different institutions and organizations.⁵² The statistical presentation of the efficiency of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities for activities that are due in the fourth quarter of 2016 shows that 70% of the activities in the chapter about culture and media have been fully achieved or continuously achieved, 10% of activities have been almost completely implemented, 10% of activities have been partially implemented, while for 10% of activities the report of the competent institution has not been submitted, i.e. it does not contain data on the implementation of the activities.⁵³

The development of a new Multi-Annual Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System is underway, which will deal with informing persons belonging to national minorities, as well as the viability and stable way of financing their media.

Funding provision for minority media in practice

⁵¹Official Gazette APV', no 54/2014.

⁵²The Government of Serbia, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities, Local Self-Government Units, National Minority Councils, Public Media Services, the Press Council etc., while associations of journalists and civil society organizations have been recognized as partners in the implementation of activities.

⁵³<http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/>

Project co-financing

Financing of media content in one or more national minority languages of privately owned media takes place through project co-financing. The Ministry of Culture and Information and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities announce annual competitions for co-financing the production of media content in the languages of national minorities. This way of supporting the media and production work for the production and broadcasting of programmes in the languages of national minorities has shown good results, since year by year more and more projects have been applied with more and more quality media content. Funds are allocated to radio and television stations, print media, associations and productions. By introducing new criteria in the competitions, the implementation of new standards in this area has been ensured in order to encourage the production of programmes in the field of culture and art, encouraging the improvement of public information, technical and technological equipping of media, improving professional standards etc., which contributed to the protection and promotion of the rights of national minority to receive information in their own language.

In order to monitor the implementation of projects and assess the effects of project co-financing on the quality of information in the languages of national minorities, the Ministry of Culture and Information makes annual reports on the competition for providing information for persons belonging to national minorities.⁵⁴

The next paragraphs of this report contain data on financial support for providing information for persons belonging to national minorities from the budget of the Republic of Serbia through project co-financing.

National Minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Albanian	285,000.00	470,000.00	1,943,000.00	1,400,000.00	1,200,000.00
Ashkali	-	-	100,000.00	-	-
Bosniak	1,214,000.00	2,169,342.00	1,683,500.00	2,204,000.00	2,400,000.00
Bulgarian	1,397,500.00	840,000.00	680,000.00	1,400,000.00	2,100,000.00
Bunjevci	422,000.00	160,000.00	300,000.00	810,000.00	800,000.00
Vlach	1,475,000.00	1,342,309.00	1,680,000.00	1,521,600.00	2,310,000.00
Jewish	224,000.00	176,000.00	230,000.00		-
Hungarian	2,466,058.00	3,475,080.00	4,806,500.00	5,547,370.00	6,283,600.00
Macedonian	-	-	-	-	450,000.00
German	224,000.00	-	-	700,000.00	400,000.00
Roma	5,038,150.00	4,404,428.00	6,450,000.00	6,894,000.00	10,020,000.00
Romanian	870,000.00	955,600.00	420,000.00	3,392,880.00	1,800,000.00
Ruthenian	-	160,000.00	600,000.00	350,000.00	830,000.00

⁵⁴Reports for 2015 and 2016 are available on the website of the Ministry of Culture and Information <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/lat/konkursi>

Slovakian	536,100.00	787,860.00	1,082,000.00	734,280.00	1,700,000.00
Slovene	60,000.00	-	-	200,000.00	-
Ukrainian	214,500.00	153,000.00	240,000.00	250,000.00	400,000.00
Croatian	745,000.00	541,000.00	1,692,000.00	-	1,900,000.00
Montenegrin	-	-	-	-	400,000.00
Czech	313,000.00	150,000.00	-	-	508,320.00

Following paragraphs of this report contain data on financial support for providing information for persons belonging to national minorities through project co-financing from the budget of AP Vojvodina.

National Minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bosniak	-	-	300,000.00	428,371.00	100,000.00
Macedonian	-	-	-	-	100,000.00
Hungarian	7,500,000.00	9,560,000.00	9,600,000.00	6,172,896.00	1,378,000.00
German	-	-	-	114,750.00	150,000.00
Roma	-	300,000.00	1,142,404.00	869,560.00	100,000.00
Romanian	2,510,000.00	1,250,000.00	1,910,000.00	721,607.00	232,000.00
Ruthenian	150,000.00	300,000.00	100,000.00	185,000.00	100,000.00
Slovak	2,950,000.00	250,000.00	1,000,000.00	657,731.00	200,000.00
Ukrainian	-	-	200,000.00	-	100,000.00
Croatian	-	-	-	447,643.00	290,000.00

Local self-government units are also obliged to take care of raising quality of providing information for persons belonging to national minorities, whereby this obligation can be accomplished by announcing a special competition or within a general one. The lack of a unique record of allocated funds has led to a lack of data on the exact scope and structure of media support at the local level.

The table below lists the aforementioned local self-government units that allocated funds for the financing of media content in the languages of national minorities in the period 2012-2016.

Funds for media content in minority languages		
Language	Local self-government units	Amount
Albanian	Bujanovac	4,000,000.00
	Medveđa	3,000,000.00
Bosnian	Tutin	61,594,125.87
Bulgarian	Bosilegrad	20,538,183.00
Bulgarian (Palchenski ⁵⁵)	Pančevo	465,000.00
Bunjevci	Novi Sad	500,000.00
	Subotica	3,646,000.00

⁵⁵Speech of Bulgarians from Banat

Hungarian	Kanjiža	11,417,000.00
	Kikinda	253,000.00
	Kovin	972,000.00
	Novi Sad	7,737,000.00
	Pančevo	50,000.00
	Senta	900,000.00
	Subotica	33,051,000.00
	Temerin	955,000.00
Roma	Lajkovac	100,000.00
	Novi Sad	3,902,300.00
	Paraćin	480,000.00
Romanian	Vršac	8,211,009.00
	Kovin	120,000.00
	Pančevo	708,000.00
Ruthenian	Novi Sad	730,000.00
Slovak	Novi Sad	3,720,000.00
	Pančevo	54,000.00
Slovenian	Novi Sad	40,000.00
Croatian	Subotica	5,255,500.00

The table below lists the local self-government units that allocated resources for financing multilingual media content in the period 2012-2016.

Resources for multilingual media content		
Local self-government units	Language	Amount
Bačka Palanka	Slovak and Hungarian	300,000.00
Bački Petrovac	Slovak and Serbian	3,070,000.00
Bečej	Serbian and Hungarian	20,000,000.00
Žitište	Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian	1,500,000.00
Kanjiža	Serbian and Hungarian	9,780,000.00
Kovin	Hungarian, Roma, Romanian	2,127,086.00
Kula	Hungarian, German, Ruthenian and Ukrainian	15,149,826.05
Novi Sad	Multilingual	17,108,000.00
Pančevo	Bulgarian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Slovak	5,300,000.00
Sečanj	Serbian and Romanian	375,000.00
Subotica	Bunjevci, Hungarian, Croatian	9,684,000.00
Šid	Slovak and Ruthenian	15,000,000.00

Project co-financing of media content in minority languages at the local level was also dealt with by the Ombudsman who stated in the Special Report that in 2016, out of 68 multinational local self-government units, 49 of them allocated almost 390,000,000.00 dinars for co-financing the production of media content of public interest and in the languages of national minorities, which is a respectable amount. In addition, comparative data at the level of local self-

government units indicate that where there was a reduction, it was the result of the reduction only for the amount of salaries and other costs of the media while they were public enterprises, prior to privatisation, as in the case of Dimitrovgrad, Kovačica and Tutin.⁵⁶

Financing of public media services

The Republic of Serbia provides a stable source of financing of public media services. Every year, from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, funds are allocated for the core activity of public media services, which is the achievement of public interest implying, *inter alia*, meeting the needs of citizens for programme contents that ensure the preservation and expression of the cultural identity of all citizens and persons belonging to national minorities, taking into account that national minorities follow certain programme units in their mother tongue and script as well. Bearing in mind that the precise amount of funds for financing the mentioned programme contents cannot be determined in the total funds distributed to public services, the table below shows data on the amount of funds distributed to public media services since the adoption of the Law on Public Media Services, i.e. in the period from 2014 to 2016.

	2014	2015	2016
RTV Serbia	6,502,500,000.00	6,742,500,000.00	3,100,000.00
RTV Vojvodina	1,897,500,000.00	1,957,500,000.00	900,000,000.00

In addition, the Republic of Serbia undertakes other measures, in order to improve the conditions for broadcasting programmes in minority languages on RTV Vojvodina. To that end, since 2017, the provincial government has been carrying out the annual transfer of funds from the public budget for the construction of the RTV Vojvodina building, which will improve the infrastructure conditions of this public service and enable better production and broadcasting of its programme in minority languages. More detailed information on this will be presented in the next report.

Financing of newspapers

In the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, funds are especially provided for financing the issuance of newspapers of provincial importance and they are directed to the publishers of these newspapers.

The next paragraphs of this report contain data on the financing of newspapers of provincial importance in the languages of national minorities with funds from the budget of AP Vojvodina.

⁵⁶Special Report of the Ombudsman on Information in the Languages of National Minorities after Privatisation of the Media, Belgrade, 2016, p. 22, available at <http://www.ombudsman.rs/index.php/izvestaji/posebni-izvestaji/5018-2016>

Language	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bunjevci	8,165,000.00	9,165,000.00	9,465,000.00	9,593,371.00	8,348,800.00
Macedonian	5,550,000.00	5,709,900.00	5,709,900.00	5,709,900.00	5,239,000.00
Hungarian	125,250,000.00	129,089,700.00	129,089,700.00	129,089,700.00	116,181,600.00
Romanian	38,610,000.00	38,469,800.00	39,129,800.00	37,941,407.00	33,730,000.00
Ruthenian	33,650,000.00	34,839,600.00	34,639,600.00	34,724,600.00	31,186,000.00
Slovak	36,580,000.00	37,699,800.00	37,699,800.00	37,699,800.00	33,930,000.00
Ukrainian	4,420,000.00	4,501,500.00	4,701,500.00	4,501,500.00	4,151,560.00
Croatian	28,700,000.00	31,700,100.00	31,700,100.00	36,747,643.00	32,960,000.00

According to an independent study funded by the Ministry of culture and information and the Office for human and minority rights, outside the territory of AP Vojvodina, the National Council of the Bulgarian national minority earmarks more than 6 million dinars for printing newspaper 'Novo bratstvo', 'which is published twice a month since July 2016'.⁵⁷

Privatisation of media

The basic concept that media laws are based on is that media cannot be financed from public revenues and that their founder cannot be a state, nor any other entities that are financially or partially financed from public revenues. An exception is made when it comes to media whose founders are national councils of national minorities. Namely, if the national councils of national minorities are mostly financed from public revenues, the Law on Public Information and Media stipulates that national councils may be founders of media, and that the existing media of national councils shall be excluded from the privatisation process.

The Law on Public Information and Media envisaged a series of protection provisions aimed at mitigating the consequences of the privatisation of media concerning the exercise of the right of national minorities to information in their mother tongue. Besides the fact that minority media buyers have to retain their core business for five years from the date of signing the contract on the sale of capital, the buyers of those media have the legal obligation to maintain the share of programming time in certain minority languages in accordance with the programme scheme that was valid for twelve months before the entry into force of the Law on Public Information and Media. In order to enable successful privatisation, with the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information and Media, the deadline for privatisation of media **by sale of capital**, was extended from 1 July to 31 October 2015. In cases where the privatisation of capital was not successful, where the conditions were met, the privatisation was carried out by **transferring the capital** of the media publisher to the employees without compensation.

⁵⁷Mapping multilingual media after privatisation: The impact of media reform on the position, media content and sustainability of multilingual media, Association of Journalists of Serbia, Belgrade, p.7, see <http://www.komsijskenovosti.rs/komsijske-novosti/dokumenta/97/2016/12/31/mapiranje-visejezicnih-medija-u-srbiji-posle-privatizacije.html>

In the last phase of media privatisation carried out in 2015, privatisation covered less than 10% of state-owned media, including radio and TV stations founded by local self-government units, which, in addition to Serbian, broadcast media content in minority languages.⁵⁸ The privatisation process encompassed: 76 public enterprises, out of which 44 (57.9% of the total) broadcast the programme in minority languages. On 5 October 2016 of these 44 media, 30 media were privatised, 13 media were not privatised, while in one case the privatisation process was not completed.

According to the findings of the Regulatory Authority on Electronic Media, which, according to the Law on Electronic Media⁵⁹, controls the work of media service providers and the Ombudsman itself, in 2016, there was an indicative coincidence without significant deviation in the continuity of broadcasting programmes in the languages of national minorities in the media privatised by the transfer of capital.⁶⁰ The Ombudsman noted that the media that were privatised by free transfer of shares "continued to broadcast the programme in the languages of national minorities".⁶¹ Also, in the reports on the implementation of the Action Plan for National Minorities, the national councils of the Czech, Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minority state that there was no deviation in the broadcasting of programmes in the languages of these national minorities in the privatised media.⁶² It can be concluded that the existing mechanism of supervising compliance with the obligation regarding the continuity of broadcasting of the programme can be considered effective and its amendments can be accessed possibly after the expiration of the period of five years prescribed by the law.

The decision to preserve media in the languages of national minorities and the painless consequences of privatisation are also evident from the fact that the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government through inviting tenders for the funds from the Budget Fund for National Minorities for 2018 in the total amount of 21,800,000.00 dinars decided to use them for the implementation of programmes and projects in the field of information in the languages of national minorities. In this competition, the right of participation also includes institutions, associations, foundations, companies and other organizations founded by the national councils of national minorities, which ensures that funds for media can be allocated to councils located outside the territory of AP Vojvodina.

Introduction of a digital television programme

By the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia of 9 October 2009, the Public company "Emisiona tehnika i veze" (JP ETV) was established which was entrusted with

⁵⁸Special Report of the Ombudsman on Information in the Languages of National Minorities after Privatisation of Media, Belgrade, 2016, p. 4

⁵⁹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 83/2014 and 6/2016 - other Law

⁶⁰Ibid, p. 26.

⁶¹Ibid

⁶²Reports are available at <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/en/node/21794>

the management of transmission infrastructure in Serbia. The task of this company was to build a network for broadcasting three different signal packets - a multiplex (the digital network is a technological system that allows the creation of a packet of several television programmes, including possibly packets from the country of origin, and that the packet is transmitted to the users).

The content of the first multiplex is made up of RTS programmes and commercial broadcasters with national coverage licenses throughout the territory of Serbia, plus RTV programmes on the territory of Vojvodina. Since 1st September 2017, the programmes of local and regional TV stations along the distribution zones have been added to the first multiplex.

The Republic of Serbia switched to digital terrestrial television broadcasting on June 10, 2015. For citizens, including persons belonging to national minorities, digitization has enabled better sound and image quality, more diverse content, more radio and television programmes, new services for people with disabilities and for the elderly, enhanced additional services, portable and mobile reception programmes, as well as convergence of services. To service providers, including those in national minority languages, digitalization has made it possible to customize content according to the needs of different target groups, interactivity, lower broadcasting costs, etc.

National Minority Councils do not have the obligation to notify public authorities about their initiatives, hence the competent public authorities do not have any knowledge of whether the national councils have initiated or intend to launch an initiative to re-examine the impact of digitalization on the broadcasting of a television programme broadcast in the languages of national minorities.

12. Use of minority languages at local level (recommendation 12)

Ensure that the legal provisions governing the use of minority languages in contacts with authorities at local level are fully implemented and promote the recruitment of civil servants at local level who are proficient in the relevant minority languages; intensify efforts to ensure the full and proper application of the rules currently applicable to registering names in minority languages and as regards the display of topographical indications in minority languages.

Recruitment of civil servants at local level who can speak minority languages

The most important measure taken during the reporting period to encourage the recruitment of local-level civil servants possessing knowledge of minority languages is the adoption of the Law on Employees in Autonomous Provinces and Local Self-Government Units.⁶³ This law prescribes the principle of equal accessibility of jobs, which implies that all jobs are available to all candidates under equal conditions, and that in the course of recruitment

⁶³"Official Gazette of RS", no. 21/2016, 113/2017 and 113/2017 - other law

process, *inter alia*, it shall be taken into account that among employees the national composition of the structure of population is reflected to the greatest possible extent. In addition, the Law stipulates that the Government shall adopt a decree by which it shall closely regulate the criteria for classification of jobs and criteria for describing the job posts of the civil servants, taking into account the knowledge of the languages and scripts of national minorities, as a special condition for the performance of jobs in those job posts which are of importance for exercising citizens' rights to the official use of languages and scripts of national minorities. The law stipulates that when regulating the criteria for classifying job posts and criteria for describing the positions of civil servants, the Government shall take particular care of the national composition of the population and the appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities in order to achieve full equality between persons belonging to national minorities and citizens belonging to the majority. Also, the Law stipulates that the Government shall regulate in more detail the procedure for conducting an internal and public recruitment competition, as well as what professional competencies, knowledge and skills are evaluated in the selection procedure, the manner of their checking and the criteria for the selection of candidates to specific positions which will provide the priority given to equally qualified candidates belonging to national minorities.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Regulation on the criteria for classifying job posts and criteria for describing the jobs of civil servants in autonomous provinces and local self-government units,⁶⁴ which began to apply on December 1, 2016. Under Article 6 of the Regulation, within the framework of conditions for the performance of jobs, it is envisaged that in the autonomous province, the local self-government unit or the city municipality where official use of the language and script of a national minority is established, in those job posts that imply direct oral and written communication with citizens, as a special condition prescribes knowledge of the language and script of national minorities. Likewise, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Regulation on the criteria for classifying job posts and criteria for describing the positions of employees other than civil servants in autonomous provinces and local self-government units,⁶⁵ which began to apply on December 1, 2016. Article 5 of the Regulation, as part of the conditions for the performance of the job posts of employees other than civil servants, envisages that in the autonomous province, the local self-government unit or the city municipality where official use of the language and script of a national minority is established, in those job posts that imply immediate oral and written communication with citizens, as a special condition prescribes knowledge of the language and scripts of national minorities. Decree on the implementation of internal and public recruitment competition for posts in autonomous provinces and local self-government units⁶⁶ envisages that in the advertisement for filling a position requiring executive activities, where knowledge of minority languages and scripts is required as a special condition, this requirement is specifically

⁶⁴"Official Gazette of RS" no. 88/2016 and 113/2017 - other Law

⁶⁵"Official Gazette of RS", no. 88/2016

⁶⁶"Official Gazette of RS", no. 95/2016

stated, as well as possible written verification of its fulfilment. The regulation also stipulates that, if there is a need for the recruitment of persons belonging to national minorities that are insufficiently represented among the employees, the ad specifically states that these national minorities have the advantage of being selected in case of an equal assessment of qualified candidates. The need for recruitment of persons of a particular national minority stems from the ratio of the number of employees who have declared their belonging to a particular national minority and their representation in the population, provided that their national affiliation has been declared by 30% of the employees in the local self-government unit or autonomous province. At the time of preparation of this Report, the relevant documents of local self-government units started getting harmonized with the provisions of the Law and the Decree.

Units of local self-government in which the languages of national minorities are officially used, either in the entire area of the local self-government unit, or in some inhabited places, have provided information on the total number of job posts where the document on systematization prescribes the knowledge of the national minority language in the official use, as well as the number of employees who have knowledge of the languages of national minorities that are in official use.

Local self-government unit	Number of systematized job posts requiring knowledge of the language of a national minority	Number of employees who speak a minority language	Notes
Ada	25 job posts (Hungarian)	all employees speak Hungarian(46)	
Alibunar	none	a certain number of employees have knowledge of Romanian and Slovak	
Apatin	none	11 employees (the Hungarian and Croatian language)	The Hungarian language is in official use in areas Kupusina and Svilojevo, and the Croatian language in uninhabited area Sonta
Bač	3 job posts (2 for Slovak and 1 for the Romani language)	10 employees speak Slovak, 1 speaks Roma, 1 speaks Hungarian	
Bačka Palanka	3 job posts (Slovak)	6 employees speak the Slovak language	
Bačka Topola	41 job posts (Hungarian, Ruthenian and Slovak)	46 employees speak Hungarian, 1 speaks Ruthenian, 2 speak the Slovak language	
Bački Petrovac	32 job posts (the Slovak language)	all employees speak Slovak (42)	
Bela Crkva	none	2 employees speak Romanian, 1 speaks the Czech language	
Beočin	2 job posts (1 for Slovak and 1 for the Romani language)		Slovak is in official use in the inhabited place Lug

Bečej	19 job posts (Hungarian),	37 employees speak Hungarian	employees have declared that they have knowledge of Bosnian (1) Roma (1), Ruthenian (1), Ukrainian (1), Croatian(1)
Bosilegrad	none	all employees speak the Bulgarian language	
Bujanovac	4 job posts (Albanian language)		
Vrbas	none	12 employees speak Hungarian, 15 speak the Ruthenian language	
Vršac	4 job posts(Hungarian and Romanian)	10 employees speak Romanian, 3 speak the Hungarian language	
Dimitrovgrad	2 job posts(the Bulgarian language)	all employees speak Bulgarian (43)	
Žabalj	1 job post (the Ruthenian language)	2 employees speak the Ruthenian language	
Žitište	3 job posts(Hungarian and Romanian)	5 employees speak Hungarian, 5 speak the Romanian language	
Zrenjanin	4 job posts(Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak)	24 employees speak Hungarian, 9 speak Romanian, 4 speak the Slovak language	
Kanjiža	53 job posts(the Hungarian language)	all employees speak the Hungarian language	
Kikinda	1 job post (the Hungarian language)	10 employees speak the Hungarian language	Hungarian language is in official use in inhabited places Kikinda, Rusko Selo and Sajan
Kovačica	none	40 employees speak minority languages which are in official use (Slovak, Romanian, Hungarian)	
Kovin	none	5 employees speak Hungarian, 3 speak Romanian language	
Kula	2 job posts(Hungarian and Ruthenian)	5 employees speak Hungarian, 5 speak Ruthenian language	
Mali Idoš	7 job posts(Hungarian and Montenegrin)	26 employees speak Hungarian, 11 speak the Montenegrin language	
Medveđa	3 job posts(the Albanian language)	6 employees speak the Albanian language	
Nova Crnja	1 job post (the Hungarian language)	7 employees speak the Hungarian language	
Novi Bečej	4 job posts(the Hungarian language)	8 employees speak the Hungarian language	
Novi Pazar	1 job post (the Bosnian language)	all employees speak the Bosnian language	
Novi Sad	none	14 employees speak Hungarian, 7 spak Slovak, 1	When allocating employees who have contacts with the

		speaks Ruthenian language	parties during their working hours to job posts, the attention is paid that they fulfill the condition of having knowledge of some of the national minority languages in official use in the city. In the personnel register, data are registered relating to the national affiliation of employees that are obtained with the written consent of the employees, without the obligation of making a statement.
Odžaci	none	3 employees speak the Slovak language	
Pančevo	none	5 employees speak Hungarian, 1 speaks Slovak, 2 speak Romanian, 3 speak the Macedonian language	Hungarian is in official use in inhabited places Vojlovica and Ivanovo, Macedonian in inhabited place Jabuka, and Romanian in inhabited place Banatsko Novo Selo
Plandište	none	2 employees speak Romanian, Hungarian is spoken by 3 and Macedonian by 2 employees	
Prijepolje	1 job post (Bosnian)		
Senta	for all job posts the knowledge of the Hungarian language is required	all employees speak Hungarian(74)	
Sečanj	none	5 employees speak minority languages that are in official use (Romanian and Hungarian)	
Sombor	7 job posts(Hungarian),	19 employees speak Hungarian	Croatian is in official use in inhabited areas Breg and Bački Monoštor, but the city did not provide data on the number of employees who speak the Croatian language
Srbobran	none	6 employees speak the Hungarian language	
Sremska Mitrovica	none	5 employees speak the Croatian language	1 employee speaks Ukrainian, 1 speaks the Macedonian language
Stara Pazova	none	15 employees speak the Slovak language	Slovak is in official use in the inhabited town of Stara Pazova
Subotica	82 job posts taken by 130 employees (the Hungarian and Croatian language)	190 employees speak the languages of national minorities that are in official use (Hungarian and	

		Croatian)	
Temerin	1 job post (Hungarian),	19 employees speak the Hungarian language	
Titel	none		
Tutin		all employees speak the Bosnian language	
Čoka	for all job posts knowledge of the Hungarian language is required	all employees speak the Hungarian language (40)	
Šid	none	14 employees speak Slovak, 10 speak Ruthenian, 37 speak Croatian	Croatian is in official use in inhabited places Sot and Batrovci.

As the process of harmonization of documents of local self-government units with the Law and the said decrees is in progress, and given that, due to the economic crisis, in 2013 a prohibition on recruitment in public sector was introduced and has continued to be effective,⁶⁷ the effects of encouraging the recruitment of civil servants who have knowledge of minority languages will only be seen after the completion of the harmonization process and the cessation of the prohibition.

In addition, in some local self-government units in which the vast majority of persons belonging to national minorities live, there is no need to take additional measures of recruitment, since most or even all employees can speak minority languages or that by document on the systematization of job posts a sufficient number of jobs is foreseen for which the knowledge of a minority language is a condition (Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Senta, Čoka, Kanjiža, Tutin, etc.).

A certain number of local self-government units, above all Subotica, did not take measures for recruiting new employees, but applied for several vacancies that were announced by the provincial secretariats or used their own funds to train employees in the city administration, local offices, and institutions in which languages of national minorities are used as languages in official use, especially in job posts where the employees are in contact with the parties.

The Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - the national communities regularly announce tenders for the distribution of budget funds to bodies and organizations in the territory of AP Vojvodina, in which the languages and scripts of national minorities are in official use. The total funds allocated in the tender in 2012 amounted to 6,650,000.00 dinars, in 2013 9,500,000.00 dinars, in 2014 9,500,000.00 dinars, in 2015 9,500,000.00 dinars and in 2016, 3,178,264.00 dinars. Funds are also allocated, *inter alia*, for the training of employees in bodies and organizations using a minority language, which has been established as a language in official use, and especially in job posts where contact is made with parties (through participation in courses, seminars and similar), as well as for the

⁶⁷With the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Budget System, which came into force on December 7, 2013, for the first time, a ban on establishing working relationships with new persons was introduced in order to fill vacant job positions with public funds users. The validity period of this ban is being extended from year to year and at the time of preparation of this Report it was related to the period until the end of 2018.

development of the electronic administration system for work in conditions of multilingualism. Text of the tender with applications for the tender is printed and published in the Serbian language and Cyrillic script, then in Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian and the Ruthenian language and script. The tender documentation can be downloaded from the official website of the Secretariat in these languages.

Information on the amount of funds allocated for training employees in bodies and organizations is contained in the table below.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1,370,000.00	1,030,000.00	1,027,600.00	488,000.00	221,064.00

Information on the amount of funds allocated for the development of the electronic administration system for work in multilingual conditions is contained in the table below.

2013	2014	2015	2016
555,000.00	414,000.00	160,000.00	200,000.00

Ensuring full and correct application of the rules for registering names in minority languages

In the preliminary reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention, the legislative framework for exercising the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to register personal names in accordance with their language and orthography has been explained in detail. The right to register a personal name in a minority language and in line with its orthography in the register does not depend on the official use of minority languages and scripts, but is provided on the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia. In exercising this right, there are no major disagreements as evidenced by the fact that during the reporting period, the Administrative Inspectorate that oversees the implementation of the Law on Registers⁶⁸ did not receive complaints from persons belonging to national minorities relating to the possibility of exercising this right.

For the purpose of informing persons belonging to national minorities with the right to register their personal names in the registers in the language and script of a national minority, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government has submitted to the bodies carrying out the entrusted tasks of the registers a sample of the Notice on the procedure and manner of entering personal names of persons belonging to national minorities in the registers so that they could display the notice on the notice boards in all areas of cities, i.e., municipalities for which the registers are kept. In the units of local self-government in which the statute establishes that the language of persons belonging to a national minority is in official use, it is required that the notice in the language and script of the national minority is displayed on the notice boards.

The table below contains data on the number of entries of personal names in the languages of national minorities.

⁶⁸"Official Gazette of RS", no. 20/2009, 145/2014 and 47/2018

Language	Number of local self-government units	Number of entries of personal names in the Register				
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Albanian	9	500	1.215	1.235	1.142	632
Bulgarian	1	1	-	1	-	3
Hungarian	25	1.291	1.067	1.364	1.374	1.387
Macedonian	2	8	2	6	1	5
German	3	15	19	8	7	15
Romanian	8	9	8	2	7	28
Ruthenian	3	3	3	3	2	1
Slovak	12	76	121	139	151	85
Ukrainian	1	1	-	1	-	1
Croatian	2	24	24	51	13	35
Czech	1	-	-	-	-	1

In addition, as outlined in the Third Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention, the regulations of the Republic of Serbia enable the units of local self-government in which the statute has established that a minority language is in official use as well, to print the forms of birth certificates bilingually, in Serbian and the minority language that is in official use. The table below gives information on languages in which, alongside the Serbian language, certificates were printed, on the number of local self-government units in which such certificates were issued and the number of issued bilingual certificates.

Language	Number of local self-government units	Number of issued bilingual certificates				
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Albanian	3	11,391	21,681	21,941	22,468	11,557
Bosnian	2	3,570	3,194	3,457	2,981	2,780
Bulgarian	1	1	-	1	-	3
Hungarian	29	29,815	44,299	34,462	24,867	22,800
Romanian	7	20	42	30	36	157
Ruthenian	1	-	-	2	-	-
Slovak	13	1,181	973	1,050	1,425	3,699
Croatian	4	725	337	657	1,155	1,096

In the Republic of Serbia, training of the registrars is continuously carried out for the purpose of consistent implementation of the legal provisions that give the possibility to register personal names in appropriate records in minority languages and scripts. In 2015, the training sessions were held for the registrars and deputy registrars of the registries in all the administrative bodies entrusted with the tasks of keeping the registers. A total of eight training sessions were organized (in Niš, Belgrade, Pirot, Zlatibor, Novi Sad and Subotica), attended by a total of 335 registrars and deputy registrars. Similar training sessions were also held during 2016.

Information on displaying topographic indications in the languages of national minorities is contained in Section IV. 8. in connection with recommendation no. 150 of the Advisory Committee.

13. Recognition of diplomas of educational institutions in the region (recommendation 13)

Pursue efforts to ensure that diplomas delivered by educational institutions in the region are duly and rapidly recognised and continue to support the provision of higher education in southern Serbia.

Recognition of diplomas

Recognition of certificates and diplomas obtained abroad at all levels of education is done on the basis of procedures established by law. During the reporting period, recognition of foreign school documents and certificates of acquired primary education was carried out on the basis of the provisions of Articles 96-99 of the Law on Primary Education, while the recognition of foreign school documents on acquired secondary education was carried out on the basis of the provisions of Articles 86 – 89 of the Law on Secondary Education⁶⁹.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Law on Primary Education, a citizen of the Republic of Serbia who has finished school or completed certain school grades in a foreign country shall have the right to request recognition of acquired foreign school documents, as a certificate of acquired primary education, or a completed particular grade. A foreign citizen and a non-citizen shall have the right to require the recognition of a foreign school certificate, if there is a legal interest in it. By recognizing a foreign school certificate, it is equalised with the corresponding public document obtained in the Republic of Serbia. The foreign school document is recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

The recognition process shall take into account: education system in the country where the school certificate was acquired, the curriculum, years of school, the right given by the foreign school certificate to the school certificate holder, and other circumstances that may influence the decision making. If, in the recognition process, it is determined that the completed foreign school curriculum deviates considerably from the curriculum that is compared with, recognition shall require passing certain exams or having the recognition seekers' knowledge checked at school.

A citizen of the Republic of Serbia, a foreign citizen and a non-citizen who does not have the relevant foreign certificate required for the recognition procedure may be enrolled in the appropriate grade based on the previous knowledge examination. The previous examination of knowledge is carried out by a team composed of teachers of class teaching, subject teaching, a pedagogue and a psychologist of the school, respecting the standards of achievement and appreciating the best interests of the students.

⁶⁹"Official Gazette of RS" no. 55/2013, 101/2017 and 27/2018 - other Law

The Law on Secondary Education also regulates the recognition of foreign school documents in a similar manner. A citizen of the Republic of Serbia who has completed secondary education or certain grades of a secondary school in a foreign country shall have the right to request recognition of an acquired foreign school document. A foreign citizen and a non-citizen shall have the right to require the recognition of a foreign school certificate, if there is a legal interest in it. By recognizing a foreign school certificate, it is equalised with the corresponding public document obtained in the Republic of Serbia. The foreign school document is recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

The recognition process shall take into account: education system in the country where the school certificate was acquired, years of school, the curriculum, the right given by the foreign school certificate to the school certificate holder, and other circumstances that may influence the decision making. If, in the recognition process, it is determined that the completed foreign school curriculum deviates considerably from the curriculum that is compared with, recognition shall require passing certain exams, producing certain papers/works, or having the recognition seekers' knowledge checked.

The Law on Higher Education⁷⁰, which was in force during the reporting period, stipulated that the recognition of a foreign document of higher education for the purpose of continuing education shall be carried out by a higher education institution, while the recognition of a foreign document of higher education for the purpose of employment shall be entrusted to the ENIC/ NARIC Centre as an internal organizational unit of the ministry responsible for educational affairs.

ENIC/NARIC Centre started operating on October 1, 2015. By founding ENIC/NARIC Centre, the procedure for the recognition of diplomas has become simpler, cheaper and shorter. The table below shows the number of resolved requests since the beginning of the ENIC / NARIC Centre operating until 2017.

COUNTRY OF OBTAINING DIPLOMA	NUMBER OF RESOLVED REQUESTS
Hungary	184
Bulgaria	102
Romania	102
Slovakia	95
Croatia	22
Albania	116
TOTAL	621

According to the new Law on Higher Education⁷¹, the recognition of a foreign document of higher education for the purpose of continuing education in the higher education system is still carried out by an independent higher education institution, after the previously evaluated study

⁷⁰Official Gazette of RS", no. 76/2005, 100/2007 - authentic interpretation, 97/2008, 44/2010, 93/2012, 89/2013, 99/2014, 45/2015 - authentic interpretation, 68/2015 and 87/2016

⁷¹Official Gazette of RS", no. 88/2017 and 27/2018 - other law

programme or part of the study programme of a foreign higher education institution where the document was obtained.

The new Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia⁷² stipulates that the ENIC/NARIC Centre shall not only engage in professional recognition of foreign documents of higher education, but shall also conduct the process of recognition of foreign primary and secondary school documents. Accordingly, it is stipulated that from the commencement date of the work of the ENIC/NARIC Centre, as an organizational unit of Qualifications Agency, the aforementioned provisions of Art. 96 - 99 of the Law on Primary Education and Art. 86 – 89 of the Law on Secondary Education shall cease to apply. The Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia will be presented in more detail in the following report.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has adopted the Regulation on the Special Method of Recognition of Higher Education Documents and Evaluation of Study Programmes of Higher Education Institutions from the Territory of the AP Kosovo and Metohija performing activities in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244⁷³, in order to determine the rights regarding continuation of education, i.e. the recruitment of holders of these higher education documents. It is about recognition and evaluation of higher education documents and study programmes of higher education institutions from the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija accredited in accordance with the legal system established pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. According to the Decree, a higher education document is considered to be a diploma supplement issued by an accredited higher education institution with a certificate issued by the European University Association, as well as a diploma issued by an accredited higher education institution certified by the European University Association. Citizens of the Republic of Serbia, persons residing in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, have the right to apply for recognition of such a higher education document, while foreign citizens or non-citizens can apply for recognition of such higher education documents if they have a legal interest in it. According to the Decree, the recognition of a higher education certificate *for continuing education* in the higher education system by which the right of the holder of this document to continue education is determined, shall be carried out by an independent higher education institution, in the manner and in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the general act of that institution, within five months from the date of submission of the proper request. Recognition of a higher education document for employment reasons by which the right to employment of the holder of this document is determined, shall be carried out by the ministry responsible for education matters within 90 days from the date of submission of a proper request.

⁷²"Official Gazette of RS", no. 27/2018

⁷³"Official Gazette of RS", no. 16/2016

Higher education in southern Serbia

Since 2009, the higher education of persons belonging to the Albanian national minority has been taking place in Medveđa at the departments of the Faculty of Economics and Law of the University of Niš. Students belonging to the Albanian national minority attend lectures in the Serbian language, and for all of them a simultaneous interpreting is provided. The co-ordinating body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa financed the translation of most textbooks into the Albanian language, and enabled the printing of the first Serbian-Albanian Legal Lexicon, which is of an immense help to the students of the Faculty of Law in Medvedja in mastering legal terms. Since its opening, three generations of students have been enrolled in these two departments, to whom the Coordinating Body awards one-time scholarships twice a year.

Faculty of Economics from Subotica of the University of Novi Sad opened a department in Bujanovac on October 28, 2011, thus fulfilling one of the most important objectives of the Government's programme for Southern Serbia. The study programme at the Department of the Faculty of Economics is conducted bilingually in a way that the students of the Serbian and Roma community attend lectures in the Serbian language, while students of the Albanian nationality attend lectures in the Albanian language as well. The study programme allows students belonging to the Albanian national minority to listen to the lectures of 14 subjects out of 32, in their native language. For all questions during the course of study, two coordinators are available to students who attend lectures in the Serbian language and to students attending Albanian language lectures. Faculty of Economics in Subotica signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Faculty of Economics of the State University in Tetovo (Republic of Macedonia), and lecturing in Albanian is performed by professors and assistants from Tetovo. More than 700 students have enrolled at the Faculty of Economics in Bujanovac since 2011, while about 400 students are currently studying on all four years of study. Also, the construction of a building of the Faculty of Economics from Subotica, in Bujanovac was of strategic interest. The construction process of the building of Department of the Faculty of Economics from Subotica, in Bujanovac, for which financial resources had been provided from the funds of the European Progress, the Coordination Body Service and the Municipality of Bujanovac was completed in September 2016. With the aim of monitoring and improving the functioning of the Department of the Faculty of Economics from Subotica in Bujanovac, a Committee of Stakeholders was established. The Committee of Stakeholders, which plays a very important role in the functioning of this higher education institution, was established on the proposal of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities from the Hague. The main task of the Committee is to make recommendations in order to ensure and maintain high quality lecturing at this higher education institution. This body consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Coordination Body, Faculty of Economics in Subotica, Bujanovac Municipality, National Council of the Albanian National Minority,

OSCE Mission, Office of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, European Union Delegation and the Friends of Southern Serbia Group.

Since 2011, the Coordination Body has been providing scholarships to young people from the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medvedja who want to study at the faculties of the University of Novi Sad. Over 50 Serbs, Albanians and Roma enrolled at the faculties of the University of Novi Sad, of which 21 persons belonging to the Albanian national minority.

14. Availability of textbooks and the exercise of the right to education in minority languages (recommendation 14)

Ensure that the availability of textbooks in minority languages adequately reflects the needs expressed by national minorities, remove all remaining obstacles and ensure the exercise of the right to education in minority languages.

Availability of textbooks

The Law on Textbooks that was in force during the reporting period⁷⁴ in Article 3 defines that a textbook in the language and script of a national minority shall be considered to be:

1) a textbook in the language and script of a national minority issued in the territory of the Republic of Serbia;

2) a textbook in the language and script of a national minority, which is a translation of an approved textbook in the Serbian language;

3) a supplement to a textbook used to implement a customized part of a study programme for subjects of national minority importance;

4) a textbook in the language and script of a national minority issued in a foreign country, which has been approved in accordance with this Law. The provisions of this law that relate to the textbook were also applied on a supplement to the textbook for subjects of importance for a national minority. The provisions of the same content exist in the new Law on Textbooks⁷⁵ which will be presented in the following report.

According to the Catalogue of Textbooks adopted in 2016 for school years 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, a total of 1,521 textbooks in the languages of national minorities for preschool, primary and secondary education are available.

⁷⁴Official Gazette of RS", no. 68/2015

⁷⁵Official Gazette of RS", no. 27/2018

**Available textbooks in the languages of national minorities for
preschool and primary education according to the Catalogue of Textbooks**

Language	Textbooks for preschool upbringing and education	Textbooks for primary upbringing and education	Textbooks for Elective subject Native language / speech with elements of national culture
Albanian	3	79	
Bosnian	12	85	
Bulgarian		56	
Hungarian	12	242	
Romanian		169	
Ruthenian		194	
Slovak		208	
Croatian		116	
Macedonian			1
Bunjevci			8
Vlach			1
Ukrainian			28
Czech			21
TOTAL	27	1,149	59

**Available textbooks in the languages of national minorities for secondary schools in line
with the Catalogue of Textbooks**

Language	Textbooks for secondary education
Albanian	0
Bosnian	18
Bulgarian	39
Hungarian	58
Romanian	34
Ruthenian	43
Slovak	64
Croatian	30
TOTAL	286

In 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, with the aim of obtaining the missing textbooks in the languages of national minorities for which the entire teaching is performed in the mother tongue, signed memorandums on cooperation in the field of printing missing textbooks in the languages of national minorities. The memorandums were signed with the Institute for Textbook Publishing and 8 National Councils of National Minorities (Albanian, Bosniak, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak and Croat national minority). It has been planned to print 189 more textbooks in these memoranda. The table below contains information on the implementation of these memoranda.

National minority	Number of textbooks per Memorandum (with Annex 1 + Annex 2 - Bosnian)	Printed	Approved, being printed	Pending approval	In preparation for approval	Not delivered
Albanian	43	0	0	0	0	43
Bosniak	43 (of which 8 CDs and 8 unified supplements)	10	13	20	5 (4 for re-approval, 1 negative opinion of the National Council)	9 (of which 8 CDs)
Bulgarian	23	14	8	1	0	0
Hungarian	10	4	0	2	1	3 (waiting for curriculum)
Romanian	11	6	1	0	0	4 (waiting for curriculum)
Ruthenian	6 (of which 1 CD)	1	1	3	1	0
Slovak	19 (of which 10 CDs)	3 (of which 1 CD)	2	3 (of which 2 CDs)	3 (of which 2 CDs)	8 (of which 5 CDs)
Croatian	34	23	1	2	3 (of which 1 to be re-approved)	5 (out of which 4 are waiting for curricula)
TOTAL	189	61	26	31	13	72

Memorandum on cooperation in the field of publishing textbooks in the Albanian language and script, signed on August 9, 2016, by which the translation into Albanian was planned as well as printing 35 titles previously approved in the Serbian language and 8 titles that are originally prepared in the Albanian language, are not being implemented because the National Council of the Albanian National Minority did not provide the Institute for Textbook Publishing with the names of translators and proofreaders for those titles translated into Albanian (35), for which the deadline was 7 days after signing. The Institute for Textbook Publishing was ready to accept and engage translators and proofreaders even after the expiration of the deadline, but the proposal by the National Council of the Albanian National Minority has never been delivered. The Ministry held several working meetings with representatives of the National Council of the Albanian National Minority, the President of the Municipality of Preševo, the President of the Municipality of Bujanovac and the representatives of the Institute for Textbook Publishing and the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in connection with the implementation of the Memorandum. In the talks, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development expressed concern that if the Ministry assumes the engagement of an Albanian translator/proofreader, the National Council of the Albanian National Minority will

not be satisfied with the translation of textbooks. Representatives of the Institute for Textbook Publishing emphasized the readiness to make corrections to current textbooks if they are provided with amendments, as well as to conclude contracts with translators/proofreaders from the territory of the Republic of Albania or AP of Kosovo and Metohija. The Ministry once again informed the National Council about all steps in the procedures and again tried to start the implementation of the Memorandum, which still did not occur.

A special type of additional books in the educational process is Serbian-Albanian and Albanian-Serbian Small Dictionary / Fjalor and Vogel, which was created based on the recommendations from the Study on possibilities of improvement of curriculum and learning Serbian language as a non-mother language in municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. Small Dictionary was prepared and financed by the Office of the High Commissioner for minorities from Hague, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development and the Coordinating body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. Dictionary was promoted and distributed in 16 primary schools with curriculum taught in Albanian in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development and the Service of Coordinating body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, which helped the development of vocabularies, the Office of High Commissioner organized the presentation of printed and digital versions for computers and smartphones in two primary schools in Bujanovac and Preševo. The vocabulary is bilingual, illustrated and adapted for the primary school pupils both in terms of its content and graphics. It contains more than 12,200 entries with over 16,600 meanings, 21,300 examples of word usage in sentences, as well as relevant grammar information and a summary of the grammar of both languages. In addition, the digital version for PCs and smartphones is enriched with audio-based pronunciation of more than 23,800 words in both languages, and in addition to being easily accessible outside schools, it enables easy search, interactivity and continuous improvement of content. Small Dictionary / Fjalor and Vogel is available in digital edition on the website: <http://dictionary.hcnm.org/dict/>.

Apart from national minorities who have full teaching-learning process performed in their mother tongue, the Institute for Textbook Publishing also publishes textbooks for persons belonging to national minorities who attend classes in the Serbian language, and who have lessons of the school subject Native Language/ Speech with elements of national culture.

So far, textbooks for the first (2014), second (2015) and third (2017) grade, funded by the Institute for Textbook Publishing, have been printed for the Macedonian language with elements of national culture. The textbook for the fourth grade is in preparation for being sent to the Ministry of Education for approval.

So far, a textbook for the first grade (2014), which was funded by the National Council, has been printed for the Vlach speech with elements of national culture. For the second grade, the manuscript is in preparation for being sent to the Ministry of Education for approval.

So far, the reader for the first and second grade (2014) and grammar book from the first to the fourth grade (2014) have been printed for the Bunjevci speech with elements of national

culture, financed by the Institute for Textbook Publishing. A manual for teachers for teaching this course in the first and second grade has also been made, and on the website of the Institute for Textbook Publishing is accessible to teachers free of charge. The reader for the third and fourth grade has been sent to the Ministry of Education for approval.

For the Romani language with elements of national culture, development of textbooks for the first four grades is in progress, of which two have been submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education (a positive opinion of the Institute for the Promotion of Education has been received, the Ministry's approval is expected which will enable initiating the printing phase), and textbooks for the third and fourth grade are in preparation for being sent for approval and will be sent by the end of the year. The funds were provided on the tender of the Centre for Education of Roma and Ethnic Communities.

Textbooks for the first (2012) and the second grade (2017), funded by the National Council (first grade), and the Institute and the National Council (second grade), have been printed for the *Czech language with elements of national culture*.

In April 2016, the Institute for the Advancement of Education organized a one-day training for representatives of national minorities for writing curricula under their jurisdiction in accordance with the Law on the Foundations of the System of Education and Upbringing and the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. There were 27 representatives of the Slovak, Romanian, Bosniak, Hungarian, Croatian and Ruthenian national minority on the training. The content of the training was prepared on the basis of the identified needs of national minorities, which are related to the preparation of content supplements to curricula that express the specifics of the national identity, such as: the world around us, nature and society, music culture, fine arts and history.

Accessibility of education

The legal framework for the provision of preschool education has been presented in the Third Report on the Implementation of the Framework Convention.

Preschool education for persons belonging to national minorities in practice is implemented in different languages and in different local self-government units. The following paragraphs contain data obtained from the competent public and provincial authorities and national councils of national minorities on the number of children covered by educational work in their mother tongue by school years.

Preschool education

For persons belonging to **the Albanian national minority** preschool educational work in the Albanian language has been organized in Bujanovac and Preševo. The following table contains data on the number of children covered with education implemented in the Albanian language in preschool institutions.

School Year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	2	2	59	695
2014/2015	2	2	58	676
2015/2016	2	2	53	661
2016/2017	2	2	52	696

Education in preschool institutions has also been organised in a bilingual manner, in Serbian and Albanian languages in Medveđa. Data on the number of children covered with bilingual education are shown in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	3	34
2014/2015	1	1	3	32
2015/2016	1	1	3	24
2016/2017	1	1	3	20

For persons belonging to the **Bosniak national minority** preschool educational work has been organized in Bosnian, in Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the Bosnian language are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	3	3	110	1,432
2014/2015	3	3	112	1,486
2015/2016	3	3	110	1,395

For persons belonging to **the Bulgarian national minority** preschool educational work has been organized bilingually in Serbian and the Bulgarian language in Bosilegrad. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in a bilingual manner are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	12	94
2014/2015	1	1	12	83
2015/2016	1	1	10	93
2016/2017	1	1	10	78

For persons belonging to **the Hungarian national minority** preschool educational work has been organized in the Hungarian language in the following units of local self-government: Ada, Apatin, Bačka Topola, Bečej, Vrbas, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Kanjiža, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kovin, Kula, Mali Idoš, Nova Crnja, Novi Bečej, Novi Kneževac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Plandište, Senta, Sečanj, Sombor, Srbobran, Subotica, Temerin and Čoka. The following table contains data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the Hungarian language in preschool institutions.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	26	28	159	1.633
2014/2015	26	28	337	5.083
2015/2016	26	28	322	4.796
2016/2017	26	28	277	4.419

Educational work in preschool institutions has also been organized in a bilingual manner in Serbian and the Hungarian language, in the following self-government units: Ada, Bačka Topola, Bečej, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kovin, Mali Idoš, Novi Sad, Plandište, Sečanj, Senta, Sombor, Subotica and Čoka. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in a bilingual manner are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	16	16	45	751
2014/2015	16	16	47	763
2015/2016	16	16	71	1,245
2016/2017	16	16	65	1.116

Preschool education has been organized bilingually, in German and Hungarian, at a preschool institution in Subotica. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the two languages are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	1	21
2014/2015	1	1	1	23
2015/2016	1	1	1	36
2016/2017	1	1	1	30

Preschool education has been organized bilingually in Serbian and German at a preschool institution in Novi Sad. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the two languages are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	4	105
2014/2015	1	1	4	102
2015/2016	1	1	4	105

For persons belonging to **the Romanian national minority** preschool educational work has been organized in the Romanian language for children from the following local self-government units: Alibunar, Bela Crkva, Žitiste, Kovačica, Plandište, Vršac, Zrenjanin and Pančevo. The following table contains information on the number of children covered by education implemented in Romanian in preschool institutions.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/14	8	4 ⁷⁶	11	84
2014/15	8	4	11	85
2015/16	8	4	11	82
2016/17	8	4	11	82

Educational work in preschool institutions has also been organized bilingually, in Serbian and Romanian, in the following units of local self-government: Alibunar, Kovačica, Vršac and Žitište. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the two languages are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/14	4	4	4	66
2014/15	4	4	4	66
2015/16	4	4	4	67
2016/17	4	4	4	66

For persons belonging to the **Ruthenian national minority** preschool educational work in the Ruthenian language has been organized in Vrbas, Žabalj and Kula. The following table

⁷⁶A smaller number of institutions compared to the number of local self-government units means that some local self-government units have jointly established a preschool institution.

contains information on the number of children covered by education implemented in the Ruthenian language at preschool institutions.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	3	3	4	78
2014/2015	3	3	4	70
2015/2016	3	3	4	56
2016/2017	3	3	4	60

For persons belonging to **the Slovak national minority** preschool educational work in the Slovak language has been organized in the following units of local self-government: Bač, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Novi Sad and Stara Pazova. The following table contains data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the Slovak language in institutions of preschool education and upbringing.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	7	8	42	861
2014/2015	7	8	41	856
2015/2016	7	8	41	812
2016/2017	7	8	41	821

Educational work in preschool institutions has also been organized bilingually, in Serbian and the Slovak language in Bački Petrovac. Data on the number of children covered by education implemented bilingually are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	1	27
2014/2015	1	1	1	27
2015/2016	1	1	1	26
2016/2017	1	1	1	26

For persons belonging to the **Croat national minority** preschool educational work has been organized in the Croatian language in Subotica. The following table contains data on the number of children covered by education implemented in the Croatian language in preschool institutions.

School year	Number of units of local self-government	Number of preschool institutions	Number of groups	Number of children
2013/2014	1	1	3	54
2014/2015	1	1	6	88
2015/2016	1	1	6	75
2016/2017	1	1	6	104

Primary education

In the reporting period, a new Law on Primary Education was adopted in 2013, which was amended in 2017 and 2018. Article 12 of the Law prescribes that educational work for persons belonging to a national minority shall be implemented in the language and script of the national minority. Exceptionally, for persons belonging to a national minority educational work can be carried out bilingually in the language and script of the national minority and in the Serbian language. When educational work is carried out in the language and script of the national minority or bilingually in the language and script of the national minority and in the Serbian language, the ministry responsible for educational issues, in line with the received opinion of the relevant national council of the national minority, shall approve the implementation of educational activities for less than 15 students enrolled in the first grade. When educational work is carried out in the Serbian language, for a pupil belonging to a national minority, teaching and learning of their national minority language with the elements of national culture shall be organized as an optional programme. When education is acquired in the language of a national minority, in a foreign language or bilingually, learning the Serbian language is mandatory.

For school year 2016/2017, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development had prepared a unique questionnaire in the procedure for selecting elective subjects, as well as a unique methodology on the basis of which a list of offered subjects for each class and each school had been established.

The subjects had been classified into two tables: the subjects that schools can offer based on their capacities or availability of teaching staff and subjects the teaching of which will be possible at the level of several schools in order to enable the accessibility of the national minority language with the elements of national culture to all pupils in the environments where persons belonging to certain minorities live. The decision on the choice of subjects offered had been made by the Head of the school administration in agreement with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development for each primary school located in the school administration territory.

By adopting a Professional manual on the establishment of classes and the manner of financing in primary and secondary schools for the school year 2016/2017, the elective subject status of the mother tongue with elements of national culture has been improved. The novelty contained in this document allows the school that conducts the elective course programme of the mother tongue with elements of national culture to form a group at the level of the cycle, that is,

the group consisting of pupils from the first to the fourth grade (first-cycle students) and/or a group made up of students from V to VIII grade (students of the second cycle).

Also, groups for elective subject of mother tongue with elements of national culture can also be formed at the level of several schools in one municipality, with the consent of the relevant school institution.

In the following paragraphs, data are presented on the number of students attending classes in their mother tongue and/or studying the subject Native language with elements of national culture, according to national minorities.

For persons belonging to **the Albanian national minority**, instruction in Albanian language is in general delivered in primary schools in three local self-government units: Bujanovac, Medveđa and Preševo. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in the Albanian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	15	355	6,109
2014/2015	3	15	341	5,562
2015/2016	3	15	331	5,203
2016/2017	3	16	384	4,862

Subject *Albanian language with elements of national culture* is studied in a primary school in Medveđa. Data on the number of pupils studying Albanian with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	1	7
2014/2015	1	1	1	7
2015/2016	1	1	1	7
2016/2017	1	1	1	7

For persons belonging to the **Bosniak national minority**, instruction in the Bosnian language is in general delivered in primary schools in three local self-government units: Novi Pazar, Sjenica and Tutin. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in Bosnian.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	26	134	3,347
2014/2015	3	26	261	6,779
2015/2016	3	26	385	9,602
2016/2017	3	26	477	12,402

Subject *Bosnian with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in five local self-government units: Novi Pazar, Priboj, Prijepolje, Sjenica and Tutin. Data on the number of pupils who study Bosnian with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	5	32	546	6,543
2014/2015	5	32	338	4,387
2015/2016	5	29	320	3,578
2016/2017	5	14	150	2,302

For pupils belonging to the **Bulgarian national minority**, instruction in the Bulgarian language is in general delivered in one primary school in Bosilegrad. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in the Bulgarian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	5	54
2014/2015	1	1	3	25
2015/2016	1	1	3	17
2016/2017	1	1	3	19

Subject *Bulgarian with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in three local self-government units: Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad and Pančevo. Data on the number of pupils studying Bulgarian with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	3	42	695
2014/2015	3	3	42	657
2015/2016	3	3	34	571
2016/2017	3	3	35	617

Persons belonging to the **Bunjevci national minority** attend classes in primary schools in the Serbian language. Subject *Bunjevci speech with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in Subotica. Data on the number of students studying the Bunjevci speech with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
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2013/2014	1	11	21	357
2014/2015	1	12	25	409
2015/2016	1	12	21	429
2016/2017	1	11	22	412

For persons belonging to the **Vlach national minority** in the school year 2013/2014, within the implementation of the pilot project in seven primary schools, study of the *Vlach language with elements of national culture* as an elective subject was organized. At the proposal of the National Council of the Vlach national minority, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development adopted the curriculum of the Vlach speech with the elements of the national culture for teaching-learning process from the first to the fourth grade of primary school, which enabled the organization of regular classes⁷⁷. According to school administration data, in the conducted survey, about 500 respondents (parents/pupils) stated that they were interested in studying the *Vlach speech with elements of national culture*. However, it was not possible to organize instruction of the subject for all interested pupils, bearing in mind that the Vlachs live in the territory of 20 municipalities in the Republic of Serbia, encouraging some associations to state that this subject was introduced in a small number of schools.⁷⁸ The table below contains data on the number of pupils attending the teaching of the *Vlach speech with elements of national culture*.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2014/2015	5	5	5	84
2015/2016	7	7	15	194
2016/2017	14	8	29	331

For **Hungarian national minority** pupils, teaching in the Hungarian language is in general delivered in primary schools in 28 local self-government units: Ada, Apatin, Bačka Topola, Bela Crkva, Bečej, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Indija, Kanjiža, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kovin, Kula, Mali Idoš, Nova Crnja, Novi Bečej, Novi Kneževac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Pančevo, Plandište, Senta, Sečanj, Sombor, Srbobran, Subotica, Temerin and Čoka. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in the Hungarian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	28	74	935	14,830
2014/2015	28	74	921	14,308
2015/2016	28	75	903	13,680
2016/2017	28	79	952	13,346

⁷⁷According to the opinion of the Forum Vlaha Bor, this type of teaching was introduced without previous serious scientific research.

⁷⁸According to an enclosed document of the Association "Gergina" from Negotin.

Subject *Hungarian with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in 24 local self-government units: Ada, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bačka Topola, Bečej, Vrbas, Vršac, Zrenjanin, Indija, Irig, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kula, Novi Bečej, Novi Sad, Pančevo, Plandište, Senta, Sečanj, Sombor, Srbobran, Subotica, Temerin and Čoka. Data on the number of pupils studying Hungarian with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	23	49	144	2,168
2014/2015	23	58	140	2,064
2015/2016	23	61	178	2,659
2016/2017	24	72	198	2,978

Pupils belonging to the **Macedonian national minority** receive instruction delivered in the Serbian language in primary schools. The study of the *Macedonian language with elements of national culture* has been organized since the school year 2010/2011 in the primary school of the inhabited area of Jabuka (the city of Pančevo). On the initiative of the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority, from the school year 2015/2016 this model of primary education has been organized in Vršac and Leskovac. Data on the number of pupils studying the *Macedonian language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	2	10
2014/2015	1	2	3	29
2015/2016	3	3	5	81
2016/2017	3	3	6	131

The German language is treated as a foreign language in the Republic of Serbia and as such it is being taught in the educational system at all levels of education. In order for this language to be studied as a mother tongue with elements of national culture, and as such offered to parents during the survey process for choosing an elective subject in primary school, a curriculum for the instructional activities of that subject has to be adopted. During the reporting period, the National Council of the German National Minority did not initiate the procedure of introducing this subject into the educational system. During 2016, however, this minority council undertook activities to introduce the *German language with elements of national culture* in primary schools, and a team of German teachers were hired to develop a curriculum for this subject, on which more information will be presented in the next report.

In one primary school in Subotica, starting from the school year 2011/2012, **Hungarian-German model of bilingual education** has been organized. The table below contains data on the number of pupils attending this instructional model.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	2	40
2014/2015	1	1	4	98
2015/2016	1	1	4	102

From school year 2015/2016, the *Romani language with elements of national culture* has been taught throughout the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The Rulebook on curriculum for the first and second grade of primary education has defined a curriculum for the elective subject the *Romani language with elements of national culture*, and thus created one of the prerequisites for the introduction of this elective subject into the teaching process. With the aim of preparing professional staff for the implementation of teaching process of the elective subject *Romani language with elements of national culture*, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in cooperation with the Center for Continuing Education and Evaluation of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade and the National Council of the Roma National Minority organized a one-month course for teachers, both men and women, of the Romani language. The course was held in June and July 2015. A total of 23 future Roma teachers received certificates for A1 and A2 levels, while in 2016, another 47 students obtained the certificates. One of the criteria for participation in training was the completion of a faculty or a higher school of pedagogical/teaching direction. The Ministry of Spatial Planning, Science and Technological Development at the end of the school year 2014/2015 and beginning of the school year 2015/2016 submitted a letter to school administrations with a request that they inform primary schools of the necessary parental survey for the introduction of the *Romani language with elements of national culture* in primary schools as an elective subject. At the beginning of the school year 2015/2016, surveys from more than 200 schools from the territory of all school administrations were submitted to the Ministry. A list of certified Romani language teachers was sent to all primary schools, and from the school year 2015/2016, this elective course has been taught throughout the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Subject *Romani language with elements of national culture* in school year 2016/2017 was studied in primary schools of 42 local self-government units: Ada, Alibunar, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bela Palanka, Belgrade, Beočin, Bečej, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Valjevo, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Žabalj, Kikinda, Kovin, Kosovo Polje, Kosovska Kamenica, Kosovska Mitrovica, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Lebane, Leskovac, Lipjan, Merošina, Mionica, Niš, Nova Crnja, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Pirot, Požarevac, Prokuplje, Smederevo, Sremska Mitrovica, Stara Pazova, Surdulica, Titel and Trstenik. Data on the number of pupils studying the Romani language with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	16	38	38	969
2014/2015	16	39	39	978

2015/2016	19	40	40	1,565
2016/2017	42	72	61	2,252

For persons belonging to **the Romanian national minority**, teaching in Romanian is in general delivered in the primary schools of nine local self-government units: Alibunar, Bela Crkva, Vršac, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Pančevo, Plandište and Sečanj. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in Romanian.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	9	18	99	1,015
2014/2015	9	18	97	921
2015/2016	9	17	90	874
2016/2017	9	17	90	853

Subject *Romanian with elements of national culture* from school year 2013/2014 in addition to AP Vojvodina, has also been studied in Eastern Serbia. In school year 2016/2017 it was studied in primary schools in 18 local self-government units: Alibunar, Bač, Boljevac, Bor, Vršac, Žitište, Zaječar, Zrenjanin, Kladovo, Kovačica, Kovin, Majdanpek, Negotin, Pančevo, Ovča (Belgrade), Plandište, Sečanj and Subotica. Data on the number of pupils studying the *Romanian language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	14	21	37	516
2014/2015	15	20	34	520
2015/2016	18	24	43	535
2016/2017	18	28	52	800

For persons belonging to **the Ruthenian national minority**, teaching in the Ruthenian language is in general delivered in primary schools in three local self-government units: Vrbas, Žabalj and Kula. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education conducted in the Ruthenian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	3	32	477
2014/2015	3	3	30	443
2015/2016	3	3	29	412
2016/2017	3	3	33	422

Subject *Ruthenian language with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in eight local self-government units: Bačka Topola, Vrbas, Žabalj, Kula, Novi Sad,

Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica and Šid. Data on the number of pupils studying the Ruthenian language with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	8	24	41	328
2014/2015	8	22	42	326
2015/2016	8	21	43	356
2016/2017	8	24	46	416

For persons belonging to the **Slovak national minority**, teaching in the Slovak language is in general delivered in primary schools in 12 local self-government units: Alibunar, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Zrenjanin, Inđija, Kovačica, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Stara Pazova and Šid. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in the Slovak language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	12	17	162	2,875
2014/2015	12	17	166	2,804
2015/2016	12	17	163	2,728
2016/2017	12	18	183	2,598

Subject *Slovak language with elements of national culture* is studied in primary schools in 13 local self-government units: Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Vrbas, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Pančevo, Plandište, Stara Pazova, Surčin (Belgrade) and Sid. Data on the number of pupils studying the Slovak language with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/14	11	38	30	590
2014/15	11	31	32	621
2015/16	11	35	34	692
2016/17	13	37	36	667

Pupils belonging to the **Ukrainian national minority** attend classes in primary schools in the Serbian language. The subject *Ukrainian with elements of national culture* is taught in primary schools in five local self-government units: Vrbas, Inđija, Kula, Novi Sad and Sremska Mitrovica. Data on the number of pupils studying the Ukrainian language with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	5	9	18	137
2014/2015	5	9	18	111
2015/2016	5	7	13	106
2016/2017	5	7	13	106

For pupils belonging to the **Croat national minority**, teaching in the Croatian language is in general delivered in primary schools in Subotica. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by primary education in the Croatian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	5	32	274
2014/2015	1	5	33	244
2015/2016	1	5	32	242
2016/2017	1	6	30	238

Subject the *Croatian language with elements of national culture* is taught in primary schools in seven local self-government units: Apatin, Bač, Beočin, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica and Šid. Data on the number of pupils studying the *Croatian language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	6	14	45	430
2014/2015	6	14	45	430
2015/2016	7	14	47	459
2016/2017	7	14	47	417

Pupils belonging to the **Czech national minority** attend classes in primary schools in the Serbian language. Subject the *Czech language with elements of national culture* is taught in primary schools in Bela Crkva and Kovin. Data on the number of pupils studying the *Czech language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	2	4	10	56
2014/2015	2	4	6	56
2015/2016	2	4	8	63
2016/2017	2	5	7	73

Secondary education

In the reporting period, a new Law on Secondary Education was adopted in 2013, which was amended in 2017 and 2018. Article 5 of the Law stipulates that educational work for pupils belonging to national minorities shall also be carried out in the language and script of a national minority, or bilingually, if, at the time of enrollment in the first grade, at least 15 pupils have made such choice.

The school can carry out educational work in the language and script of a national minority, i.e. bilingually and for less than 15 pupils enrolled in the first grade, with the consent of the ministry responsible for education, in accordance with the law. The consent for the implementation of curriculum in minority languages for less than 15 pupils shall be given by the Ministry after it has received an opinion of a relevant national council of a national minority in line with the law regulating the competence of national councils of national minorities. When educational work is carried out in the language and script of a national minority, the school shall organize instruction in the Serbian language for the pupil. When the educational work is carried out in the Serbian language, for the pupil belonging to a national minority instructional activities relating to the minority language with elements of national culture shall be organized. Article 10 of the Law prescribes that the national council of a national minority shall provide an opinion on the educational programme of institutions that have been found to be of special importance to national minorities. Article 35 stipulates that in the process of determining the number of pupils to be enrolled in a school in which instruction is performed in the language of a national minority, the national council of the national minority shall give its opinion.

In the following paragraphs, data on the number of pupils attending classes in their mother tongue and/or studying the subject Mother tongue with elements of national culture are presented arranged by national minorities.

For pupils belonging to the **Albanian national minority**, teaching in the Albanian language is in general delivered in secondary schools in three local self-government units: Bujanovac, Medveđa and Preševo. The following table contains data on the number of pupils covered by secondary education delivered in the Albanian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	4	132	3.482
2014/2015	3	4	125	3.297
2015/2016	3	4	121	3.071
2016/2017	3	4	105	2.888

For **Bosniak national minority**, teaching in the Bosnian language is delivered in grammar schools in Sjenica and Tutin. The following table contains data on the number of pupils enrolled in secondary education in the Bosnian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	2	2	4	85
2014/2015	2	2	8	198
2015/2016	2	2	12	307
2016/2017	2	2	15	440

Subject *Bosnian language with elements of national culture* is studied in secondary schools in three local self-government units: Novi Pazar, Prijepolje and Tutin. Data on the number of students who study the *Bosnian with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	32	436	6,543
2014/2015	3	32	292	4,387
2015/2016	3	29	238	3,578
2016/2017	3	29	155	2,302

For pupils belonging to the **Bulgarian national minority**, teaching in the Bulgarian language is in general delivered in secondary schools in Dimitrovgrad. The following table contains data on the number of students covered by secondary education in the Bulgarian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	2	2	4	54
2014/2015	2	2	5	63
2015/2016	2	2	7	82
2016/2017	1	1	2	35

Subject *Bulgarian with elements of national culture* is taught in secondary schools in two local self-government units: Bosilegrad and Dimitrovgrad. Data on the number of students studying the *Bulgarian with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	School year	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	2	2	4	112
2014/2015	2	2	4	111
2015/2016	2	2	4	105
2016/2017	2	2	4	93

For pupils belonging to the **Hungarian national minority**, instruction in the Hungarian language is in general delivered in secondary schools in 12 local self-government units: Ada, Bačka Topola, Bečej, Zrenjanin, Kanjiža, Novi Sad, Novi Kneževac, Senta, Sombor, Subotica, Temerin and Čoka. The following table contains data on the number of students enrolled in secondary education in the Hungarian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	12	38	320	6,829
2014/2015	12	38	323	6,585
2015/2016	12	37	315	6,139
2016/2017	12	37	314	5,359

Subject *Hungarian with elements of national culture* is taught in secondary schools in three local self-government units: Bečej, Inđija and Subotica. Data on the number of students studying the *Hungarian with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2014/2015	3	3	3	35
2015/2016	3	3	3	89
2016/2017	3	3	3	79

At secondary education level, **bilingual instruction** that is additionally delivered in **the German language** is organized in three secondary schools. The Serbian-German model has been organized in Niš and Novi Sad, and the Hungarian-German model in Subotica. Data on the number of students attending bilingual classes are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	3	6	150
2014/2015	3	3	9	225
2015/2016	3	3	9	225

For pupils belonging to the **Romanian national minority**, teaching is in general delivered in the Romanian language in secondary schools in two units of local self-government: Alibunar and Vršac. The following table contains data on the number of students enrolled in secondary education where instructional activities have been organized in the Romanian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	2	2	8	189
2014/2015	2	2	8	204
2015/2016	2	2	8	195
2016/2017	2	2	8	189

Subject *Romanian language with elements of national culture*, in addition to secondary schools in AP Vojvodina, since the school year 2013/2014, has also been studied in Eastern Serbia (Zaječar, Kladovo and Negotin). Due to insufficient interest of the pupils in grammar schools in Negotin, the instruction of this subject was not organized in the school years following the aforementioned one. Studying the *Romanian language with elements of national culture* as a school subject in the school year 2015/2016 was organized in grammar schools in Zaječar, Kladovo and Kovačica. Data on the number of students studying the *Romanian language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	4	4	9	59
2014/2015	3	3	7	64
2015/2016	3	2	7	66
2016/2017	3	2	7	64

For pupils belonging to **the Ruthenian national minority**, teaching in the Ruthenian language is in general delivered in the secondary school of Ruski Krstur (Kula municipality). The following table contains data on the number of students enrolled in secondary education delivered in Ruthenian.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	4	60
2014/2015	1	1	4	57
2015/2016	1	1	4	60
2016/2017	1	1	4	56

Subject *Ruthenian language with elements of national culture* is studied in secondary schools in Novi Sad. Data on the number of pupils studying the *Ruthenian language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
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	Number of local self-government units			
2013/2014	1	1	4	29
2014/2015	1	1	4	10
2015/2016	1	1	1	10
2016/2017	1	1	1	13

For pupils belonging to **the Slovak national minority**, teaching in the Slovak language is in general delivered in secondary schools in three local self-government units: Bački Petrovac, Kovačica and Novi Sad. The following table contains data on the number of pupils enrolled in secondary education delivered in the Slovak language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	2	55
2014/2015	1	1	4	97
2015/2016	3	2	4	223
2016/2017	3	4	16	420

Subject the *Slovak language with elements of national culture* is studied in secondary schools in three local self-government units: Bačka Palanka, Stara Pazova and Šid. Data on the number of students studying the *Slovak language with elements of national culture* are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	3	3	10	52
2014/2015	3	3	8	14
2015/2016	3	3	7	17

For pupils belonging to the **Croat national minority**, teaching in the Croatian language is in general delivered in secondary schools in Subotica. The following table contains data on the number of pupils enrolled in secondary education in the Croatian language.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of classes	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	2	7	121
2014/2015	1	2	7	108

2015/2016	1	2	7	117
2016/2017	1	2	8	147

Subject the *Croatian language with elements of national culture* is studied in secondary schools in Sremska Mitrovica. Data on the number of pupils studying the Croatian language with elements of national culture are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of local self-government units	Number of schools	Number of groups	Number of pupils
2013/2014	1	1	1	5
2014/2015	1	1	1	7
2015/2016	1	2	2	32
2016/2017	1	2	2	28

Higher education

The Law on Higher Education, the provisions of which have been presented in section 11.1.4. of the Third report was amended in 2015 and 2016, and then in 2017 a new Law on Higher Education was adopted. The new law contains the same provisions as previous laws regarding the principles of higher education, *inter alia*, the principle of respecting human rights and civil liberties, including the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, the same provisions apply when instruction in the language of a national minority is delivered in whole or in part within higher education system as well as in matters of relevance for delivering instruction in the language of a national minority, thus in the work of the National Council for Higher Education with the right to participate in decision-making, a representative of the national council of that national minority also takes part.

The higher education institution organizes and conducts studies in the Serbian language. The higher education institution may organise examinations and implement studies and/or certain parts of studies, and organise the preparation and defense of a final work for a master's degree or a specialized master's degree and a doctoral dissertation and pursue a study programme in the language of a national minority or in a foreign language, if such programme has been accredited as a special study programme, in accordance with the Statute.

Each school year, the Government determines an additional number of students whose studies are financed from the budget for the implementation of affirmative measures for persons belonging to the Roma national minority. Students enrolled by the affirmative measure who in the current school year get awarded 36 ECTS credit points, have the right to be financed from the budget in the next school year. A student enrolled in studies by the affirmative measure retains the status of a student until the expiration of the deadline determined in the triple number of school years required for the implementation of the study programme.

Pursuant to the aforementioned provisions of the Law, in the Republic of Serbia, at certain faculties and academies of professional career studies teaching has been organised in the languages of national minorities as well as studying the languages of national minorities.

Higher education in the **Albanian language** is being delivered in Medveđa, at the departments of the Economic and Law Faculty of the University of Niš, as well as in Bujanovac, at the Department of the Faculty of Economics in Subotica, University of Novi Sad. In addition, the Albanian language and literature are also studied at the University of Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philology within the Albanology Department.

Bosnian language and literature are studied at the State University in Novi Pazar, Department of Philological Sciences, Study Programme of Serbian Literature and Language.

At the request of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, the State University of Novi Pazar organizes training in the framework of lifelong learning programmes:

- for performing instruction of the Bosnian language for teachers of subject teaching and professional associates in primary and secondary schools,
- for performing instruction of Bosnian language with methodology, for teachers in preschool institutions and teachers of class teaching.

During 2016, 140 teachers, professional associates and preschool teachers from Novi Pazar, Tutin and Sjenica completed their training.

Bulgarian language and literature are studied at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, at the Bulgarian Language Study Programme. Bulgarian literature is also studied within the Department of Serbian Literature with South Slavic Literatures.

Greek language and literature are studied at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade at the Department of Neo-Hellenic Studies.

Higher education in the **Hungarian language** is in general delivered at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad (Department of Hungarology), Faculty of Teacher Education in Subotica, Faculty of Civil Engineering in Subotica, Academy of Arts in Novi Sad; Academy of professional career studies for preschool teacher education in Subotica and Academy of technical professional career studies in Subotica. The Hungarian language and literature are studied at the University of Belgrade, the Faculty of Philology within Hungarology Department.

At the Faculty of Economics in Subotica, Department of Faculty of Economics of Subotica, with location in Novi Sad and Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Novi Sad, there is a possibility to receive instruction in Hungarian. For all subjects for which there is a sufficient number of interested students, and if the professors master the knowledge of the Hungarian language, instructional activities in that language are organized.

Macedonian language and literature are studied at the University of Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philology at the Department of Serbian Language, the Department of Serbian Literature and the Department of Russian Language. The Macedonian language is also studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad as an elective subject, at the Department of Serbian Language and the Department of Serbian Literature.

The German Language and Literature are studied at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, the Department of German Studies, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy within the Department of German Studies and University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Philology and Art at the Department of German Studies.

The Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade has shown readiness to organize the study of the **Romani language** at the level of undergraduate studies, and in 2015 a Romani Language and Culture Group was established. Students of the Faculty of Philology, within the study program *Language, Literature, Culture*, have been given the opportunity to study 35 foreign languages, and the Romani language is one of them. Academy of professional career studies for preschool teachers "Dr Mihailo Pavlov" in Vršac, enrolls students who belong to the Roma national minority, who receive education in the Serbian and Romani languages.

Higher education in the **Romanian language** is delivered at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, at the Department of Romanian Studies, the Department of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Belgrade - the Department for the Romanian Language (as a native language) and the Academy of professional career studies for preschool teacher education. The Romanian language and literature are also studied at the University of Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philology, within the Department of Romanian Studies, the Study Program for the Romanian Language and Literature.

Higher education in the **Ruthenian language** is delivered at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, at the Department for Ruthenian Studies.

Higher education in the **Slovak language** is delivered at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, at the Department of Slovak Studies, the Faculty of Teacher Education in Sombor and the Academy of professional career studies for preschool teacher education in Novi Sad. The Slovak language and literature are also studied at the University of Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philology within the Department for Slavic Studies, Study Program for Slovak Language and Literature.

The Slovene language and literature are studied at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology within the Department of the Serbian Language with South Slavic Languages and the Department of Serbian Literature with South Slavic Literatures. The Slovene language is also studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad as an elective subject at the Department of Serbian Language and the Department of Serbian Literature.

The Ukrainian Language and Literature are studied in the Republic of Serbia at the University of Belgrade, at the Faculty of Philology within the Department of Slavic Studies, the Study Program for Ukrainian Language and Literature. At the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, at the Study Program for Ruthenian Language and Literature, the Ukrainian language is a compulsory subject for all four years of studies, while in the Study Program for Russian Language and Literature, the Ukrainian language is an elective subject.

The Croatian literature is studied at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, within the Study Programme Serbian Literature with South Slavic Literatures. Within the Center for Lifelong Teacher Education and Professional Development of the Faculty of

Philosophy of the University of Novi Sad, a programme for acquiring competences in the field of Croatian language and literature with work methodology has been organized since 2015 and can be pursued and completed. The programme can be enrolled by all graduates, and lasts for a year. It has been designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for conducting teaching in Croatian at the level of subject and class instruction and for performing pre-school activities. The aim of the programme is the adoption and methodical application of the Croatian language, as well as the development and changes in the Croatian literature and the cultural context in which they are developed, and it is intended for persons working in educational institutions. Despite the fact that there were no enrolled students in the school year 2015/2016 for all persons involved in education in the Croatian language, it is extremely important that this higher education institution has provided the opportunity for their additional education and training.

The **Czech language** and literature are studied at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, the Department of Slavic Studies, Czech Language and Literature Study Programme.

15. Economic development of economically disadvantaged regions (recommendation 15).

Pursue efforts to improve the situation in economically disadvantaged regions with a view, inter alia, to strengthening development as well as the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the economic life of those regions.

Economically underdeveloped areas in which persons belonging to national minorities live in significant numbers

According to the Law on Regional Development,⁷⁹ local self-government units are classified, according to the degree of development, into four groups: 1) to the first group - local self-government units whose level of development is above average of the Republic of Serbia; 2) to the second group - local self-government units whose level of development ranges from 80% to 100% of the average value of the Republic of Serbia; 3) to the third group - local self-government units with a degree of development ranging from 60% to 80% of average of the Republic of Serbia; 4) to the fourth group - local self-government units whose development level is below 60% of the average value of the Republic of Serbia. According to the same Law, devastated areas belong to local self-government units from the fourth group whose level of development is below 50% of the average value of the Republic of Serbia. Pursuant to the Law, highly undeveloped local self-government units are local self-government units classified in the fourth group and local self-government units in which the demographic decline in the period from the census in 1971 to the observed year is greater than 50%.

⁷⁹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 51/2009, 30/2010 and 89/2015 - other Law

According to the available data, the fourth group of municipalities include the following local self-government units⁸⁰:

IV group				
Aleksinac	<i>Vladičin Han*</i>	Knjaževac	<i>Merošina*</i>	Raška
<i>Babušnica*</i>	Vlasotince	Krupanj	Mionica	Rekovac
<i>Bela Palanka*</i>	Gadžin Han	Kuršumlija*	<i>Nova Varoš</i>	Svrljig*
Blace	<i>Golubac*</i>	<i>Kučevo</i>	Opovo	<i>Sjenica</i>
<i>Bojnik*</i>	<i>Dimitrovgrad</i>	<i>Lebane*</i>	<i>Petrovac na Mlavi</i>	<i>Surdulica*</i>
<i>Bosilegrad*</i>	<i>Doljevac</i>	Ljig	<i>Preševo*</i>	Trgovište*
Brus	Žabari	Mali Zvornik*	<i>Priboj</i>	<i>Tutin*</i>
<i>Bujanovac*</i>	<i>Žagubica</i>	Malo Crniće	<i>Prijepolje*</i>	Crna Trava
Varvarin	<i>Žitorađa*</i>	<i>Medveđa*</i>	Ražanj	

* V group—devastated areas

Information on pursued efforts to improve the situation in the economically disadvantaged areas where persons belonging to national minorities live in substantial number

In accordance with the Law on Regional Development⁸¹ and the Decree on the content, manner and procedure of keeping the Register of measures and incentives for regional development,⁸² the Business Registers Agency keeps the Register of measures and incentives for regional development. The tables below provide information on the overall incentives for regional development in the local self-government units that fall into the fourth group of development, in which a substantial number of persons belonging to national minorities live. Incentives for regional development have been used to promote employment, production, agriculture, transport and economic infrastructure, etc.

Total incentives for regional development	2014	2015	2016
Babušnica	78,005,000.00	44,875,000.00	69,049,000.00
Bela Palanka	35,021,000.00	32,033,000.00	98,692,000.00
Bojnik	41,652,000.00	121,458,000.00	46,009,000.00
Bosilegrad	39,673,000.00	14,298,000.00	45,849,000.00
Bujanovac	48,705,000.00	130,090,000.00	1,238,677,000.00
Vladičin Han	39,842,000.00	79,252,000.00	167,630,000.00
Golubac	40,252,000.00	69,934,000.00	48,185,000.00
Dimitrovgrad	31,804,000.00	42,766,000.00	46,112,000.00

⁸⁰Local self-government units in which persons belonging to national minorities live in a significant number are clearly marked (bold and italic).

⁸¹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 51/2009, 30/2010 and 89/2015 –other Law

⁸²"Official Gazette of RS", no. 93/2010, 100/2011, 35/2012, 16/2013, 76/2015, 12/2017 and 83/2017

Doljevac	335,903,000.00	346,358,000.00	62,872,000.00
Žagubica	138,023,000.00	105,074,000.00	149,482,000.00
Žitorađa	50,588,000.00	51,119,000.00	61,137,000.00
Kučevo	41,823,000.00	36,306,000.00	55,691,000.00
Lebane	115,081,000.00	98,757,000.00	174,419,000.00
Medveđa	10,017,000.00	11,857,000.00	23,602,000.00
Merošina	61,931,000.00	49,030,000.00	67,823,000.00
Nova Varoš	206,785,000.00	441,356,000.00	279,682,000.00
Petrovac na Mlavi	169,501,000.00	87,022,000.00	155,874,000.00
Preševo	19,507,000.00	49,242,000.00	151,063,000.00
Priboj	186,398,000.00	484,483,000.00	804,303,000.00
Prijepolje	203,287,000.00	181,362,000.00	325,899,000.00
Sjenica	256,816,000.00	165,425,000.00	282,826,000.00
Surdulica	64,650,000.00	116,254,000.00	49,781,000.00
Tutin	125,995,000.00	47,721,000.00	79,008,000.00

16. Functioning of councils for inter-ethnic relations (recommendation 16)

Promote the establishment and effective functioning of councils for inter-ethnic relations at local level in all municipalities with an ethnically mixed population.

As outlined in the previous reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention, the provisions of Article 98 of the Law on Local Self-Government⁸³ stipulate that in local self-government units with ethnically mixed population a council for inter-ethnic relations shall be established as an independent working body composed of representatives of the Serbian people and national minorities. Local self-government units with ethnically mixed population, in the sense of this law, are local self-government units in which persons belonging to one national minority constitute more than 5% of the total population or where persons belonging to national minorities constitute more than 10% of the total population according to the latest census in the Republic of Serbia. A council for interethnic relations may be represented by Serbian people and national minorities with more than 1% of the participation in the total population of a local self-government unit.

In the course of 2015, the Office for Human and Minority Rights prepared an analysis of the functioning of the councils for interethnic relations. The analysis was made on the basis of information obtained from local self-government units. Out of 72 local self-government units, answers were provided by 61 or 84.72%. According to the results of the analysis, most of the local self-government units with ethnically mixed population have established an independent

⁸³Official Gazette of RS", no. 129/2007, 83/2014 –other Law, 101/2016 – other Law and 47/2018

working body for interethnic relations, in accordance with the legal obligation. The topics that were the subject of review of the councils were diverse and were dependent on the events in some of the local self-government units that were deemed to be of importance for the achievement of national equality. The information received from local self-government units have shown that the practice is not uniform and that the councils also considered issues that could not be classified in the issues of achieving national equality.

The analysis states that it is necessary to strengthen the capacities of multinational local self-government units to recognize the importance of a council for interethnic relations in the local community. Only the ability of the councils to carry out their tasks and thereby enable the involvement of minorities in public affairs and full national equality in the multinational local self-government units can lead to full affirmation of this body in the achievement, protection and promotion of national equality at the local level.

In order to contribute to the resolution of open issues, the Ombudsman organized, with the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, training in ten local self-government units in 2017: Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Bor, Vršac, Dimitrovgrad, Žabalj, Žitište, Petrovac na Mlavi, Priboj and Šid which enabled members of the councils and representatives of the competent local self-government departments to become familiar with all the decisions on which such councils could give opinions.

Chapter IX of the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities has envisaged enabling the full implementation of the Law on Local Self-Government as one of the activities in connection with the establishment of councils for interethnic relations in all nationally mixed municipalities in accordance with the Law, as well as overseeing the implementation of the Law on local self-government in this regard, through reporting on the establishment of councils for inter-ethnic relations.

With amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government adopted on June 20, 2018 the obligation is foreseen of a local self-government unit in whose area a minority language is in official use, that in the process of obtaining and changing the names of streets, squares, city districts, hamlets and other parts of settlements, an opinion of a council for interethnic relations shall be provided, which is a novelty in the Law, and what, in this procedure, is a condition for deciding. The Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government shall supervise its implementation, primarily through the obligation of submitting opinions to the Ministry on the compliance of the statute of local self-government units with the law, and then in each individual case when the ministry approves the proposals of local self-government units to change the streets' names, squares, etc. More detailed information on normative solutions and implementation of new legal solutions in practice will be presented in the following Report.

IV. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee of Ministers are based on the observations of the Advisory Committee. The following paragraphs contain responses of the Republic of Serbia referring to certain findings of the Advisory Committee in relation to the relevant members of the Framework Convention. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, when certain issues have already been addressed in response to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, the reference is made to respective parts of the Report.

1. Article 3

Personal scope of application

37. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to apply a flexible approach in practice towards access to minority rights for non-citizens who speak one of the minority languages used in Serbia, and again invites them to consider reviewing the citizenship criterion included in the Law on National Minorities.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia remind the Advisory Committee that during the ratification of the Framework Convention, the Republic of Serbia did not submit any declaration or interpretative statement regarding the personal scope of the Convention's application.

The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, which was adopted in its original text in 2002, contains the definition of a national minority. According to this Law, a national minority is considered to be every group of citizens of the Republic of Serbia, which is by the number of persons belonging to it sufficiently representative, although it represents a minority in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, and belongs to one of the population groups who have long and firm links with the territory of the Republic of Serbia and possess features such as language, culture, national affiliation or ethnicity, origin or religion, by which it differs from the majority of the population, and whose people are distinguished by the care that they jointly maintain their common identity, including culture, tradition, language or religion. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia remind the Advisory Committee that during the previous monitoring cycles, it repeatedly emphasized that this definition is comprehensive and allows the numerically small communities to be considered as national minorities⁸⁴. In practice, partly through the process of constituting national councils, and, partly in other contexts, over twenty groups of citizens enjoy the status of a national minority, which makes the Republic of Serbia one of the most liberal democratic multicultural countries.

The criterion of citizenship contained in the legally defined definition of a national minority refers to *groups of citizens* who can enjoy the status of a national minority in the legal order of the Republic of Serbia. In other words, in the legal order of the Republic of Serbia, the

⁸⁴ACFC/OP/I(2003)08

status of a national minority cannot be recognized to groups of persons possessing characteristics such as language, culture, national affiliation or ethnicity, origin or religion, which distinguish them from the majority of the population but who have no citizenship and are not in a long-lasting and firm connection with the territory of the Republic of Serbia. This primarily refers to groups of refugees, migrants and persons living on the basis of economic activities in the Republic of Serbia. The fact that such groups of persons do not enjoy the status of a national minority does not mean that they and persons belonging to them in the Republic of Serbia, in accordance with the highest international human rights standards, do not enjoy the right to freely express, preserve and develop their ethnic, cultural, religious identity.

In the legal order of the Republic of Serbia, most minority rights that are individually enjoyed and exercised, especially with regard to the use of languages and scripts, as well as in the field of education, are not reserved exclusively for citizens. Therefore, persons who are not citizens of the Republic of Serbia, who share the same national identity with persons belonging to national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, do not have any obstacles regarding the enjoyment and exercise of minority rights. In fact, such persons may be beneficiaries of all minority rights (for example, they may freely use their language and a script in contact with authorities, may be parties in proceedings conducted fully in the languages and scripts of national minorities, may be members of minority associations, may individually and in community with persons belonging to national minorities, nurture and develop their religious identity, can attend full education delivered in the language and script of national minorities, etc.), except in cases where the requirement of citizenship has explicitly been stated in the Law (for example, they cannot enjoy the right to vote and, in that sense, cannot be political representatives of national minorities, nor participate in the process of selecting national councils of national minorities and be members of these bodies). That being said, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia remind that the Advisory Committee itself, in its Third Opinion on Implementation of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Serbia in Section 36, welcomed *"the fact that in practice people who are non-citizens, but who speak the same language as the national minorities in Serbia, can benefit from many of the same rights as persons who are recognized to belong to national minorities"*.⁸⁵

Bearing in mind everything that has been mentioned, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia firmly hold the view that there are no justified reasons for the initiative contained in this recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

38. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities pursue vigorously their efforts to regularise the situation of persons whose citizenship and/or legal status remains unclear and for whom this may constitute an unnecessary obstacle to their exercise of the rights of national minorities.

Information on the implementation of this recommendation is contained in Section III. 7

⁸⁵ACFC/III(2013)006, par. 36

Respect for the specific identity of persons belonging to national minorities

43. *The Advisory Committee again encourages the Serbian authorities to continue to abide strictly by the principle of free self-identification as contained in Article 3 of the Framework Convention.*

44. *In parallel, it encourages them to take steps – while maintaining strict neutrality as to outcomes – to promote constructive dialogue between persons identifying themselves as belonging to the Romanian and Vlach national minorities, and between persons identifying themselves as belonging to the Croat and Bunjevci national minorities.*

The Serbian authorities are fully committed to the strict adherence to the principle of free self-identification contained in Article 3 of the Framework Convention. In the monitoring cycles completed so far, the Advisory Committee welcomed the consistent position of the authorities not to interfere with the debate on the ethnicity of persons belonging to national minorities, which is reflected in the determination not to arbitrate in the debates on ethnicity and impose no identity on any community.⁸⁶ In this sense, in the Republic of Serbia the freedom of persons belonging to national minorities to decide whether they want to be connected with a particular national minority and to be treated as persons belonging to a particular national minority is a fundamental element of the protection of national minorities based on democratic principles. Moreover, the legal framework and the practice of the authorities in the Republic of Serbia allow for the existence and expression, in various social contexts, of the multiple identity of a person based on the Constitution and international treaties guaranteed freedom of choice and declaring national affiliation.

The authorities of the Republic of Serbia are aware that in the reality of social life there are certain disputes about the identity of different national groups and their legal status and they are determined that such disputes do not affect the enjoyment and exercise of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities or their freedom to determine whether they will be treated as persons belonging to national minorities in different social and legal contexts. In this regard, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia seek such discussions not to be politically instrumentalized and arbitrarily and institutionally ended, but to transform into a constructive democratic dialogue that will take place at different levels, in different contexts and primarily among *persons* who identify differently, without contradicting and/or the imposition of identity on any *community*, both by the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and by the authorities of other states or international organizations. With a view to establishing and maintaining a constructive democratic multicultural dialogue on issues of importance to national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, including issues of importance for cooperation among persons belonging

⁸⁶ACFC/OP/III(2013)066, par. 40

to national minorities whose identity is the subject of dispute, the Serbian authorities have created significant institutional conditions and provided adequate financial conditions.

In institutional terms, a democratic multicultural dialogue on issues of importance to national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, including issues of importance for cooperation among persons belonging to national minorities whose identity is the subject of dispute, may take place within the Council for national minorities in which representatives of all national councils of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia participate, as well as through the Coordination of national councils acting with the aim of jointly proposing measures and personnel solutions within the meaning of the Law on the protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities and the Law on national councils of national minorities. Of course, direct contacts and meetings of representatives of interested national councils are certainly the basic institutional channel for constructive dialogue on bilateral issues of importance to national minorities, including issues of importance to persons belonging to the Romanian and Vlach national minorities, as well as the Croat and Bunjevci national minorities. Bearing in mind the positive climate and the presented institutional opportunities, some interested national councils of the mentioned minorities have made direct contacts and started to consider open issues which, in some cases, resulted in appropriate protocols on cooperation. In that sense, it should be noted that, *inter alia*, they are determined to work together on the promotion of their status with regard to the exercise and protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities. The National Councils of the Romanian and Moldovan national minorities adopted on November 5, 2015 a Cooperation Protocol one of whose objectives is harmonizing programmes, projects and activities in the fields of education, culture and information, and agreed forms of cooperation organizing joint meetings of presidents and executive boards, exchange of information, establishment of joint plans and work programmes in areas of interest to both parties, organization of joint events and conferences, etc. On September 26, 2017 the National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority invited the National Council of the Croat National Minority to cooperate in order to establish direct dialogue, mutual communication and cooperation on all issues of interest for the exercise of the rights of national minorities, but the response of the National Council of the Croat National Minority at the time of writing this report was still not given. The Serbian authorities will continue to promote the importance of cooperation and dialogue between national councils of the Bunjevci and Croat national minorities.

Institutions of the Republic of Serbia created the necessary conditions for participatory processes within the national minorities themselves, which undoubtedly allows pluralism of views, ideas and commitments and which can contribute to the development of a constructive democratic dialogue between persons belonging to different national minorities. In that sense, it should be noted that the decisions on elections contained in the Law on National Councils of National Minorities allow participation in the process of national councils' elections for individuals and groups with different views on issues of importance to national minorities represented by the councils, including questions on national identity and key elements of the identity of specific communities.

Last, but not least, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia in order to establish and maintain constructive democratic multicultural dialogue on issues of importance for national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, including issues of importance for cooperation among persons belonging to national minorities whose identity is the subject of dispute, have provided adequate financial conditions, especially through the possibility of financing and co-financing various multicultural projects in the field of culture, information, education, etc. The relevant paragraphs of the Report contain specific data on submitted and supported multicultural projects in various areas of social life. A number of such projects were jointly submitted by persons and associations belonging to the Vlach and Romanian national minorities, as well as the Bunjevci and Croat national minorities, which testify that dialogue and consideration of issues of importance for cooperation among persons belonging to national minorities take place not only through their national councils, but also directly among the stakeholders and within the civil society, and that such forms of cooperation and exchange of views are supported by the Serbian authorities.

Census

49. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to pursue a flexible approach in the use of data gathered through the census for policy development affecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, in particular as regards Roma and in areas where a boycott had a significant impact on the results of the census. It recommends that the authorities maintain a close dialogue with representatives of the Albanian minority to ensure that alternative data sources, including independent research data, are appropriately consulted.

Information on the implementation of this recommendation are contained in Section III.5.

Ethnic data protection

52. The Advisory Committee calls on the Serbian authorities to issue the necessary implementing regulations to ensure that the existing domestic legal guarantees regarding the collection and processing of sensitive personal data relating in particular to individuals' ethnic affiliation, language and religion are fully operational in practice. It again calls on the authorities to ensure that the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection has all the necessary resources to fulfil his tasks efficiently.

Regulations and Enabling Implementation of Legal Guarantees

The basic law governing the area of personal data protection in the Republic of Serbia is the Law on Personal Data Protection,⁸⁷ which has been in force since 1 January 2009. In the period 2012-2016 there were no significant changes to the current Law.

Article 16 of the Law on Personal Data Protection prescribes that particularly sensitive data are those relating, *inter alia*, to national affiliation, language and religion, which can be processed on the basis of freely given consent of a person, unless the law forbids processing data even with the given consent. The processing of particularly sensitive data shall be specially marked and protected by the protection measures, and the processing consent must be provided solely in writing, with the mark of the data being processed, the purpose of the processing and the manner of their use. Therefore, the Law stipulates more stringent conditions for the processing of particularly sensitive data than for the processing of data of other kind.

The Action Plan for Chapter 23 in the negotiations with the European Union envisages the adoption of a new Law on Personal Data Protection, which should be in accordance with the Model Law made by the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection. The commissioner prepared another Model Law in March 2017 and delivered it to the Ministry of Justice and the Government after a public hearing. In December 2017, the Ministry of Justice published the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection and put it in a public hearing that lasted for 45 days.

The protection of particularly sensitive personal data shall be part of a wider concept, and other regulations shall be adopted to ensure the protection of these data. The protection of data on national affiliation, in the context of the election of national councils of national minorities, is also regulated by the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. According to the provisions of this Law, the data from the special electoral roll enjoy special protection, and every use of data from a special electoral roll is forbidden and punishable, except for the purpose of election and for the exercise of other rights of national minorities, if prescribed by law. Pursuant to the quoted provision of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, the Rulebook on the Manner of Keeping a Special Electoral Roll of National Minorities, adopted in 2014, stipulates in Article 7 that every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right to an insight into the special electoral roll in order to check personal data registered in the special electoral roll and that an insight into a part of the special electoral roll may be provided directly in the municipal or city administration where the person belonging to a national minority resides, *in accordance with the law governing the protection of personal data*. The Law on Registry of all Employees, Elected, Nominated and Appointed and Engaged Persons within Public Funds Beneficiaries⁸⁸ from 2015, starting from the need to monitor equality in the conduct of public affairs, and in this regard, ensuring equal representation of persons belonging to minorities when recruiting in public services it is stipulated that the Registry, *inter alia*, shall contain data on the

⁸⁷ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 97/2008, 104/2009 - other Law, 68/2012 - CC and 107/2012

⁸⁸ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 68/2015 and 79/2015 - amendment

nationality of such persons. The provisions of this Law also prescribe that the regulations governing the protection of personal data shall be applied to the collection and processing of personal data contained in the Register, that such data shall not be made available for an insight or in any other way made available to unauthorized persons, as well as that the data on ethnic affiliation shall be entered in the Register with the written consent of the employees, elected, nominated, appointed and engaged persons, without the obligation to declare.

Providing funds to the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection

Independence and autonomy of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection is one of the basic principles of the institution's work that implies that it is organized and functionally separated from administrative bodies and other public authorities whose work is controlled by the Commissioner. This is ensured by the method of election and the explicit legal provision according to which the Commissioner, in the exercise of his competence, shall not seek or receive orders and instructions from public bodies or other persons, and cannot be held responsible for the opinion he has expressed or the proposal he has given in the exercise of his jurisdiction. The Commissioner is elected by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for a period of seven years, with the possibility of another election. In December 2011, the National Assembly elected the current Commissioner to the second seven-year term of office. Numerous strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia recognize the importance of strengthening the Commissioner's capacity.

For performing professional and administrative activities from the scope of work of the Commissioner, an expert service has been established, named the Commissioner's Office. A total of 94 employees have been systematized in the Rulebook on internal organization and job classification in the Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner's office presently has 77 employees. The Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection states in the supplement to the fourth report that the business premises that have been made available to the Commissioner meets basic needs for the current number of employees. The available work equipment is relatively in line with the existing capacity of the Commissioner's Office. The work of the Commissioner and his office is financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. The available data indicate a trend of a steady increase in the volume of budgetary funds that have been remitted to the Commissioner.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection	142,843,000.00	162,695,000.00	168,224,000.00	190,705,000.00	203,000,000.00

2. Article 4

Legislative framework for prohibiting discrimination

56. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities take all necessary steps to ensure that the wording of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination does not prevent persons from national minorities from bringing claims of discrimination in the fields of housing and social protection, and amend the Law if necessary to achieve this.

The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination determined that the terms "discrimination" and "discriminatory treatment" mean any unjustified making of a difference or unequal treatment, i.e. omission (exclusion, limitation or giving priority) in relation to persons or groups as well as members of their families, or persons from their surroundings, in an open or covert manner, based on race, skin colour, ancestors, citizenship, nationality or ethnic origin, language, religious or political beliefs, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, financial situation, birth, genetic features, health status, disability, marital and family status, conviction, age, appearance, membership in political, trade union and other organizations and other real or supposed personal qualities. In addition, the law has established the right to equal access and equal protection of rights before all public authorities. It follows from the above stated that all personal qualities are covered by the protection in the sense of the said law, and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality has handled in previous practice complaints regarding inadequate housing and exercising the right to social protection. Bearing in mind that it is fully ensured that persons belonging to national minorities lodge their complaints on discrimination in the area of housing and social protection, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia are of the view that there is no need to approach the amendments to the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination in this context.

57. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to ensure that all undue citizenship requirements are removed from constitutional and criminal law provisions relevant to the protection of national minorities.

Information on the meaning of the criteria of citizenship contained in the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities is given in Section IV. 1. in connection with Recommendation No. 37 of the Advisory Committee. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia draw the attention of the Advisory Committee to the fact that both in the Constitution and in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia, there are no provisions in which citizenship is treated as a relevant criterion for the protection of national minorities. On the contrary, in all the provisions of the Criminal Code which provide criminal-law protection of social values and foresee criminal offences that are in the broadest sense of relevance for the protection of national minorities and which include violation of equality (Article 128), violation

of the right to the use of language and script (Article 129), violation of the right to expression of national or ethnic affiliation (Article 130), violation of the freedom of religion and performing religious service (Article 131), injury to reputation due to racial, religious, ethnic, or other affiliation (Article 174) instigating national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance (Art. 317), desecration of a grave (Art. 354) genocide (Art. 370), racial and other discrimination (Art. 387), the citizenship is in no way defined as a criterion and/or the element of the essence of those criminal offences. Moreover, the Constitution in Article 17 explicitly stipulates that in the Republic of Serbia, in accordance with international treaties, foreigners have all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law, except for the rights that only the citizens of the Republic of Serbia have under the Constitution and the law. The rights reserved exclusively for citizens of the Republic of Serbia, according to the Constitution, do not include the freedom of expression of national affiliation, nor individual minority rights. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia, on this occasion, express the belief that the Advisory Committee, starting from the presented, in its second Opinion on the implementation of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Serbia, stated in section 33 that *"it welcomes the fact that the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia contains a special section on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities which includes general guarantees for persons belonging to national minorities, regardless of their "citizenship".*⁸⁹

Positive measures

61. The Advisory Committee recommends that the wording of Article 76, paragraph 3 of the Constitution as regards positive measures with respect to persons belonging to national minorities be aligned both with the spirit of Article 4, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Framework Convention and with the recognition of special measures in Article 21 of the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in Article 76, paragraph 3 explicitly stipulates that special regulations and temporary measures that the Republic of Serbia may introduce in the economic, social, cultural and political life in order to achieve full equality between persons belonging to national minorities and citizens belonging to the majority are not considered discriminatory, if they are aimed at removing extremely unfavorable living conditions that particularly affect them. This provision of the Constitution, if it is isolated and linguistically interpreted, can indeed lead to the perception that the adoption of such measures may be regarded as discrimination, if they are undertaken for other purposes, except for the elimination of "extremely unfavorable living conditions", which would certainly not be in accordance with the principles arising from Article 4, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia point out that the Constitution still contains other provisions that, if systematically and teleologically interpreted,

⁸⁹ACFC/OP/II(2009)001, par. 33

do not lead to the perception that the intention of the constitution maker was to allow the adoption of positive measures in favor of persons belonging to national minorities only if such measures are undertaken to eliminate "extremely unfavorable conditions of life". The Constitution in Article 21 provides for equality before the Constitution and the law and the prohibition of discrimination. In paragraph 4 of that article, the Constitution provides that the following shall not be regarded as discrimination: special measures which the Republic of Serbia may impose in order to achieve full equality of persons or groups of persons who are substantially in an unequal position with other citizens which certainly applies to national minorities. In addition to the outlined general provision, the Constitution contains several provisions that can be considered as a special constitutional basis for undertaking certain measures of affirmative action in favor of persons belonging to national minorities. Thus, in Article 77 the Constitution prescribes that persons belonging to national minorities, under the same conditions as other citizens, have the right to participate in the management of public affairs and to take up public service jobs, while in paragraph 2 of the same article it is foreseen that in recruitment process in public bodies, public services, autonomous provincial authorities and local self-government units, the national composition of the population and the appropriate representation of persons belonging to national minorities shall be taken into account. Moreover, in Article 180, paragraph 4, the Constitution stipulates that in autonomous provinces and local self-government units where the population of a mixed national composition is inhabited, it allows proportional representation of national minorities in the assemblies, in accordance with the law. The representation of representatives of national minorities in representative bodies is not ensured only at the local and provincial levels. According to Article 100, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, equality and representation of representatives of national minorities is ensured, in accordance with the law. Bearing in mind the provisions laid down, it is quite clear that the intention of the constitution maker was not to allow positive measures in favor of persons belonging to national minorities only in the case of extremely unfavorable living conditions that particularly affect them. In particular, it should be noted that positive measures in favor of persons belonging to national minorities were not considered discriminatory, which were undertaken after the adoption of the Constitution aimed at not removing the extremely unfavorable living conditions that are particularly affecting national minorities, but at promoting the equality in general, and about which the Committee was informed in detail in past reports, as well as in the relevant sections of this Report.

Regardless of the above stated, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia are nevertheless aware that the differences that exist between the text of Article 76, paragraph 3 and Article 21 need to be overcome, and in that sense, any possible future constitutional changes will be an opportunity to prepare solutions that will in all reflect the spirit of Article 4 paragraph 2 and 3 of the Framework Convention.

Monitoring discrimination and available remedies

69. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities at all levels to give rapid and complete follow-up to the findings and recommendations of the Ombudsman, Provincial Ombudsman and Commissioner for the Protection of Equality in all cases affecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Information on the implementation of this recommendation is contained in Section III. 6.

70. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities rapidly to provide adequate premises to the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, in order to enable this institution to recruit its full complement of staff and to ensure the efficient handling of complaints received. It again emphasises that the Ombudsman institutions at all levels, as well as the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, must receive adequate support in order to ensure that they are in a position to perform their tasks efficiently and that they are known to persons belonging to national minorities and accessible to them, including in their languages.

In the reporting period, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality has been allocated an adequate office space of a total area of 1.008 m². Conditions for recruiting new employees for an indefinite period of time have been created. Specifically, in the Professional Service of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality since 2013, the job posts for 60 executives have been systematized. At the moment, there are a total of 38 employees in the Professional Service of the Commissioner, while the plan foresees the dynamics of completing the capacities of the Professional Service at full capacity by the end of 2020. In order to strengthen the professional capacities and continuous improvement of the quality and efficiency of work, training and professional development of the employees in the Professional Service are constantly being carried out.

In order to acquaint persons belonging to national minorities with the institution, publications and brochures are created and distributed to enable all citizens to get easily informed of the work of the institution, the concept of discrimination, and methods of protection against discrimination.⁹⁰

During 2011, a brochure was published (with information on jurisdiction and manner of conduct of the Commissioner) and leaflets, as well as complaints forms, in Serbian and in the languages of national minorities, which are continuously distributed to institutions, bodies and organizations, civil society organizations, etc. The forms of complaint in minority languages are used in everyday work, and are also available on the website of the Commissioner for the

⁹⁰All publications of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality are available on the website <http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/izvestaji-i-publikacije/publikacije/>.

Protection of Equality, in the following languages: Ruthenian, Romanian, Macedonian, Roma, Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, Bulgarian and Albanian.

The Practicum for Protection against Discrimination, which is available in Serbian, English, Albanian, Hungarian and the Romani language, was published in 2012.

During 2013, an information brochure was published in *Equality- our right and our responsibility*, which also includes the complaint form in the following languages: Serbian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Romanian and the Romani language.

Then, in 2014, two publications were prepared dedicated to the protection of the rights of national minorities: *Protection of Equality: Manual for National Minority Councils and Manual for Institutional Protection against Discrimination Against National Minorities - for Serbia without Discrimination*. A following manual was also prepared: *Manual for Men Journalists and Women Journalists: A Fight for Equality*. This publication is a guide to all media, with information on handling methods and examples from the Commissioner's practice and the European Court for Human Rights. The publication contains a "Tolerance Dictionary", i.e. a list of anti-discrimination, gender-sensitive and lesser-known terms with explanations.

In 2015, *Manual for the Application of the Anti-Discrimination Misdemeanor Law* was also published. The Second Collection of Selected Opinions and Recommendations of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality - handling of complaints related to discrimination against children based on, *inter alia*, nationality, as well as the publication *Protection of the Rights of Children in the Health System with a special emphasis on Roma and other sensitive groups of children*.

The Commissioner's brochure for the protection of equality, in Cyrillic and Latin alphabet, as well as in the Romani language on the institution of the Commissioner and lodging complaints, was made and published in 2016. A Manual for the Prevention of Segregation was also prepared, the development of inclusive enrollment policies and the desegregation of schools and classes has also been prepared, where, *inter alia*, comparative desegregation models in some European countries, and concrete proposals for the implementation of the desegregation process in the Republic of Serbia were presented.

During the reporting period, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality implemented a number of projects that were dedicated to improving the awareness of persons belonging to national minorities about the existence and mandate of the Commissioner's institution, as well as institutional mechanisms for combating discrimination which are at their disposal.

During 2013 and 2014, activities were conducted on the project *Let Equality become our reality* with the aim of combating discrimination and promoting equality through the implementation of activities at the local level, in cooperation with national councils of national minorities, youth groups and civil society organizations dealing with the young.

In 2014, the implementation of project *Equal Chances for Better Prospects - Strengthening Roma men and Roma women in Combating Discrimination* was completed,

implemented in cooperation with Praxis and the Regional Center for Minorities, in the period from May 2012 to December 2013.

The Commissioner, together with the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, was the beneficiary of the twinning project *Support to the Promotion of Human Rights and Zero Tolerance to Discrimination*, which was implemented in the period 2015-2017.

In addition, the Commissioner has been organizing internships for Roma in this institution for several years in the framework of the European Roma Rights Center project, with the aim of providing young Roma people with direct experience in working in an independent institution and communicating the need to involve Roma men and Roma women in the work of public authorities.

We point out that Ombudsman institutions at all levels in their submissions for the preparation of the Report did not emphasize that they have any difficulties in the efficient performance of their tasks and recognition in minority communities.

71. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities adopt measures aimed at collecting reliable data on discrimination in all relevant fields and to this end, develop adequate methods of ethnic data collection while fully respecting the right to free self-identification and in accordance with international standards on personal data protection.

The decision of the authorities of the Republic of Serbia to seriously approach preventing and combating discrimination was clearly expressed through the adoption of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for the period 2014-2018,⁹¹ in June 2013. By adopting the Strategy, the Republic of Serbia has opted for the systemic construction of the institutional and legislative framework, as well as the mechanisms for combating discrimination. The Strategy covers all persons and groups of persons with regard to their personal characteristics, in particular national minorities and vulnerable social groups that are most often exposed to discrimination. In October 2014, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination for the period 2014-2018.⁹² The action plan stipulates concrete measures and activities necessary for the achievement of strategic objectives, deadlines, responsible entities and resources for implementation. Also, indicators of fulfillment of activities have been defined, on the basis of which the level of their achievement will be monitored, as well as indicators for assessing the performance of the set objectives. The action plan stipulates, *inter alia*, the legal regulation of the manner of keeping records on the number of persons belonging to national minorities in the public administration bodies.

⁹¹"Official Gazette of RS", no. 60/2013.

⁹²"Official Gazette of RS", no. 107/2014.

Also, the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities stipulates amendments to the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities in order to regulate the right to enter data on the national affiliation of persons belonging to national minorities into public documents, official records and collections of personal data in accordance with the constitutional principle of free expression of national affiliation, which is one of the conditions for adopting and undertaking measures aimed at collecting reliable data on discrimination on a national basis in all relevant areas. Although it does not apply to the reporting period, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia use this opportunity to inform the Advisory Committee that the measure stipulated by the Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities has been implemented by adopting amendments to the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, which the Advisory Committee will be informed about in the following report.

In addition, it should be emphasized that by certain documents, for different areas of social life, the obligation has been prescribed to report to the competent authorities all recognized cases of discrimination, as it is the case with the Rulebook on closer criteria for recognizing forms of discrimination by an employee, a child, a pupil or a third person in an institution of education and upbringing. The establishment of the obligation to report cases of discrimination undoubtedly contributes to the possibility of creating comprehensive measures to collect reliable data on discrimination on a national basis in all relevant areas.

The situation of the Roma

80. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities ensure that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to achieve the objectives fixed in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma 2012-2014. Local self-government authorities and Roma representatives should continue to be directly involved in the evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy and in designing further steps forward in this respect.

Data on the allocation of adequate human and financial resources for achieving the objectives fixed in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma 2012-2014 are contained in Section III. 1.

The involvement of local self-government authorities and Roma representatives in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan

The involvement of local self-government authorities in designing further steps forward in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan is reflected in the adoption of local action plans that more precisely regulate measures and activities at the local level. In the reporting period, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Association

of Roma Affairs Coordinators, carried out activities to advocate the adoption of local action plans for persons belonging to the Roma national minority. A total of 27 local self-government units have adopted local action plans related to the improvement of the status of the Roma national minority. These are: Apatin, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Boljevac, Vladičin Han, Indija, Kanjiža, Kikinda, Kovačica, Koceljeva, Lajkovac, Leskovac, Loznica, Merošina, Novi Bečej, Novi Pazar, Odžaci, Pančevo, Paraćin, Požarevac, Senta, Sombor, Srbobran, Sremski Karlovci and Subotica. The National Council of the Roma National Minority gave an opinion to all local self-government units on the content of the local action plans.

81. The authorities should review carefully the impact in practice of the measures so far taken to facilitate registration of residence for persons living in informal settlements and to establish a procedure for the late registration of the birth of “legally invisible” persons. They should in particular take all necessary steps – including amending the relevant legislation or regulations if necessary – to ensure that these measures serve to assist Roma living in informal settlements to obtain the identity documents necessary to exercise other rights, as well as to enable “legally invisible” persons who would otherwise be stateless not only to register their birth but also to acquire citizenship. Judicial decisions on birth registration must also be promptly implemented.

Information on the implementation of this recommendation is contained in Section III. 7.

82. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to put an immediate end to forced evictions and to introduce in domestic law provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate housing and to be free of forced evictions. Where evictions occur, these must be carried out in full conformity with international standards in this field. The authorities should moreover, in consultation with representatives of the Roma, establish a clear overall plan as to which informal settlements should be improved and legalised and which should be vacated while providing adequate alternative housing to their inhabitants.

The introduction of provisions guaranteeing the right to adequate housing and the omission of forced eviction is explained in Section III. 1.

General plan on Roma settlements

During the implementation phase of the IPA 2012 project *We are here together – European support for Roma inclusion* for the first time records were established on the number and location of informal settlements in the Republic of Serbia, which gives the possibility, in the area of housing, in the following period, for funds to be directed to solve these problems in line with established plans. The National Council of the Roma National Minority had its representative in the project's steering committee. According to the data of municipalities in Serbia, 583 informal/illegal Roma settlements have been identified. The first urban plans for sub-

standard Roma settlements have been developed and 13 models have been developed in detail to improve the living conditions of Roma. In order to improve housing conditions and infrastructure facilities in Roma settlements, a total of 23 infrastructure projects have been developed through this project in 14 municipalities. The project included the development of urban plans, plumbing and sewerage systems in individual settlements, construction of prefabricated houses, etc.

Moreover, at the end of the reporting period, within IPA 2012, TARI project, a Geographic Information System (GIS) for sub-standard Roma settlements was established and operationalized. All local self-government units have been provided with initial data on substandard housing in Roma settlements on their territory from the GIS base, based on which progress will be monitored annually on improving the housing conditions of Roma in these settlements. Within the development of affordable housing models, a publication was issued on appropriate models for solving the housing needs of the Roma population. Detailed data from the GIS on substandard Roma settlements in Serbia will be provided in the next report.

Through the IPA 2013, *the Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma in sub-standard settlements* activities are carried out related to building and/or improving municipal infrastructure and residential facilities in sub-standard settlements with the majority of the Roma population. These activities are financed through a grant scheme in 13 selected municipalities (Ub, Svilajnac, Lebane, Čačak, Prokuplje, Stara Pazova, Smederevo, Novi Pazar, Loznica, Odžaci, Opovo, Boljevac and Niš), which contributed to the improvement of living conditions in these settlements. In addition to these activities, within the Programme appropriate planning and technical documentation have been prepared for the implementation of construction and infrastructure projects in order to improve the living conditions and housing of the Roma population in another 20 municipalities through new investment projects.

Forced evictions

In the reporting period, cases of eviction of Roma families from informal settlements in the city of Belgrade have been recorded. *In all cases of displacement, the right of the affected persons, groups and communities was guaranteed to give prior complete and conscious consent to the relocation.* None of the affected persons, groups or communities have suffered damage in terms of their human rights, nor have they been denied the right to continuously improve living conditions. All displaced families had the right to compensation for the loss, the collection and transport of their property that was affected by eviction. No displacement of informal settlements resulted in the consequence that an individual or family becomes homeless. From 2009 to the end of 2017, the city of Belgrade provided housing for 363 displaced Roma families, or 1,700 people. All procedures were monitored by the Ombudsman, representatives of the Delegation of the European Union, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as representatives of international and domestic NGOs: "Amnesty International", "Praxis", "Regional Center for Minorities", "Belgrade

Center for Human Rights", "Center for Ethnicity Research", "Center for Minority Rights". In the case of emigration and resettlement, human dignity was respected and there was no use of force.

In all cases of displacement, the City of Belgrade conducted consultations with displaced population before displacement, considering all possible alternatives, all persons affected by the displacement were adequately and reasonably informed, information on eviction and alternative accommodation were given, all persons involved in displacement were properly identified and all families have been provided with adequate accommodation in accordance with the action plan for displacement. The City of Belgrade held meetings where inhabitants of the settlements expressed their opinion as to which of the offered locations they wanted to move to, and had the opportunity to choose one of the models of housing provision (social housing, purchase of a rural household, renovation of one's own property). In addition to consulting with families, the city of Belgrade also conducted consultations with local residents in settlements to which Roma families should have been relocated. The consultations were made according to the methodology of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The city provided access to education for displaced people (enrollment in schools and kindergartens, transportation to school, free textbooks, additional instruction in the settlement) and all expenses were borne by the city. In addition to providing adequate services, efforts were pursued to improve the overall quality of life in newly-formed settlements, by promoting activities for improving everyday life and providing administrative, commercial, social services (monetary social assistance, one-time assistance, free meals for all socially vulnerable citizens, the presence of social services, etc.), public transport, waste disposal, maintenance of settlements and their surroundings (disinsectization, disinfection, and deratization etc.), arrangement of settlements (placement of children's playgrounds, landscaping of green areas, etc.).

The inhabitants in social housing and newly-formed settlements with full capability for work have been offered a certain number of jobs - both in city utility services (City Waste Disposal, Belgrade City Parks, Belgrade Power Stations, Waterworks and Sewage) and in private companies. Motivational workshops have also been organized for them where they received practical advice on employment, possibility to complete primary school, craft training, courses, etc. The City Center for Social Entrepreneurship of Belgrade in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), within the framework of the Project, *EU support to Roma Employment* awarded non-refundable funds for self-employment in equipment for 50 unemployed Roma people with the best business plans, in the amount up to 3,400 euros, for starting a business, that is, the the founding of a shop or other form of entrepreneurship.

Care of preschool-age children had an extremely important place in the programme of integration of displaced families. Experts from relevant Secretariats regularly visited families, talked with families, collected information about their needs and problems. In this way, the priorities in solving the one-off and long-term problems of displaced families with children were directly perceived. The settlements were visited by social workers and psychologists employed in preschool institutions.

In addition to all of the above stated, the City of Belgrade has implemented the project *Let's Build a Home together* through the Action Plan for resettlement of inhabitants of the newly-built settlements Makiš 1, Makiš 2, Resnik, Kijevo and Jabučki rit. The project was implemented in cooperation with the European Union and UNOPS. Through the implementation of this project permanent housing has been provided for 170 Roma families. As a contribution, the European Union, through UNOPS, allocated 3.6 million euros from pre-accession IPA funds for permanent housing for families who were residents in five newly-formed settlements, created after the resettlement of 'Gazela' and 'Belvil' settlements. For this purpose, the city of Belgrade has so far allocated 1.933.000 euros from the budget.

According to the project, housing provision process was implemented through three models of housing provision: social housing, the purchase of a rural household and the reconstruction of their own property. During the displacement and housing provision process, the City of Belgrade acted upon the recommendations of the European Union, and the families received all the necessary help and support in order to collect all necessary documentation for participation in the project. Families were involved in the entire process, and the city regularly reported to the Delegation of the European Union on all steps taken to address housing needs for them.

During the reporting period, within the project implementation, 116 families were provided with social housing, 42 families were accommodated in rural households, and for 11 families who owned their own homes, assistance in the form of building materials was provided.

In 2014 and 2015, through the implementation of the Action Plan for the Displacement of an Unhygienic Settlement within the project of building access roads to the bridge across the Sava River, 51 families displaced from the informal settlement "Belvil" were taken care of by providing them with social housing at the following locations: "Orlovsko Naselje" - the municipality of Zvezdara (24 families) and the Jabučki rit – the municipality of Palilula (27 families).

In cooperation of the City of Belgrade with the NGO "Vision", Kragujevac and UNHCR, during 2016 and 2017, through the Project of providing housing solutions for internally displaced persons in the informal settlement "Grmeč", the municipality of Zemun, by purchasing rural households, a total of 54 Roma families, or 224 persons were provided with accommodation.

83. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to continue employing health mediators with the aim of improving both access to health care of Roma and their overall health situation, and to pursue their efforts to raise the awareness of health professionals to the needs of Roma.

Employing health mediators

Employing health mediators should provide better insight of health facilities into the situation in Roma settlements, and show the inhabitants the importance of timely medical appointments. Health mediators are not health professionals, but they connect the health system

and citizens of informal settlements. Roma women are engaged in the work of health mediators, who sometimes live in substandard Roma settlements. Two thirds of the hired mediators have completed secondary or higher education, while about one-third of the hired mediators have completed primary school.

Since the beginning of employing health mediators, from the initial 15, the number of health mediators reached 60 in 2017, and in 2018, some 85 trained health mediators are expected to be hired within the health care system.

The competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia are of the opinion that mediators should be engaged in environments where there are over 1,000 Roma, with the number of Roma covered by one mediator not exceeding 1,500 persons, which means that, in relation to the needs of the Roma community for health care and the demographic distribution of Roma settlements, a required number of health mediators is 200. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia will continue to pursue efforts to further employ health mediators.

Efforts to raise the level of awareness of health professionals of the needs of Roma

Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma envisages the following measures and activities related to raising the level of awareness of health professionals about the needs of Roma: organizing seminars for employees in the Republic Health Insurance Fund on the specific situation of the Roma population in the compulsory health insurance system and organizing seminars and workshops for health professionals and associates so that they could get acquainted with the specific needs of the Roma population, establishing better communication and understanding.

For the purpose of implementing the Action Plan, in 2012, there were 10 training sessions in the health centers: Leskovac, Lebane, Vranje, Medveđa, Vlasotince, Crna Trava, Vladičin Han, Surdulica, Trgovište and Bojnik, encompassing 885 health professionals, and the topics that were covered, *inter alia*, related to the historical and cultural heritage of the Roma and the health status of Roma - *Roma neighbors, Roma patients*.

In the same year, the Center for Integration of the Roma of the Region held four training sessions on the topic of "*Health of the Roma population* in Belgrade, Užice, Niš and Novi Sad" attended by doctors, nurses and technicians, dentists from 42 health centers. There were 142 health professionals educated. Similar activities continued in the following years of the reporting period.

3. Article 5.

Policy of Support for national minority cultures

89. *The Advisory Committee invites the authorities at State and provincial level to review the system of allocating public funds to national minority councils with a view to ensuring that*

itenables all national minorities, in particular numerically smaller ones, to benefit fully from the opportunities that such funding may provide.

State level

As stated in the previous state report, pursuant to Article 115 of the Law, the funds provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia are allocated so that 30% is allocated in equal amounts to all registered national councils in the Republic of Serbia, while the rest of the funds (70%) in proportion to the number of persons belonging to a particular national minority represented by the national council, as well as the total number of institutions of that national minority in the field of culture, education, information and official use of the language and script and the scope of activities of those institutions. According to the Decree on the Procedure for the allocation of funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for financing the work of national councils adopted by the Government in 2010, the remaining funds (70%) are distributed proportionally: one half (35% of the total) according to the number of persons belonging to a certain national minority represented by the national council, and the other half of the rest of the funds (35%) is allocated to the total number of institutions in the field of culture, education, information and official use of languages and the scope of their activities. Such an allocation system actually means that 65% of the funds allocated to the national budget for each national council are obtained on the basis of criteria that are not related to the activities and number of institutions that the national minority has in the areas of culture, education, information and official use of languages and scripts. On the other hand, having in mind that, according to the Constitution, national councils are formed precisely for the purpose of exercising the right to self-government in these areas of social life, any exclusion of the criteria related to activities and the number of institutions in those areas would make no sense. The authorities of the Republic of Serbia point out that the above explained system of allocation of funds for financing the work of national councils cannot be interpreted in such a way that certain councils do not have access to public funds to the extent that they would allow them to establish their own institutions and receive supportive funds, since new minority institutions can just be established with funds that are 65% of the total amount provided to each national council in the state budget. The practice of applying the normative framework, which establishes the system of allocation of funds from the state budget, indicates that the national councils of numerically small minorities, including even those which do not exercise self-government in any of the constitutionally defined areas of social life, receive significant funds from the state budget.

The table below contains information on the allocation of funds for the work of national councils of national minorities from the budget of the Republic of Serbia during the reporting period.

National Councils	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016

National Council of the Albanian National Minority	16,600,502.00	13,233,963.00	13,233,963.00	12,491,000.00	13,152,600.00
National Council of the Ashkali National Minority	4,379,367.00	3,834,517.00	3,834,517.00	3,599,660.00	3,599,660.00
National Council of the Bosniak National Minority	22,107,860.00	24,851,206.00	24,851,206.00	26,256,638.00	26,564,392.00
National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority	7,880,533.00	8,512,506.00	8,512,506.00	7,761,553.00	7,715,875.00
National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority	5,798,751.00	6,014,169.00	6,014,169.00	6,972,774.00	7,011,328.00
National Council of the Vlach National Minority	7,486,041.00	7,749,279.00	7,749,279.00	7,378,940.00	7,545,497.00
National Council of the Greek National Minority	4,175,043.00	3,867,530.00	3,867,530.00	3,572,471.00	3,572,471.00
National Council of the Egyptian National Minority	3,594,820.00	3,851,029.00	3,851,029.00	3,699,266.00	3,683,326.00
Association of the Jewish Municipalities of Serbia	3,901,113.00	4,039,787.00	4,039,787.00	3,615,862.00	3,776,620.00
National Council of the Hungarian National Minority	57,908,690.00	61,384,884.00	61,384,884.00	61,422,735.00	60,822,882.00
National Council of the Macedonian National Minority	6,631,474.00	6,678,437.00	6,678,437.00	7,029,376.00	7,021,022.00
National Council of the German National Minority	3,927,640.00	4,430,358.00	4,430,358.00	4,092,021.00	4,090,989.00
National Council of the Roma National Minority	16,685,606.00	22,200,078.00	22,200,078.00	22,092,023.00	22,159,688.00
National Council of the Romanian National Minority	13,499,383.00	14,515,839.00	14,515,839.00	13,651,862.00	13,281,805.00
National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority	8,416,134.00	8,708,259.00	8,708,259.00	9,339,131.00	9,228,042.00

National Council of the Slovak National Minority	18,848,446.00	18,271,250.00	18,271,250.00	18,629,439.00	18,387,692.00
National Council of the Slovenian National Minority	4,851,671.00	4,836,680.00	4,836,680.00	3,942,456.00	4,081,792.00
National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority	4,763,209.00	5,014,076.00	5,014,076.00	4,626,892.00	4,617,148.00
National Council of the Croat National Minority	14,017,680.00	13,324,549.00	13,324,549.00	13,115,041.00	12,976,524.00
National Council of the Czech National Minority	4,526,037.00	4,681,604.00	4,681,604.00	4,039,750.00	4,039,538.00
National Council of the Montenegrin National Minority				7,671,110.00	7,671,109.00
Total	230,000,000.00	240,000,000.00	240,000,000.00	245,000,000.00	245,000,000.00

Provincial level

Resources for financing activities of national councils provided in the budget of the autonomous province are allocated to national councils with the headquarters in the territory of the autonomous province, provided that the number of persons belonging to a national minority that they represent on the territory of AP Vojvodina makes up more than half of the total number of persons belonging to that national minority in the Republic of Serbia or their number is more than 10,000. according to official data of the Republic Institute for Statistics. National councils with the headquarters in the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, but do not fulfill the stated conditions, have the right to receiving resources, in the amount of up to 1% of the defined budget resources.

The funds from the provincial budget are allocated for the regular and development activities of national councils.

Funds for the regular activities of national councils are distributed by allocating 30% of the total funds available in equal amounts to all national councils, while the rest of the funds are allocated in accordance with the following criteria: 30% of the balance of funds is allocated proportionally to the percentage representation of persons belonging to a national minority which is represented by the national council on the territory of AP Vojvodina, according to official data from the census, and 70% of the remainder of the funds is distributed in accordance with the criteria and number of allocated points which, on the basis of the available and submitted data, were assigned to national councils. The fields of culture, education, information and official use of languages and scripts are taken into account when allocating points. The above described system in fact, means that 60% of the funds allocated by the provincial budget for the regular activity of each national council are obtained on the basis of criteria that are not

related to the activities and number of institutions that the national minority has in the fields of culture, education, information and the official use of language and script.

Development funds are distributed in a way that 30% of the total available funds for development activities is distributed in equal parts to all national councils with the headquarters in the territory of the AP Vojvodina, while the remaining 70% is distributed in accordance with the following criteria: the number of persons belonging to a national minority represented by the national council on the territory of AP Vojvodina to the total number of persons belonging to national minorities, whose national councils have their headquarters in the territory of AP Vojvodina, according to official data from the census (70% of funds); number of institutions, foundations, companies and organizations based in the territory of the AP Vojvodina, founded or co-founded by a national council, institution, foundation, company and other organizations whose founding rights are partially or completely transferred to the national council, and whose activities are of particular importance for the promotion and development of the rights of national minorities in the field of culture, education, information and use of languages and scripts (30% of funds). The above explained system actually means that 79% of the funds allocated by the provincial budget for the development activity of each national council are obtained on the basis of criteria that are not related to the activities and number of institutions that a national minority has in the fields of culture, education, information and official use of languages and scripts. The practice of applying the normative framework that establishes the system of allocation of funds from the provincial budget indicates that the national councils of numerically small minorities, including even those which do not exercise self-government in any of the constitutionally defined areas of social life, receive significant funds from the provincial budget.

The table below contains data on the total allocation of funds for the work (regular and development activity) of national councils of national minorities from the budget of AP Vojvodina during the reporting period.

National Councils	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
National Council of the Ashkali National Minority	400,000.00	550,000.00	550,000.00	600,000.00	472,140.00
National Council of the Bunjevci National Minority	1,696,000.00	2,428,768.41	2,450,000.00	2,556,000.00	2,382,747.00
National Council of the Greek National Minority	400,000.00	550,000.00	550,000.00	600,000.00	472,140.00
National Council of the Egyptian National Minority	400,000.00	550,000.00	550,000.00	600,000.00	472,140.00
National Council of the Hungarian National Minority	16,504,000.00	23,790,962.13	23,852,000.00	25,644,000.00	23,677,146.00
National Council of the Macedonian National Minority	1,604,000.00	2,456,595.12	2,538,000.00	2,536,000.00	2,319,505.00
National Council of German National Minority	1,340,000.00	1,819,575.11	1,882,000.00	1,816,000.00	1,776,400.00
National Council of the Roma National Minority					3,722,116.00
National Council of the Romanian National Minority	4,216,000.00	4,870,323.66	4,784,000.00	4,840,000.00	4,860,078.00

National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority	2,504,000.00	3,236,113.95	3,190,000.00	3,204,000.00	3,130,465.00
National Council of the Slovak National Minority	5,172,000.00	6,636,922.45	6,528,000.00	6,816,000.00	6,663,356.00
National Council of the Ukrainian National Minority	1,400,000.00	1,954,287.24	1,954,000.00	1,944,000.00	1,789,304.00
National Council of the Croat National Minority	3,024,000.00	4,230,287.33	4,250,000.00	4,400,000.00	4,053,514.00
National Council of the Montenegrin National Minority				2,540,000.00	2,447,734.00
National Council of the Czech National Minority	1,340,000.00	1,926,164.59	1,922,000.00	1,904,000.00	1,761,215.00
Total	40,000,000.00	55,000,000.00	55,000,000.00	60,000,000.00	60,000,000.00

Bearing in mind everything that has been mentioned, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia firmly hold the view that there are no justified reasons for the initiative contained in this recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

90. It reiterates its call on the authorities to take the necessary steps to bring the State Fund for National Minorities into operation and ensure that both its composition and functioning adequately involve national minorities. It again recommends that existing funds for the preservation, promotion and development of minorities' cultures be made accessible also to relevant actors other than the councils of national minorities, in particular NGOs and associations of national minorities.

Budget Fund for National Minorities

In accordance with the normative framework presented in section 3.3. of the Third report, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government has prepared a bylaw regulating the allocation of resources from the Budget Fund for National Minorities. The Decree on the allocation of resources from the Budget Fund for National Minorities⁹³ was adopted on March 3, 2016. The Regulation stipulates that the Budget Fund may also be financed from donations. Resources for the Budget Fund for National Minorities were provided in the amount of 1,800,000.00 dinars. Resources from the Fund are awarded by a public call for tenders for programmes and projects in the field of culture, education, information and official use of languages and scripts of national minorities.

At the session of the Council for National Minorities, held on May 23, 2017, with the participation of representatives of national councils, the Programme Proposal for allocation of resources from the Budget Fund for National Minorities was adopted unanimously, which provides that information in the languages of national minorities shall be a priority area in which programmes and projects are financed from the Budget Fund for National Minorities in 2017.

⁹³"Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/2016

Resources from the budget fund for national minorities, in accordance with the Decree, were awarded through a public call for tenders announced by the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government. The right to participate in the competition was enjoyed by institutions, associations, foundations, companies and other organizations whose founders were national councils of national minorities and civil society organizations registered in the appropriate register, whose objectives under the statutory provisions are achieved in the field of protection and promotion of rights and positions of persons belonging to national minorities, who have their headquarters in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, as well as endowments, foundations and conferences of universities or academies of professional career studies.

At the same time, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia draw the attention of the Advisory Committee that in 2017, in line with the Budget Law of the Republic of Serbia for the year 2018⁹⁴ for the Budget Fund for National Minorities resources in the total amount of 21,800,000.00 dinars were allocated, which is twelve times more than the amount so far. By undertaking the described measures, the conditions for making the Budget Fund for National Minorities capable have been fulfilled.

Detailed information on the results of the Call for Proposals for allocating the resources from the Budget Fund for National Minorities will be included in the next report.

Legal basis for the allocation of resources for the preservation, promotion and development of national minorities' cultures

In addition to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and a set of regulations pertaining to national minorities, the Law on Culture⁹⁵ provides legal bases for creating conditions for the preservation and development of the culture of national minorities. The law states that the general interest in the field of culture is to discover, create, study, preserve and represent the Serbian culture and culture of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, as well as to encourage the cultural and artistic creation of socially sensitive groups. The above position clearly shows that the culture of national minorities is viewed equally with the culture of the Serbian people and that they are part of the cultural space of Serbia.

In accordance with the Law, calls for tenders for financing/co-financing projects in culture are announced annually, and a special part is a call for tenders for cultural activities of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia. Distinguished experts in culture and persons belonging to national minorities are nominated members of independent and professional competition committees that decide on the selection of projects. The competitive procedure, as a preliminary procedure, involves obtaining the opinion of national councils of national minorities on applications, and this opinion falls within the corpus of criteria for the selection of projects whose implementation will be supported.

⁹⁴"Official Gazette of RS", no. 113/17

⁹⁵"Official Gazette of RS", no. 72/2009, 13/2016 and 30/2016 - amended

In 2016, the Decree on criteria, values and method of selection of culture projects was adopted that was financed and co-financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, i.e. local self-government units⁹⁶, which established uniform criteria for distribution of resources from all public sources. This document regulates closer values, criteria and method of selection of projects in culture.

The Law on Establishing the Competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina⁹⁷ prescribes that AP Vojvodina through its bodies determines the interest of citizens in the territory of AP Vojvodina in the field of culture and provides funds for its serving, and it is specially stated that the needs and interest in the field of culture of national minorities are also determined and funds for their satisfaction provided. The Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina⁹⁸ has determined that AP Vojvodina is responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring the implementation of cultural policy in the territory of AP Vojvodina.

Financial support from the budget of the Republic of Serbia

Budget funds allocated for co-financing the project of national minorities in the period 2012-2016 are stated in the table below.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
8,000,000.00	8,200,000.00	13,035,000.00	15,090,000.00	12,450,00.00

Support was given to the projects contributing to the empowerment of the capacities of entities in culture (improvement and modernisation of work, contribution to professionalization of minority culture, cooperation with expert institutions and individuals, encouragement of professional and scientific research in culture), which ensure the access to cultural contents (intended for a wide circle of beneficiaries, not only for members of national minorities or only for members of the majority population, e.g. translation of the publications, creation of subtitles for films, dubbing of theatre plays), and projects of cooperation, networking, co-production, visits in the country and in the region (countries of origin) – professional creation as recognisable both for the minority and for majority population, and a possibility for cooperation and presentation of the cultural scene of Serbia.

Data on the allocation of funds in the period 2012-2016 are given in the table below. Authorities of the Republic of Serbia draw attention of the Advisory Committee that those are the funds are allocated to civil society organisations based on the public call, therefore not the funds from the budget allocated to national councils for performing their activities in the field of culture.

National	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
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⁹⁶Official Gazette of RS", no. 105/2016 and 112/2017

⁹⁷Official Gazette of RS", no. 99/2009 and 67/2012 - CC

⁹⁸Official Gazette of AP Vojvodina", no. 20/2014

minority						
Albanian	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	400,000.00	400,000.00	2,300,000.00
Bosniac	1,800,000.00	1,550,000.00	1,340,000.00	2,100,000.00	1,750,000.00	8,540,000.00
Bulgarian	550,000.00	700,000.00	540,000.00	700,000.00	600,000.00	3,090,000.00
Bunjevci	200,000.00	200,000.00	500,000.00	550,000.00	600,000.00	2,050,000.00
Vlach	250,000.00	250,000.00	400,000.00	400,000.00	400,000.00	1,700,000.00
Greek	50,000	50,000	100,000.00	100,000.00	200,000.00	500,000.00
Jewish	100,000.00	175,000.00	250,000.00	600,000.00	200,000.00	1,325,000.00
Hungarian	1,050,000.00	1,200,000.00	2,040,000.00	1,600,000.00	1,800,000.00	7,690,000.00
Macedonian	250,000.00	300,000.00	550,000.00	650,000.00	600,000.00	2,350,000.00
German	-	-	-	200,000.00	200,000.00	400,000.00
Roma	1,250,000.00	1,050,000.00	2,255,000.00	2,650,000.00	1,200,000.00	8,405,000.00
Romanian	250,000.00	260,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	600,000.00	2,110,000.00
Ruthenian	200,000.00	300,000.00	450,000.00	530,000.00	500,000.00	1,980,000.00
Slovak	550,000.00	500,000.00	1,080,000.00	880,000.00	800,000.00	3,810,000.00
Slovenian				380,000.00	400,000.00	780,000.00
Ukrainian	100,000.00	100,000.00	150,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00	750,000.00
Croatian	500,000.00	600,000.00	1,130,000.00	1,050,000.00	1,000,000.00	4,280,000.00
Tzintzar	-	-	-	100,000.00	-	100,000.00
Montenegrin	-	-	-	150,000.00	200,000.00	350,000.00
Czech	-	125,000.00	100,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00	625,000.00
Multicultural projects	350,000.00	340,000.00	1,150,000.00	1,150,000.00	600,000.00	3,590,000.00

Financial support from the budget of the AP Vojvodina

Support to the preservation of cultural identity and creativity of the members of national minorities, as well as the realisation of the projects and programmes promoting culture and heritage of national minorities is also achieved through the support to the institutions and organisations founded by the members of the national minorities, and through the support to the public institutions founded by AP Vojvodina in the field of culture, which have programme contents contributing to the research, preservation, and presentation of culture and cultural heritage of national minorities. As already stated, the support to projects in the field of culture is realised only through public calls.

The table below contains an overview of the earmarked funds for *cultural and artistic creativity* of national minorities in the AP Vojvodina for individual national minorities in the period 2012-2016. Those are funds primarily allocated to organisations founded by the members of the national minorities.

National minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ashkali	30,000.00	50,000.00	-	60,000.00	15,000.00
Bulgarians	50,000.00	50,000.00	70,000.00	70,000.00	15,000.00
Bunjevci	400,000.00	600,000.00	750,000.00	725,000.00	190,000.00
Greeks	30,000.00	50,000.00		45,000.00	15,000.00
Egyptians		50,000.00			
Jews	150,000.00	150,000.00	180,000.00	52,500.00	

Hungarians	3,150,000.00	7,200,000.00	9,915,000.00	8,657,000.00	2,480,000.00
Macedonians	160,000.00	200,000.00	300,000.00	336,500.00	90,000.00
Germans	60,000.00	150,000.00	180,000.00	189,000.00	
Roma	120,000.00	300,000.00	400,000.00	500,000.00	100,000.00
Romanians	860,000.00	1,200,000.00	1,500,000.00	1,364,000.00	380,000.00
Ruthenians	550,000.00	1,050,000.00	1,500,000.00	1,399,500.00	360,000.00
Russians	30,000.00	50,000.00			
Slovaks	1,250,000.00	1,900,000.00	2,300,000.00	1,978,000.00	700,000.00
Slovenians		50,000.00	80,000.00	64,500.00	15,000.00
Ukrainians	220,000.00	250,000.00	300,000.00	278,000.00	70,000.00
Croats	1,100,000.00	1,220,000.00	1,850,000.00	1,730,500.00	480,000.00
Montenegrins	40,000.00	50,000.00	130,000.00	369,000.00	75,000.00
Czechs	120,000.00	150,000.00	100,000.00	70,000.00	15,000.00
Shokci	30,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00		
Multi-ethnic			715,000.00	562,500.00	
Total:	8,350,000.00	14,820,000.00	20,320,000.00	18,451,000.00	5,000,000.00

The funds from the provincial budget are also used for financing the activities of provincial cultural institutions including two institutions performing the activities in Hungarian: National Theatre – Nepszinhaz, Subotica and Publishing House “Forum” Novi Sad. These institutions perform the activities in the field of culture in line with the activity for which they were founded.

Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities also co-finances the activities of five institutes for culture: Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Hungarians, Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Slovaks, Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Romanians, Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Ruthenians, and Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Croats. The institutes were founded by the Assembly of the AP Vojvodina and national councils of national minorities in early 2008. Some institutes, such as the case with the Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Ruthenians, realise a successful cooperation with associations. Society for Ruthenian Language, Literature and Culture, in cooperation with the Institute has published the two-volume Dictionary of Ruthenian National Language.⁹⁹

The table below gives an overview of received funds allocated for the institutes:

Institutes	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Hungarians	13,800,000.00	15,000,000.00	15,000,000.00	14,700,000.00	15,000,000.00
Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Romanians	8,700,000.00	9,400,000.00	9,400,000.00	9,212,000.00	9,400,000.00

⁹⁹According to the data contained in the supplement of the Society for Ruthenian Language, Literature and Culture from Novi Sad.

Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Ruthenians	6,100,000.00	6,600,000.00	6,600,000.00	6,468,000.00	6,600,000.00
Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Slovaks	9,200,000.00	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	9,800,000.00	10,000,000.00
Institute for Culture of Vojvodina Croats	9,200,000.00	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	9,800,000.00	10,000,000.00
Total:	47,000,000.00	51,000,000.00	51,000,000.00	49,980,000.00	51,000,000.00

Apart from co-financing the projects in all the fields of cultural-artistic expression of members of national minorities affirming and presenting the creativity made in minority languages and financing of the institute, co-financing is also ensured for *programmes of protection of cultural heritage*. Based on an annual public call for the field of protection of cultural heritage, the Provincial Secretariat for Culture co-finances the research, protection, restoration, conservation, valorisation and presentation of numerous immovable cultural goods – religious and other sacral facilities in Vojvodina and multi-ethnic cultural monuments covering the cultural heritage of national minorities in Vojvodina, as well as the protection of cultural monuments significant for the history and culture of national minorities. The funds for that purpose were allocated through the public call both to the institutions founded by the AP Vojvodina and to institutions and organisations of national minorities dealing with protection of cultural heritage.

Overview of earmarked funds for the protection of cultural heritage of national minorities in the period 2012-2016 through the institutions of protection of cultural heritage founded by the AP Vojvodina

National minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Hungarian	130,000.00	35,371.00	213,400.00	270,000.00	174,000.00	822,771.00
German		601,901.00	97,000.00	120,293.00		825,194.00
Romanian	197,000.00					197,000.00
Ruthenian	25,000.00	21,000.00	30,000.00	230,000.00	142,000.00	448,000.00
Slovak		20,400.00	315,000.00	154,000.00	1,420,000.00	1,909,400.00
Total:	352,000.00	678,672.00	655,400.00	774,293.00	1,736,000.00	4,202,365.00

Provincial secretariat responsible for the field of culture has continuously supported the work and programmes of cultural institutions and organisations of minority communities, not founded by the AP Vojvodina, and which work and programmes have a wider significance and permanently satisfy the interests and cultural needs of the citizens of Vojvodina, as follows: Naïve Art Gallery in Kovačica (nourishing naïve art of Vojvodina Slovaks), Museum of

Vojvodina Slovaks in Bački Petrovac, Naïve Art Gallery of Romanians “Doina” in Uzdin (nourishing naïve art of Romanians) and Cultural Centre of Bunjevci in Subotica.

Overview of earmarked funds for the support to work of institutions and organisations of national minorities in the field of protection of cultural heritage in the period 2012-2016

Institutions	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Naïve Art Gallery, Kovačica	160,000.00	160,000.00	160,000.00	200,000.00	100,000.00
Museum of Vojvodina Slovaks, Bački Petrovac	3,000,000.00	2,900,000.00	1,800,000.00	443,000.00	150,000.00
Naïve Art Gallery of Romanians “Doina”, Uzdin	160,000.00	160,000.00	160,000.00	200,000.00	100,000.00
Cultural Centre of Bunjevci, Subotica					443,000.00
Total	3,320,000.00	3,220,000.00	2,120,000.00	843,000.00	793,000.00

Authorities of the Republic of Serbia underline that the funds from the budget of the AP Vojvodina are also used for financing the publishing activity in national minority languages in the field of culture and art which, among other things, covers the first editions of the books in the languages of the national minorities and the activity of publishing houses. The table below gives the information about the funds allocated for that purpose from the budget of the AP Vojvodina.

National minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ashkali	35,000.00	-	-	-	-
Bunjevci	35,000.00	85,000.00	610,000.00	1,871,250.00	390,000.00
Jews	200,000.00	-	-	-	-
Hungarians	19,020,990.36	18,069,609.00	18,957,082.00	17,243,918.71	15,917,461.00
Macedonians	85,000.00	100,000.00	-	187,500.00	-
Germans	35,000.00	-	55,000.00	-	-
Roma	45,000.00	-	-	581,250.00	-
Romanians	1,000,000.00	3,240,000.00	3,360,000.00	2,285,375.00	480,000.00
Rithenians	1,335,000.00	3,399,000.00	3,250,000.00	2,602,500.00	300,000.00
Slovaks	1,553,000.00	3,315,000.00	3,290,000.00	731,250.00	500,000.00
Slovenians	-	-	-	-	-
Ukrainians	75,000.00	-	-	187,500.00	-
Croats	860,000.00	1,376,000.00	2,055,000.00	2,652,500.00	270,000.00
Tzintzar	-	-	-	250,000.00	-
Czechs	30,000.00	55,000.00	-	-	-
Total:	24,308,990.36	29,639,609.00	31,732,082.00	28,343,043.71	17,916,029.00

Provincial secretariat responsible for the field of culture makes public calls for co-financing of production of films, events, festivals and other projects in the field of film production and other audio-visual works, in which equal right to participate have members of

national minorities in the AP Vojvodina. The table below contains an overview of earmarked funds for film production and other audio-visual production of members of national minorities in the reporting period.

National minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bunjevci	-	510,000.00	-	-	-
Jews	-	-	140,000.00	-	-
Hungarians	2,300,000.00	910,000.00	2,200,000.00	300,000.00	1,000,000.00
Roma	150,000.00	-	160,000.00	-	-
Croats	-	400,000.00	-	-	-
Total	2,450,000.00	1,820,000.00	2,500,000.00	300,000.00	1,000,000.00

In the reporting period the competent provincial secretariat also financed projects *in the field of scene production*. Through the public calls for financing and co-financing of production and interpretation of theatre, opera, ballet, plays and other scene production as artistic dances and musicals, awarding prestigious rewards for achievement in this field, festivals and events of inter-regional, regional, national and provincial significance which are held in the territory of the AP Vojvodina and in which the right to participate had members of national minorities in the AP Vojvodina. Also, based on the request for financing outside the competition deadline for projects which could not have been planned, it financed important projects in the field of scene production in the languages of national minorities in the AP Vojvodina. With the aim to develop the scene production in the languages of national minorities in the AP Vojvodina, in the period 2012-2014, the Secretariat financed the production of two theatre plays for each national minority. Due to inability to realise two plays in some theatres in the period 2014-2016, one play was financed for each of them.

The table below contains an overview of earmarked funds for scene production in the languages of national minorities in the period 2012-2016.

National minority	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hungarian	1,900,000.00	2,900,000.00	1,700,000.00	1,850,000.00	550,000.00
Roma	1,210,000.00	3,400,000.00	-	-	-
Romanian	2,000,000.00	3,400,000.00	1,700,000.00	1,700,000.00	550,000.00
Ruthenian	2,000,000.00	3,400,000.00	1,700,000.00	1,700,000.00	550,000.00
Slovak	2,000,000.00	3,400,000.00	1,700,000.00	1,700,000.00	550,000.00
Total	9,110,000.00	16,500,000.00	6,800,000.00	6,950,000.00	2,200,000.00

4. Article 6

Inter-ethnic relations

97. *The Advisory Committee recommends that the Serbian authorities intensify their efforts to develop and implement measures aimed at increasing and strengthening contacts and interactions between the various communities living in Serbia. Specific efforts in this regard should be made with respect to the Sandžak and South Serbian regions. Measures to enhance mutual interest in and respect and understanding for each other's culture amongst young people are of particular importance. Better use could also be made of councils for inter-ethnic relations in this context.*

Planning and implementing the measures to increase and strengthen the contact and interaction among different communities living in the Republic of Serbia is a constitutional obligation of the government arising from the provision of Article 81 of the Constitution according to which in the field of education, culture and information the Republic of Serbia shall give impetus to the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and undertake efficient measures for enhancement of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation among all people living on its territory, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity. Such measures are of systemic and project character and are undertaken both by government, and provincial and local authorities, depending on the competences of various level of organisation of public government.

Planned systemic measures

The most significant systemic measures for enhancing and strengthening the contact and interaction among different communities living in the Republic of Serbia in the field of education stipulated by the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System are consisted of the definition that the objectives of education in the Republic of Serbia, *inter alia*, contain development of personal and national identity, development of the sense and feeling of belonging to the Republic of Serbia, respect and nourishment of Serbian language and mother tongue, tradition and culture of Serbian people and national minorities, development of multiculturalism, respect and preservation of national and world cultural heritage. Pursuant to the same Law, the outcomes of education also include the ability of pupils to respect human rights and freedoms, communicate in an assertive and non-violent manner especially in the growing diversity of the society and conflict solving, and to have the awareness of own culture and variety of cultures. In the Republic of Serbia the mentioned request is fulfilled with the curricula of relevant subjects taught in primary and secondary education, such are the subjects, World around us, Nature and Society, and Civic Education.

Law on Culture defines that the government shall take care of the realisation of the general interest in culture and on implementation of the cultural policy as a set of objectives and measures encouraging cultural development which is, *inter alia*, based on the principle of respect

of cultural and democratic values of the local, regional, national, European, and world tradition and cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Financing or co-financing of cultural programmes and projects, as well as artistic i.e. professional and scientific research in culture, is performed based on a public call. Institutions founded by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, or local self-government unit, are financed or co-financed from the budget of the founder and other sources defined by the law with the funds which amount is defined by the founder, based on the strategic plan and proposed annual work programme of the institution. Law on Culture defines the obligation of the cultural institutions founded by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, or local self-government unit, to contribute with its work to the preservation, study, presentation, collection, and encouragement of domestic cultural and artistic heritage, as well as domestic cultural and artistic contemporary creation, i.e. cultural production of all national and ethnic communities living in the Republic of Serbia.

Pursuant to the Law on Public Information and Media, a public interest in the field of public information, *inter alia*, covers a truthful, impartial, timely and full information in the mother tongue of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia who are members of national minorities, preservation of the cultural identity of Serbian people and the support to the production of media contents with the aim of protecting and developing human rights and democracy.

Planning and developing the systemic measures for increasing and strengthening the contacts and interaction of different communities living in Serbia is particularly emphasized in relation to the position of the youth in the Republic of Serbia. Law on Youth¹⁰⁰ defines that the National Youth Strategy, *inter alia*, regulates the encouragement and value of tolerance and democracy. The National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025¹⁰¹ defines a special objective for improvement of the programme of respect of human and minority rights, gender equality, acceptance of difference, tolerance and nourishing non-violent ways of communication within which, *inter alia*, the following activities are planned: support to research, activities and programmes covering the most frequent stereotypes and prejudice in the society and find the manners to make the young people overcome/suppress them; develop programmes of communication and cooperation among different social groups to which young people belong; support to programmes of peer education and intercultural learning, promoting tolerance, understanding and anti-discrimination; develop integrative models of information which present minorities as part of a wider social group, and not isolated groups.

Apart from the government level, planning and development of systemic measures for increasing and strengthening the contacts and interaction of different communities living in Serbia is performed also at lower levels of organisation of public power in line with the scope of their competences. So the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina in 2015 adopted the Provincial Assembly Decision on allocation of budget funds to organisations of national minorities – national communities¹⁰² which defines that the organisation of national minorities are granted

¹⁰⁰ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 50/2011

¹⁰¹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/2015

¹⁰² "Official Journal of APV", no. 14/2015

funds for regular activity, procurement of equipment, programmes and projects and in particular for programmes and projects of multicultural character with the aim to develop the spirit of tolerance.

Implementation of measures

According to the data of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, for the support to the programmes and projects of associations and other civil society organisations in 2012, 8.63 billion dinars were paid at all government levels in the Republic of Serbia, and in 2013, 14.38 billion dinars were paid, while in 2014 12,081,050,814.00 dinars, in 2015 15,299,432,004.00 dinars, while in 2016, 16,882,291,342.00 dinars were paid.

The overview of the fields in which programmes/projects were supported, and which may be of importance for the increase and empowerment of contacts and interaction among different communities living in Serbia, can be seen in the table below.

Field	2012	2013 ¹⁰³	2014	2015	2016 ¹⁰⁴
Support to children and youth	704 programmes/projects or 9.39%	215,394,674 dinars or 3.84%	115,430,597 dinars or 2.25%	1,124,954,006 dinars or 5.05%	766,941,141 dinars or 7.94%
Social inclusion	439 programmes/projects or 5.85%		85,847,691 dinars or 1.23%	1,282,531,337 dinars or 5.75%	411,651,881 dinars or 4.26%
Human and minority rights	215 programmes/projects or 2.87%	43,184,709 dinars or 0.77%	60,352,076 dinars or 2.25%	933,476,847 dinars or 4.19%	249,057,323 dinars or 2.58%
Spread the culture of peace and non-violence, strengthen the rule of law, development of democracy	153 programmes/projects 2.04%		1,362,500 dinars or 0.03%	624,526,753 dinars or 2.80%	430,017,775 dinars or 4.46%
Process of integration and reintegration, improvement of information and preservation of cultural identity (of returnees)		7,668,000 dinars or 0.14%			
Encouragement of youth activism and multi-ethnic projects		698,500.00 dinars or 0.01%			
Projects for			167,635,178		

¹⁰³ Only government level.

¹⁰⁴ Only local level.

various fields focused, <i>inter alia</i> , on affirmation of human and minority rights, social inclusion, programmes for children and youth, development of civic society, etc.			dinars or 3.4%		
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At relevant places in the Report there are data about the amount certain state bodies and bodies of the AP Vojvodina allocated and distributed for multicultural projects in the reporting period in different spheres of social life.

Apart from that, a special emphasis should be placed on the fact that the project of the Provincial government of the AP Vojvodina *Affirmation of multiculturalism and tolerance in Vojvodina*, with the objective to nourish cultural diversity and development of the spirit of multi-ethnic tolerance among the citizens of Vojvodina, has been successfully realised since 2005. Project leader is the Provincial secretariat for education, regulations, administration and national minorities – national communities, and it has been realised in cooperation with numerous organisations and institutions from Vojvodina. The project is designed as a complex multi-topical and multicultural programme, directed towards the idea of strengthening of the international trust among the youth in Vojvodina. It covers several sub-projects and activities realised on the territory of entire Vojvodina and includes several thousands of young people, pupils of primary and secondary schools in Vojvodina. The project has been realised in cooperation with other line provincial authorities, international organisations, state administrative authorities, local self-government authorities, and non-government organisations, educational and cultural institutions, depending on specific sub-projects. The table below contains the data on the amount of the funds allocated within that project in the reporting period.

Co-financing of projects for preservation and nurture of international tolerance in Vojvodina in 2016				
Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016
9,670,000.00	13,435,000.00	13,500,000.00	9,296,000.00	13,300,000.00

Councils for Inter-ethnic Relations

Information of encouraging the establishment and efficient functioning of the council for international relations at the local level in all municipalities with ethnically mixed population are contained in the section III. 16. Special information on functioning of these councils in the area of South and South-West Serbia are contained in the following section.

Measures to increase and strengthen the contact and interaction among different communities in the area of South and South-West Serbia

Measures to increase and strengthen the contact and interaction among different communities in the area of South and South-West Serbia get a significant importance in the Republic of Serbia. Those measures are realised both state authorities and authorities of local self-governments.

Republic of Serbia participated in the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe *Promotion of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities in South-East Europe*. To participate in the project in the Republic of Serbia, six local self-government units were selected, including Bujanovac, and Novi Pazar. They realised projects which objective was the promotion of differences and peaceful cohabitation with the local population.

Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development supported a number of projects and programmes of extracurricular activities, encouraging tolerance and multiculturalism, and which, *inter alia*, are conducted also in the area of South and South-West Serbia. We single out the following projects: *Youth in Multicultural Community*, realised in six local self-government units in the South-West Serbia: Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Prijepolje, Priboj and Nova Varoš, and *Promotion of Intercultural Practice in Culturally Diverse Schools* realised in five schools having a high percentage of pupils who are members of national minorities.

The Service of the Coordination Body of the Serbian Government for municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, with the support of Pestaloci Foundation from Switzerland and the Fondation for open society, is implementing the following projects: *Our City, Our Schools* realised in all schools on the territory of the municipality of Bujanovac, with the objective to create opportunities for interaction and cooperation of pupils and teachers, and project *Our Story* realised in two primary schools from Preševo, with the objective to create mutual trust and respect among the pupils who are members of different national groups.

Measures to increase and strengthen the contact and interaction among different communities in the area of South and South-West Serbia also include the activities of the councils for international relations established in local self-government units in those areas.

Council for international relations in Bujanovac was established during the reporting period (2015). The council held several sessions and discussed issues of importance for international relations, among which the initiative for changing the names of streets in the municipality of Bujanovac stands out.

Council for international relations in the municipality of Priboj has discussed and given positive opinion for the decision on the Municipality Day, symbols and installation of the Memorial Monument in Sjeverin.

Council for international relations in the city of Novi Pazar has started to work and adopted the Rulebook stating that its work will be based on the establishment of good relations,

cooperation, understanding and creation of trust and it has mostly works on the issues regarding the decision on changing the names of streets.

98. The Advisory Committee also recommends that the authorities strengthen their efforts to combat prejudice against the Roma in all fields of daily life. It reiterates its call on the authorities to pay particular attention to ensuring that where Roma living in informal settlements are relocated to other areas, this is done in a transparent manner and in consultation with both the Roma population to be resettled and the inhabitants of the areas concerned by the relocation, using mediation wherever necessary.

Information on resettling of Roma from informal settlements is contained in section IV. 2. with regard to the recommendation 82 of the Advisory Committee.

Fight against prejudice

In a wider sense, all measures and activities conducted with the aim to implement political-strategic documents and improve the position of the Roma are focused, *inter alia*, on the fight against prejudice about the Roma population. In addition to that, through the competition-based financing and co-financing of projects supported by state authorities, assistance is given to the realisation of projects which are exclusively focused on curbing the prejudice about the Roma. In addition to other state authorities, the Office for Human and Minority Rights allocates annual funds for competitions of associations with the aim to promote the position and status of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia. The activities are mostly focused on encouraging positive actions of a wider social community towards the Roma in order to reduce discrimination and break the prejudice with regard to this vulnerable social group.

Reduction of prejudice is significantly contributed also by the media campaigns raising the awareness of the public about the national differences and ban of discrimination in the Republic of Serbia. In the reporting period in 2014 the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Commissioner for Equality Protection launched a national campaign on promoting the equality and tolerance and fight against discrimination under the slogan *Discrimination is not a joke – let's talk about equality* and *The same, different, equal*. The objective of the campaign was to raise the visibility of the problem of discrimination in the general population and promotion of the existing mechanisms to raise equality and curb discrimination. The central part of the campaign took the media campaign within which TV videos were aired pointing out discrimination of the Roma national minority.

Within the IPA Twinning Project *Support to Improvement of Human Rights and Zero Tolerance to Discrimination*, the Office for Human and Minority Rights prepared in the reporting period a national media campaign named *Together, we are Serbia*. The objective of the campaign was also to promote the respect of the right to be different and to raise the awareness

of the general population about the existence of national minorities. The campaign consisted of the video and billboards installed in many cities in Serbia.

Hate crimes and the role of law-enforcement bodies

105. The Advisory Committee strongly urges the Serbian authorities to ensure that the criminal justice system adequately addresses hate crimes, by preventing, thoroughly investigating and prosecuting acts of violence targeting persons belonging to national minorities. It recommends that the Serbian authorities intensify their efforts to raise the awareness of the police, prosecutors and the judiciary as to the importance of prosecuting hate-motivated offences as such and that they strengthen the measures in place to train all relevant actors of the criminal justice system so as to ensure that this is done in practice.

Adequately addressing hate crimes

The situation of international relations in the Republic of Serbia has been constantly characterised by a reduction of international incidents. In the period 2012-2016, compared to the period 2007-2011, the number of incidents was reduced by 54.1%, i.e. 633 incidents were registered in total (in 2012 - 158, in 2013 - 157, in 2014 - 108, in 2015 - 121 and in 2016 - 89) which in the widest possible sense can be classified as international, i.e. which are assumed to be motivated by national, race or religious intolerance.

By their structure, the incidents are: physical assaults - 77¹⁰⁵; brawls between persons belonging to different nationalities - 8; anonymous threats - 16; verbal conflict - 153; damaging religious facilities - 69; defilement and desecration of cemeteries and memorials - 4; damaging facilities belonging to Albanian, Turkish and Gorani national minority - 80; damaging facilities belonging to Roma - 7; writing slogans, drawing graffiti and other symbols - 202 and other cases - 17.

Out of the total number of incidents, criminal charges were submitted for 240 offenses, as well as 71 requests for the initiation of criminal proceedings. In the auxiliary register criminal charges were registered for 34 offenses of destruction and damaging other person's property which are initiated as private lawsuits, while in other cases reports were submitted to the competent prosecutor's office. Out of the total number of criminal offense for which criminal charges were submitted, 148 or 61.6% were cleared up, where criminal charges were submitted against 258 persons of different nationalities. The structure of criminal offenses is as follows:

- criminal offense of attempted aggravated murder (to the detriment of Gorani, cleared up);
- 139 criminal offenses of inciting national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance (92 cleared up);
- three criminal offenses of inflicting serious bodily (cleared up);

¹⁰⁵Out of total 77 physical assaults, almost 60% were committed against the Roma.

- a criminal offense of inflicting light bodily injury (cleared up);
- a criminal offense of brawling (cleared up);
- two criminal offenses of endangering others by reaching for a dangerous too in brawl or quarrel (cleared up);
- 15 criminal offenses of violent behaviour (14 cleared up);
- two criminal offenses of violent behaviour at sport event or in a public gathering (one cleared up);
- three criminal offenses of causing general danger;
- a criminal offense of racial and other discrimination(cleared up);
- 16 criminal offenses of endangering the safety (11 cleared up);
- three criminal offenses of injuring the reputation due to racial, religious ethnic or other affiliation (two cleared up);
- two criminal offenses of injuring the reputation of a foreign country or international organisation (one cleared up);
- a criminal offense of ruining the reputation of Serbia (cleared up);
- a criminal offense of abuse and torture (cleared up);
- a criminal offense of causing panic and disorder;
- two criminal offenses of illegal manufacturing, holding, carrying and selling firearms and explosives (cleared up);
- five criminal offenses of preventing an official while performing duties of maintaining public order and peace (cleared up);
- 41 criminal offenses of destruction and damage of other person's property (nine cleared up).

Efforts have been made to raise the awareness about the importance of prosecution of the perpetrators of hate crimes

Directorate for Professional Development and Training in the Ministry of Interior continuously realises trainings of police employees on human rights, prevention of discrimination and torture, which are primarily focused on the sensitisation of the police employees working in multi-ethnic communities, through the basic police training, which has been realised since 2007 in line with a new curriculum, in the Basic Police Training Centre in Sremska Kamenica, and through annual trainings which are an integral part of the Programme of vocational training of police officers for the current years, and which are realised in all organisational units of the Ministry of Interior.

The basic police training has the aim to train the police offices to legally and efficiently perform their activities and duties of uniformed police employees, for the job of a police employee, and it is obligatory for all future police employees, and is organised before entering the service, i.e. before entering the employment relations in the police. The field of human rights in the basic police training is represented in several subjects, professional modules and teaching

units, among which a special emphasis must be placed on the module “Police Work in the Community” and teaching and modular units “Criminal Offenses against Rights and Freedoms of a Man and Citizen” (Violation of Equality, Violation of the right to use of language and script, etc.) and “Police work with minority and socially vulnerable groups”.

Vocational training of employees in the Ministry of Interior is a continuous enhancement and development of acquired knowledge, skills and behaviour, and acquiring new one arising from practice, scientific research or new legal regulations, with the aim to ensure a legal, efficient and safe performance of work, and duties for all employees in the Ministry.

With the programme of vocational training of police employees of the Ministry of Interior for the period 2012-2016 a special review and accent are placed on the topic of recognising and reacting to discrimination and human rights. The mentioned programme provides all the police employees of the Ministry of Interior, *inter alia*, with the mandatory theory classes:

1. *Police work with marginalised, minority and socially vulnerable groups*, realised for: in 2012 - 149 trainees, in 2013 - 123 trainees, in 2014 - 124 trainees, in 2015 – no trainings were realised, in 2016 – 5,841 trainees.
2. *Constitutional protection of human and minority rights*, realised in 2012 for 155 trainees.
3. *Implementation of anti-discriminatory policies*, realised for: in 2014 - 91 trainees, in 2015 – not realised, in 2016 - 23 trainees.
4. In 2016, the seminar on the topic “Hate Crime” was realised and 10 police employees attended it.

With the aim to have a standardisation and a uniform realisation of these thematic fields, the Department of Professional Education and Training – Section for Training Realisation has created a manual and presentations.

Based on the approval by the Minister of Interior from 12 April 2016, at the proposal of the Commissioner for Equality Protection, Department of Professional Education and Training, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, realised the training of police employees on recognising and fight against discrimination.

The training realised in the period from 19 April until 23 June 2016, in the form on one-day seminar, in seven cities (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar, Subotica and Vršac) was attended by 140 police employees. In the period 5-6 December 2016, a seminar was realised on the topic *Recognise and react to discrimination*. The seminar was organised for the crime investigations police and traffic police. The seminar was attended by 39 police employees of police administrations in Valjevo, Zrenjanin, Jagodina, Kikinda, Požarevac, Smederevo, Sremska Mitrovica, Čačak, Užice and Šabac.

In 2016, a manual was created named *Manual for training police employees on the term, recognising and reacting to discrimination* as a basic literature for teaching this field which, according to the Vocational Training Programme since 2017 has been an obligatory part of education for all police employees.

Other information about the enhancement of efforts to raise the awareness of all relevant subjects of the criminal justice system about the importance of criminal prosecution for the offenses committed because of hatred is contained in section III.9.

106. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to pursue and expand their efforts aimed at ensuring that police forces adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of the population in the region where they operate.

With the aim to expand the efforts and make the police forces reflect the ethnic diversity of the population, Ministry of Interior continuously works on the education of employees and future members of the Ministry, paying a special attention, *inter alia*, to the integration of national minorities in the police service. In that respect, it should be particularly underlined that the candidates for the enrolment into the Basic Police Training Centre, before the entrance, may take psychological tests in their mother tongue. The tests, apart from Serbian, can be taken also in Hungarian, Albanian, Roma, Slovak, Ruthenian, Romanian and Ukrainian.

Information about the number of trainees in the basic police training who are members of national minorities, regarding the period 2011-2016, is given in the table below.

Class	Number of admitted	Number of trainees	Completed	Muslims	Slovaks	Bunjevci	Hungarians	Bosniacs	Albanians	Roma	Croats	Romanians	Bulgarians	Macedonians	Ruthenians	Montenegrins	Ukrainians	Poles	Yugoslavs	Unspecified	Total	
6.	137	129	128					1						1		2						4
7.	114	111	111						9	2				1		1					1	14
8.	175	173	170	1					2	1											1	5
9.	159	156	154	1	1																	2
10.	301	296	296	16	1	1	3	69			1					2	1				2	96
11.	278	274	272		4		9		1	2			1		1	5		1				24
12.	301	287	283	1	2	3	11		2	3	1		1		1	3		1	4	1		34
13.	279	261	256		1			1														2
Total	1.744	1.687	1.670	19	9	4	23	71	14	8	2	0	2	2	2	13	1	2	4	5		181

In the period 2012-2016, the Basic Police Training Centre realised many activities related to the professional information, and several promotional campaigns, workshops and forums with the aim to integrate the members of national minorities in the security sector of the Republic of Serbia.

In 2012 and 2013, the project *Support to the inclusion of national minority in the police service of the Republic of Serbia* was realised. There were two promotional forums, in Prijepolje and Novi Pazar, on the competition for enrolment of trainees into the basic police training from those district administrations, and two preparation workshops within which courses of Serbian language, general knowledge and information were conducted in Preševo and Bujanovac for potential candidates for enrolment into the basic police training. Within the project, *inter alia*, there were activities performed on the integration of the members of the Roma national minority.

The project realisation was ended by showing a documentary-information film *Open-door Schools*, about the inclusion of minorities in the police service of the Republic of Serbia.

With the aim to promote the trainings and further integration of members of national minorities in the police of the Republic of Serbia, in 2013, there were 11 promotional forums in multi-ethnic communities.

In 2014, the Centre held promotional forums on the territory of police administrations for which it had been decided to have public calls for the admission of trainees to the basic police training. The forums were held in Bujanovac, Preševo, Užice, Belgrade, Sremska Mitrovica, Valjevo, Kladovo, Negotin, Požarevac and Kikinda. The interested candidates were familiarised with the selection system, manner of taking the qualification exam and the training itself in the Centre. A special emphasis was placed on encouraging the members of national minorities to apply for the admission in the Centre. To that end, a promotional film was made, inviting the members of national minorities to apply for the enrolment in the Centre and to get informed about the objectives of the Ministry of Interior in terms of employing the members of national minorities in its services.

Within the *Doors Open Days* a visit was organised to the Centre for 50 secondary school pupils from Belgrade and 30 secondary school pupils from Kikinda. Those interested in the enrolment had the opportunity to learn about important information on the training and see the living and working conditions of the trainees in the Centre.

Within the project *Secondary Schools Market*, there were 15 schools gathering in Kanjiža with the aim to present to their pupils the profession of a police employee, a selection process and the training itself in the Centre in Sremska Kamenica.

Basic Police Training Centre also realised promotional activities at the Education Fair *Road Signs* in Novi Sad in the period 2012-2015.

In 2015, the realisation of the project *Inclusion of Roma Women and Men in the Security Sector* started at the initiative of the Police Association “European Police Employees of Roma Nationality”. The aim of the project is to ensure a higher rate of the Roma enrolling into the basic police training. Within the project there were six promotional forums and preparation workshops in the Centre in Sremska Kamenica, Belgrade, Bor, Kraljevo, Pirot, and in Niš. Those interested in the police profession could get informed about the requirements to apply, selection process, and all the segments of the entrance exam and to take a mock psychological exam, test of knowing Serbian spelling rules and learn how to write a CV. For 50 most successful trainees there were three-day preparation workshops for taking the entrance exam on Serbian language, and to check their current basic-motor ability working five exercises in the conditions such as those at the entrance exam.

In 2016 a new cycle of preparations for taking the entrance exam for the basic police training was organised for the members of the Roma national minority, interested in the enrolment into the basic police training on the territory of six police administrations: Sremska Mitrovica, Belgrade, Smederevo, Novi Pazar, Prokuplje and Vranje.

107. It recommends that an effective and independent supervisory mechanism be established to handle complaints of police misconduct and to ensure that established cases of misconduct and human rights abuse by the police against persons belonging to national minorities are adequately punished.

Article 5 of the Law on Police defines that employees of the Ministry and the Police shall treat everyone equally, regardless of their race, gender or nationality, their differences stemming from social origin, birth, religion, political or other belief or orientation, gender and gender identity, culture, language, age and mental or physical disability.

Police education gives a special significance to vocational, responsible and professional conduct of the police, by which it prevents any sort of improper behaviour of the police. In that respect, it should be underlined that in the teaching subjects, modules and teaching units within the basic police training, a special role has the subject “Human Rights and Police Ethics Code” where the following thematic fields are done: “Human Rights and Fundamental Human Freedoms”, “Morals and Ethics” “Deontology” and “Code of Police Ethics”.

Apart from the abovementioned, the teaching contents which refer to the protection of human rights and freedoms and professional conduct of the police, are covered within the subjects: “Penal and Penal Proceeding Law”, “Police Employees: rights, obligations and duties”, and also within professional modules: Crime suppression, Applying police powers and Use of means of coercion, Community policing.

Subject and modular units from the mentioned subject and professional modules, which also refer to this field, *inter alia*, are the following: “Legal means of citizens against an act by a member of Ministry of Interior in a pre-criminal proceeding”, “Rights of persons deprived of liberty”, “Treatment of persons deprived of liberty”, “Duties of police employees in terms of respect of human dignity, reputation, honour, and right of persons to reject giving statements”, “General requirements for application of police powers”, “National and international police conduct standards” “Police officers, their rights and duties”, “Discipline responsibility of police officers”, “Equality Respect” “Police work with minority and socially vulnerable groups”, “General requirements and principles for applying police powers”, “Providing support, protection and assistance to victims (vulnerable groups in applying the law, etc.)”.

The control of work on resolving the complaints is regulated by Articles 234-243 of the Law on Police. The complaints may be submitted by any person (a complainant) who believes that his or her human and minority rights and freedoms were violated by an act or failure to act of an employee (respondent) during the performance of official tasks, within 30 days after the day when the act subject to complaint occurred. The manner of handling complaints during the complaints procedure shall be prescribed by the Minister. In line with that, in 2017 the Rulebook on the manner of handling complaints during the complaints procedure¹⁰⁶ was adopted. If the complaints procedure established that the respondent’s actions breached or threatened human

¹⁰⁶ “Official Gazette of RS“, no. 54/2017

and minority rights and freedoms of the complainant, managers of organisational units of the Ministry shall take appropriate measures against the respondents.

Action Plan for Chapter 23 defines the creation of special methodology of the prosecutor and police for investigation of cases of abuse and torture with the aim to conduct efficient investigations on the allegations of abuse and torture by the police. With the aim to realise those activities in 2016 and 2017, a special Working Group was formed involving also the representatives of the Ministry of Interior. The objective of the creation of this methodology was to clearly define the manner of action of the prosecutor and police with the aim to conduct effective investigation of cases of abuse by the police and in order to ensure independence and impartiality of the investigation. The Republic Public Prosecutor's Office adopted the methodology in the form of a binding instruction for prosecutors, and the Ministry of Interior adopted the Instruction on Methodology for Conducting Investigation in Cases of Abuse by the Police on 18 October 2017.

In line with the mentioned Instruction, the competent authority for conducting investigations in case of abuse will be the public prosecutor. Exceptionally, the public prosecutor may entrust the performance of certain evidence activities to the Sector for Internal Control of the Ministry of Interior, and in that case he will be obliged to effectively undertake the activities for which he is authorised, with the aim to have a timely and efficient work of the Sector. The mentioned Instruction underlines the necessity of the investigation to be independent and that the public prosecutor and police officers of the Sector of Internal Control participating in the investigation should be independent and impartial towards the persons whose acts are subject to the investigation. The public prosecutor must independently, impartially, emergently and effectively undertake all the evidence activities and measures which ensure the collection and securing of evidence about the allegations in the specific case of abuse by the police.

Media coverage of persons belonging to national minorities and issues relevant to them

111. The Advisory Committee again calls on the authorities, whilst fully respecting and actively promoting the editorial independence of the media, to take measures to encourage both national and provincial/regional media outlets to develop programmes aimed at promoting tolerance and inter-cultural understanding.

Respecting the editorial independence of the media, authorities of the Republic of Serbia at all levels promote and encourage tolerance and inter-cultural understanding and financially support the projects aimed at contributing to development of the dialogue, better knowing and understanding among the citizens of different nationalities.

Ministry of Culture and Information co-finances the production of media contents promoting the respect of differences due to speciality of ethnical, cultural, linguistic or religious identity. In the competition for co-financing the projects in the field of public information in the national minority languages, the Ministry of Culture and Information supported in the reporting

period 55 multilingual and multicultural projects in total. With the funds given in the table below.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
3,507,692	1,938,536	3,263,000	4,988,000	5,550,080

In addition to the aforementioned, Ministry also co-finances the production of the media contents in Serbian language, by which the awareness and tolerance to all differences existing due to ethnical, cultural, linguistic or religious identity is raised in the entire population.

The table below gives the data about the amounts of funds allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Information supporting more than 30 media projects in Serbian language, raising the awareness and tolerance.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1,390,200	-	2,713,535	9,726,600	4,409,600

It should be particularly stressed that thanks to the funds received from the state budget, in 2015, the Media Art Contact doo project was launched *Do you speak meow, puppet TV series in Serbian language for children intended for learning of minority languages*. This education series for children, aged 4-7 has the aim to make the viewers overcome the most basic conversation skills in Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak. Also, the funds from the budget were used to co-finance the project *Chronicles of national minorities: Media content to a full integration and promotion of communication of national minorities and the wide public* of the Association for migration research. In the mentioned project, the biggest effect was achieved by broadcasting the TV show *Chronicles of national minorities*, an information show realised in minority languages and in Serbian language at TV Pink, media with the national coverage. From the beginning of broadcasting, *Chronicles* has established itself as a serious and professional source of information, both for member of national minorities and the majority population about culture, language, history and other topics of importance for national minorities.

The Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities also supports the multicultural medial projects in national minority languages, and projects in Serbian raising the awareness of tolerance and fight against prejudice. In 2015 and 2016, such projects were supported with the amount of 15,495,900 dinars.

112. Vocational training of journalists and other media professionals should receive greater attention, in particular so as to improve media reporting on minority issues. The authorities should support initiatives designed to encourage balanced and objective reporting. The monitoring work of the RBA Council should be strengthened and the authorities should review the manner in which its members are designated with a view to ensuring that national minority perspectives are adequately represented.

Vocational training of journalists

Republic of Serbia keeps undertaking measures aimed at enhancement of professionalism of the media and journalism, for a better media reporting on minority issues.

Ministry of Culture and Information and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities introduced a special competition in 2015, for co-financing the medial projects contributing to the enhancement of professionalism of the medial and journalism, and promoting professional capacities of the media workers (journalists, managers, researchers, experts in the field of media law, etc.), including those who can report on minority issues.

In 2015, for project *Academy for Media Management*, the “Minority & Local Media” Association was granted the funds in the amount of 1,459,120.00 dinars. Within the project there were two modules of lectures held to contribute the development of skills for managing the media necessary for a successful management of media campaigns. The lectures were attended by the representatives of local media and media founded by national councils of national minorities.

The project *Strengthening the capacities and enhancing professional standards of local media* has raised the level of knowledge and skills of journalists and managers of local papers through the implementation of three workshops participated by 59 trainees from 24 local editorial staff. For the mentioned project 1,300,000.00 dinars were allocated in 2015.

Project *European conference on minority and local media – New narration: the power of communities, value of diversity and cooperation skill* was devoted to minority and local media. Three conference panels were used for a discussion of the issue of importance and belonging to the communities. As one of the models of the new positioning of minority media was a model of possible cooperation of more minority and other media in preparing larger European projects. Representatives of the state participated at the conference, as well as provincial and local institutions and organisations together with local and minority media from Serbia and the region. For the mentioned project 1,800,000.00 dinars were allocated.

Project named *Raising the capacities of the media in Vojvodina for the production of media contents in the public interest* was realised in 2016 through a two-day training participated by the representatives of 25 local media, also including those who can report on minority issues. The objective of the training was to train the medial for the project approach to the production of media content in the public interest which will increase their chances for a better business in the future. The project was co-financed with the amount of 827,080.00 dinars.

Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media

The election of the Council of the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (hereinafter referred to as: Regulator), which is practically the legal successor of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RBA) ensures the participation of the representatives of national minorities and representation of their interests in this body. Election of the Council of the Regulator is regulated

by Article 9 of the Law on Electronic Media. The Council has nine members elected from the ranks of esteemed experts from the field of importance for the performance of the activities of the scope of the Regulator (media experts, economists, lawyers, engineers of telecommunications, etc.). Members of the Council are elected by the National Assembly, at the proposal of authorised nominators, including also the national councils of national minorities ((Article 9, item 7), electing their candidate with mutual agreement.

Regulator performs the surveillance over the work of Public Media Services and Media Service Providers. The mentioned organisation performs surveillance over the work of public media services in the realisation of the general interest, and in fulfilling the obligations of the public media services in protecting the rights of the minorities. The Regulator makes annual reports on fulfilment of programme and legal obligations of public medial services. The reports state also the programme intended for the members of national minorities.¹⁰⁷

In performing the authority of surveillance over the work of media service providers, the Regulator is particularly obliged to ensure that they in all comply with the requirements under which they were issued the license.

The monitoring activities of the Regulator also refer to the control of the obligations of the media privatized by selling the capital and which, by the programme elaborate, planned the programme contents in minority languages. Based on this Protocol on Cooperation, concluded between the Privatisation Agency¹⁰⁸ and the Regulator in May 2015, with the aim to ensure the continuity in the production of the media contents of public interest, including the media contents in minority languages, the Regulator became obliged to provide the Privatisation Agency with the written act on ensuring the continuity in the production of medial contents, for the period of 12 months from the day of concluding the contract on selling the capital always when identifying a deviation from the obligation of the continuity which requires undertaking certain measures from the competencies of the Agency. The Agency is the one which decides on the fulfilment of the obligation of the continuity in the production of media contents of public interest for electronic media only based on the written act of the Regulator.¹⁰⁹ In the media privatized by the transfer of free shares the Regulator is authorised to monitor the compliance with the programme elaborate of the media and based on that control the continuity of broadcasting the programmes in national minority languages, when the broadcast of such a programme is included in the programme elaborate submitted in the course of license issuance, or based on the subsequent request for a change of the elaborate.

Within the monitoring activities, the Regulator has a significant role also in preventing hate speech. Article 51 of the Law on Electronic Media defines that the Regulator shall ensure that the programme content of the media service provider does not contain information which overtly or covertly encourages discrimination, hatred or violence based on race, colour, ancestry, citizenship, national origin, language, religion or political beliefs, sex, gender identity, sexual

¹⁰⁷Report by the Regulator are available at <http://www.rem.rs/sr/izvestaji-i-analize/izvestaji-i-analize-o-nadzoru-emitera>

¹⁰⁸ Activities of the Agency from that domain are performed by the Ministry of Economy.

¹⁰⁹ Report on implementing the Action Plan for National Minorities in I and II quarter of 2016, page 27

orientation, economic status, birth, genetic characteristics, health status, disability, marital and family status, criminal record, age, looks, membership in political, trade union and other organizations, and other actual or presumed personal characteristics.

Pursuant to Article 60 of the Law, in 2015, the Council adopted the Rulebook on Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Service Provision¹¹⁰ which closely defines the term of hate speech and the criteria for assessment whether a certain programme content contains elements of hate speech.

Pursuant to Article 27, paragraph 2 of the mentioned Rulebook, a media service provider must not publish contents glorifying, justifying or minimizing the significance of discrimination, hatred or violence against persons or groups of persons defined by the Law. Prohibitions apply regardless of whether the publication of the programme content resulted in a criminal offense.

The Council performs the surveillance and analysis of the programme content of media service providers and possibly initiates procedures for pronouncing the measures envisaged by the Law (reminder, warning, temporary or permanent suspension of the license). In the reporting period, according to the available information, there were three cases in which the Council considered hate speech against national minorities. In all three cases the broadcasters were warned and they undertook measures imposed by the Council.

Displaced persons

116. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to pursue the implementation of the National Strategy on Resolving Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons and to ensure that adequate means are allocated to its implementation, including beyond 2014. It emphasises the need to find durable solutions for these persons, including local integration, and to address their lack of personal documentation as a matter of priority.

Refugees and internally displaced persons

The Third Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention (section 4.3.) contains the information about the adopted National Strategy on Resolving Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the period 2011-2014. In 2015, a revised National Strategy on Resolving Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the period 2015-2020 was adopted¹¹¹

Apart from the strategic documents adopted at the level of the Republic of Serbia, local action plans (LAP) for resolving issues of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and returnees pursuant to the Readmission Agreement define the needs of these categories of people and plan the measures, activities and allocation of funds of local self-governments with the aim to improve their position. By the end of 2016, 154 local self-governments, out of which 18 from

¹¹⁰ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 55/2015

¹¹¹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 62/2015

the territory of the AP Kosovo and Metohija, adopted action plans and established the migration councils.

Reduction of the number of refugees from the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a result of their integration in the Republic of Serbia, which was achieved by the admission to citizenship. The number of people with confirmed status of refugees by the end of 2012 was 66,408, and by 2016 it was 29,457. After the donation conference held in Sarajevo in 2014, 335 million euros have been collected so far for resolving issues of the most vulnerable refugees in the region and the collection of the funds will continue. When it comes to the implementation of the Regional Housing Project in the Republic of Serbia, in the period 2014-2016, agreements were signed with donors which were realised or are in the process of realisation, by which 94,000,000 euros have been collected for resolving the housing needs of 5,500 refugee families (with granting construction material for the completion of started facilities, procurement of village households with gardens, granting prefabricated houses or apartments).

In the reporting period the implementation of the plan of gradual closure of collective centres was started. The Commissioner for Refugees and Migrations conducted a gradual closure of collective centre by ensuring adequate housing solutions through he programmes of: procurement of houses with gardens, assistance in construction material, construction of prefabricated houses, accommodation in the facilities for social housing in protected conditions, accommodation in the institutions of social care and one-time assistance in commodity and money for moving from collective centres to private accommodation. Housing programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons from collective centres, realised in the period 2012-2016 were financed through the 2012 IPA Programme *Support to the improvement of living conditions of forced migrants and closure of collective centres*, of the total value of 14.2 million euros. In early 2017, in the Republic of Serbia there were 13 operating collective centres, out of which 8 collective centres on the territory of the AP Kosovo and Metohija, The total number of people admitted in these 13 collective centres were 530, as follows: 101 refugees and 429 internally displaced persons.

In the period 2012-2016, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations allocated 21.8 million euros from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for the support to the activities planned by the LAPs for the improvement of housing conditions (supporting 7.513 refugee families and 2,909 IDP families) and economic empowerment (supporting 11,417 refugee families and 3,168 IDP families).

According to the data of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, including 1 January 2017, 203,140 internally displaced persons were settled in the Republic of Serbia.

Having in mind the fact that the Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons¹¹² plans the return and integration should be given possibility, the Republic of Serbia invests significant efforts to create adequate conditions for the return. However, in addition to the implemented measures, a small number of internally displaced persons have

¹¹²Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs.

returned to the AP Kosovo and Metohija (less than 5 % of the total IDP population). According to the UNHCR data, 12.145 people have returned, and only 4.000 people achieved a sustainable return (1.9%) due to a lack of safety and possibility to realise the basic human rights.

UNHCR Serbia in cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration conducted in 2017 a research *Condition and needs of internally displaced persons* showing that on the territory of Central Serbia there are around 17.000 IDP families in the condition of the social need.

Solutions for internally displaced Roma from the territory of the AP Kosovo and Metohija who, to a large extent, do not plan to return, are found through the funded programmes for improving the living conditions of internally displaced persons, including the Roma. Though the members of RAE (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians) population make 10% of the IDP population, in resolving the housing needs they take 20% of the total number of beneficiaries. It should be underlined that there are no obligations for the internally displaced persons to state their national affiliation. Generally, it is considered that in the total number of refugees and internally displaced persons, about 40% are of Roma nationality.

The review of the number of refugees and internally displaced persons from collective centres in the reporting period is given in the table below.

Year	Number of collective centres	Refugees and expelled persons	Internally displaced persons	Total
2012	41	607	2869	3476
2013	33	507	2190	2697
2014	23	340	1310	1650
2015	20	312	940	1252
2016	14	112	431	543

In around 40 unofficial collective centres in the Republic of Serbia there are currently around 1.400 IDPs. Those are facilities in which they moved in on their own initiative, and due to unresolved property-legal relation of those facilities, the Commissariat had no ability to conclude necessary contracts with the owners of those facilities and include them in the system of official collective centres. In the reporting period, the Commissariat continued to search for mechanisms for creation of conditions for their further closure. In that way, in 2016 the Commissariat allocated funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for resolving the housing issue by buying village households with gardens in the amount of 202,000 euros. The realisation is ongoing, while the plan is to continue with searching housing solutions for IDP in these centres in the coming period as well.

When it comes to the closure of informal collective centres, funds were ensured in the budget and donations in the reporting period for relocation of the Roma from three sub-standard Roma settlements in which majority of IDP Roma lived: Blaževo in Novi Pazar, Stari Kostolac in Požarevac and South bypass in Kragujevac.

Readmission

Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and the European Union on the readmission of persons who illegally reside which entered into force on 1 January 2008, the contracting parties regulated the procedure of returning of persons who fail to meet and ceased to meet the requirements for the entry or stay on the territory of the contracting country. Serbian Government adopted the Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees based on the 2009 Readmission Agreement.

According to the Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees based on the Readmission Agreement, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration has the task to coordinate and organise the primary acceptance and cooperation with accepting communities and is responsible for operational implementation of planned activities on the field, and to undertake measures and activities aimed at a successful reintegration of returnees.

Number of returnees based on the readmission agreement registered by the Readmission Office at the “Nikola Tesla” airport in Belgrade in the period 2012-2016, was 12.921 and a tendency of growth is visible, since the number of returnees in 2012 was 2.107, while in 2016 it was 3.655. Persons of Roma nationality make around 90% of the total number of returnees. The Commissariat recognised the need for housing and economic empowerment of these persons, and thus has allocated the funds in the budget since 2013 in the amount of 170,000 euros annually.

In the period 2012-2016, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations allocated 684,000 euros in the budget of the Republic of Serbia for the support to the activities planned in local action plans, and directed to housing and economic empowerment of returnees based on the readmission agreement.

More information about the undertaken measures in resolving the lack of personal documents is contained in section III. 7.

5. Article 8

Freedom of religion

122. The Advisory Committee again urges the authorities to ensure that the right of persons belonging to a national minority to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations is fully guaranteed in both legislation and its implementation. It recommends that they implement without further delay the recommendations of the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality in this regard.

Data on religion of the members of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, according to the results of the 2011 Census, are given in the table below, by percentage in relation to the total number of the members of each minority group.

	Christians					Islamic	Jewish	Eastern religions	Other religions	Agnostics	Non-believers (atheists)	Undeclared	Unknown
	Total	Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant	Other Christians								
Albanians	19.66	2.60	16.84	0.03	0.07	71.06	0.00	0.07	0.03	0.02	1.58	4.82	2.75
Ashkali	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	97.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.10	1.50
Bosniacs	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	99.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.13	0.13	0.17
Bulgarians	96.31	90.89	3.95	0.09	0.05	0.14	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.03	1.00	2.21	0.28
Vlachs	98.25	97.56	0.01	0.14	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.23	1.00	0.47
Bunjevci	92.23	1.86	91.61	0.28	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.07	2.29	3.15	0.21
Gorani	1.07	1.04	0.03	0.00	0.00	90.81	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.50	6.04	1.54
Greeks	93.93	91.17	1.52	0.28	0.14	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00	2.90	2.48	0.41
Egyptians	3.71	2.89	0.22	0.38	0.00	95.37	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.38	0.33
Jews	9.15	6.10	2.16	0.25	0.00	0.13	49.81	0.00	0.13	1.91	20.97	15.37	2.54
Armenians	95.05	85.04	2.70	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.00	3.15	0.45	0.45
Hungarians	96.15	1.15	88.34	6.25	0.15	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.75	2.62	0.41
Macedonians	93.92	92.60	0.24	0.36	0.11	1.06	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.08	1.89	2.54	0.44
Muslims	1.55	1.26	0.19	0.01	0.03	92.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	1.22	3.59	0.84
Germans	86.49	9.77	66.63	8.51	0.17	0.30	0.02	0.10	0.15	0.17	4.21	7.48	1.08
Roma	62.74	55.86	3.30	2.01	0.47	24.79	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.74	8.50	3.20
Romanians	94.89	83.92	7.68	2.11	0.30	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	0.56	3.60	1.22
Russians	92.89	89.65	1.54	0.28	0.18	0.37	0.06	0.09	0.06	0.18	2.68	2.93	0.74
Ruthenians	94.91	18.53	75.43	0.70	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.06	0.02	1.07	3.60	0.32
Slovaks	91.74	2.14	6.68	82.37	0.12	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04	1.08	6.62	0.48
Slovenians	75.97	10.91	62.36	1.44	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.50	11.41	10.59	1.41
Turks	8.04	6.96	0.46	0.00	0.15	78.67	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.46	3.71	6.03	2.78
Ukrainians	94.76	57.56	36.14	0.57	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.84	4.10	0.18
Croats	90.97	2.48	87.59	0.42	0.07	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.23	3.65	4.60	0.50
Montenegrins	88.68	87.66	0.56	0.14	0.02	0.51	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.23	5.91	4.10	0.50
Czechs	85.09	10.03	69.52	4.44	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.11	5.81	7.35	1.54

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia guarantees the freedom of political, trade union and *any other association* and defines that *every person* is free to express his or her religion or religious beliefs by performing religious rites, attend religious services or education, individually or with others, and to express his religious beliefs in private or in public. Starting from the given constitutional provision, the Law on Churches and Religious Communities¹¹³ defines the manner of realising the freedom of association and public gathering for expressing religious beliefs. According to the provisions of that Law, decision to establish new religious organisations can be made by minimum 0.001% of adult citizens of the Republic of Serbia having the residence in the Republic of Serbia according to the last official population census or foreign citizens with the permanent residence on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, and such an organisation acquires the capacity of a legal person by the registration in the Register upon the conducted administrative procedure of registration. In this context, it is essential to emphasize that the registration process of the respective religious community, itself, is not a condition for its existence and the confession of the faith of its followers, but only for the acquisition of legal subjectivity and the rights and obligations deriving from that. Having in mind the given

¹¹³ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 36/2006

provisions, it is clear that the members of the national minorities in the Republic of Serbia, as well as all other persons fully enjoy the right to establishment religious institutions, organisations and associations. The fact that about 20 (some twenty) new churches and religious communities have been registered, since the adoption of the Law on Churches and Religious Communities in 2006 to date (2018), in the best way, confirms the thesis on the extremely liberal character of this Law, as well as more than democratic practice of establishing religious communities in the Republic of Serbia, and also in relation to the largest number of European Union (EU) countries.

In practice, members of the national minorities who are believers do not apply for the establishment of new religious institutions or organisations, since they are members of traditional churches and religious communities which have a historical continuity in Serbia for centuries and which legal subjectivity was acquired based on special laws in the past. Moreover, some of those churches and religious communities, as their majority members, actually have members of national minorities, such as the case with the Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelical Church A.V., Reformed Christian Church, Evangelical Christian Church A.V, Islamic Community and Jewish Community. Information of the access of the members of national minorities to the religious rites in their mother tongue within those churches and religious communities is contained in section III.10.

Members of national minorities, as members and believers of traditional churches and religious communities, fully realise their right to associations, within or under the auspices of their structures. In that respect, as illustrative examples we state the associations of “Maria” and “Caritas” within the Roman Catholic Church, “Gajret” within the Islamic Community, “Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO)” within the Protestant Church Reformation, “Chabad Serbia” within the Jewish Community, etc.

Having in mind the abovementioned, authorities of the Republic of Serbia strongly state that there are no justified reasons for the initiative contained in the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

123. It further recommends that the authorities take active steps – while respecting the principle of separation between the State and religion – to promote the finding of pragmatic solutions in all cases where these could help resolve difficulties in access of persons belonging to national minorities to worship in their mother tongue.

Information about the realisation of this recommendation is contained in section III.10.

6. Article 9

Legislative framework relating to minority media

128. The Advisory Committee recommends that national minority councils be closely consulted in the process of drawing up and enacting legislation governing media privatisation. Particular care should be taken to ensure that this process does not lead to a reduction in the offer of

broadcasting in minority languages, especially where there may be issues of commercial viability of such broadcasting. Questions surrounding the role of national minority councils with respect to the media also need to be resolved, in full consultation with these councils as well as with media outlets and associations themselves.

Consultations with the representatives of national councils in the process of drawing up and enacting legislation governing media privatisation

In the process of drawing up the Law on Public Information and Media, not only national councils of national minorities were consulted, but also the journalist and media association, civil society organisations, independent experts and the wider public. In the process of enacting the Law, a public debate was conducted about the Draft Law in the period 27 February – 22 March, 2013. The presentation and debate about the Draft Law were held on round tables organised in Novi Sad, Novi Pazar, Niš and Belgrade, participated also by the representatives of national councils. Having in mind that the provisions of the Draft Law contained novelties for the legal order of the Republic of Serbia, in terms of the state's exit from the media ownership, the draft was sent to the European Commission to be analysed.

Ensuring that the privatisation does not lead to a reduction in the offer of broadcasting and adequate compensation of the offer by broadcasting in national minority languages

Privatisation is a process which has been recently finished and at this point we cannot have a whole picture of the impact of the process on the situation in the media in minority languages. In European countries which have had this process, in principle it reflected in the reduction of broadcasting in minority languages and the Republic of Serbia is not an exception in that aspect.

It is important to mention that in the privatisation process of the media, a special care was given whether the medial service providers had programme contents in the languages of the national minorities. To be precise, according to Article 142 of the Law on Public Information and Media, the privatisation of media was organised in the manner to enable the continuity in the production of media content of public interest, in a period of five years as of the conclusion of the agreement on sale of capital. The continuity in the production of media content meant the obligation to maintain the program timeshare in certain languages of national minorities, and share of information, educational, scientific, cultural-artistic, children, entertainment, sports and other programmes of public interest in certain languages of national minorities, in accordance with the programme schedule which was valid within the period of twelve months preceding the adoption of that Law. The information about the role of the REM Council in the monitoring of the execution of that obligation is contained in section IV.4 with regard to the recommendation 112 of the Advisory Committee.

After the privatisation in the Republic of Serbia new media were established. Moreover, according to the data from the Media Register there is an increase in the number of medial

registered in the Media Register¹¹⁴ and many of them are, apart from Serbian, envisaged broadcasting in one or more languages of national minorities. This created the possibility to alleviate the negative effects of the privatisation by publishing the media contents in minority languages in some of the newly established media.

Regardless of the fact that there are no generally accepted international standards on the manner in which public authorities should encourage the realisation of the right to information of the members of the national minorities in practice, the fact remains that the Republic of Serbia still has diverse models of information in minority languages including the following: programmes of the public service, shows, i.e. articles in private media, printed media founded by a national council, as well as the internet media, access to the media of the country of origin, etc. Of crucial importance is that the change of the ownership structure in the media did not have an impact on the obligation of the government to protect the public interest in the field of information and the right to the true, impartial and timely information in mother tongue of members of the national minorities and the preservation of their cultural and linguistic identity, which is ensured, *inter alia*, through co-financing the projects in the field of public information.

The role of national councils of national minorities in the media

Apart from the public authorisations the national councils have in the field of information (e.g. giving opinions in the process of project financing, participation of the representative of national councils in relevant bodies, etc.), which have been mentioned in certain parts of the Report, the role of national councils of national minorities can be discussed in the context of the editorial policy of the media founded by the national councils.

Editorial policy of the media founded by the national councils

The legal regulation treat the editorial independence as part of the concept of free information, affirmed by the Constitution and laws on the media. The Law on Public Information and Media in Article 4, *inter alia*, defines that the editorial autonomy of the media, especially by putting pressure, threatening or blackmailing editors, journalists or sources of information shall not be jeopardised. Law on National Councils of National Minorities does not contain any provisions defining the responsibilities and obligations of national councils as founders of the institutions and companies, i.e. foundations as media publishers. However, pursuant to Article 16 of the Law on Public Information and Media, the act on establishing an institution, company or foundation founded by national councils shall in particular regulate appointment and election procedures for management bodies and, where the institution, company or foundation is the publisher of the media, for the media editor, in a way that ensures full editorial independence of

¹¹⁴ Before the beginning of the privatisation, on 1 January 2015, there were 364 licenses issued in a public competition for provision of media services (radio and television). On 7 December 2017, based on the issued licenses in the public competition the media services were provided by 377 electronic media.

the media. National councils are, therefore, obliged to elect management boards of media institutions, appoint directors and main editors in the manner which ensures editorial independence of the media. However, the media associations and civil sector point out that there is a significant impact of the national councils on the editorial policy of the media¹¹⁵ and that it is necessary to establish mechanisms to ensure that independence. For now, the solutions should be looked for in the consistent compliance with the legal regulations governing the entire field of public information, primarily the Law on Public Information and Media, and the harmonisation of the acts on establishment of the institutions founded by national councils with the mentioned law. In the next period, it will be challenging for the authorities of the Republic of Serbia to establish additional mechanisms to protect the independence of editorial policy of minority media on one hand, and avoid the violation of minority self-management, i.e. the principle of autonomy in decision making and acting of national councils on the other. Since the creation of the new media strategy included all relevant stakeholders of the media scene and that a part which refers to the national minorities will be created in consultation with the national councils, the government has made the possibility to resolve the mentioned issue, respecting both the principle of independence of the editorial policy of the media, and the principle of autonomy of the minority self-management.

Access to media of persons belonging to national minorities

134. The Advisory Committee again encourages the Serbian authorities to promote the development of professional training, including vocational training, of journalists belonging to national minorities. It also encourages the authorities, notably at state level, to take into account the need for sufficient and stable funding to guarantee the viability of media in minority languages, as an integral part of ensuring access to information for persons belonging to national minorities, in particular outside Vojvodina.

Vocational training of journalists belonging to national minorities

Serbian authorities promote the development of vocational training, including vocational training of journalists belonging to national minorities. The contribution to such a commitment is the allocation of part of the budget funds for projects contributing to the strengthening of the capacities of the editorial offices reporting in the languages of national minorities, expanding the reporting network of minority media, and for the projects of organisation of training, workshops, and courses for journalists, etc.

For those projects in 2012, 1,008,000.00 dinars were allocated from the budget of the responsible ministry, in 2013, 521,712.00 dinars, in 2014, 860,000.00 dinars, and in 2016, 950,000.00 dinars.

¹¹⁵See at <https://www.subotica.com/vesti/uticaji-na-uredjivacku-politiku-manjinskih-medija-id19166.html>

Competent provincial secretariat in 2015 and 2016 allocated the funds in the amount of 2,009,814.00 dinars for the projects contributing to the strengthening of the capacities of editorial offices reporting in the languages of national minorities.

Sustainability of the media in the languages of national minorities

Information about the financing which guarantees sustainability of the media in the languages of national minorities is contained in section III. 11.

135. The Advisory Committee recommends that the impact of the introduction of digital television broadcasting on minority media be carefully reviewed, in full consultation with national minority councils. The increased opportunities for reaching dispersed minorities should be fully exploited while at the same time taking all necessary measures to preserve broadcasting at local level for national minorities concentrated in certain parts of the territory.

Information about the realisation of this recommendation is contained in section III. 11.

7. Article 10

Use of minority language in relations with authorities at local level

140. The Advisory Committee urges the Serbian authorities to ensure that the legal provisions governing the use of minority languages in contacts with authorities at local level are fully implemented without further delay. It encourages them to promote a flexible application of the 15% threshold for bringing minority languages into official use at the local level, bearing in mind also that it is sufficient under the Framework Convention as well as under domestic law that an area be traditionally inhabited by persons belonging to a national minority.

Information about ensuring that the legal provisions governing the use of minority languages in contacts with authorities at local level are fully implemented is contained in section III. 12.

In the Republic of Serbia, legal provision on the official use of a language and script which, as a condition for its realisation at the level of a local self-government unit, defines the participation of members of a national minority with 15% of the total number of the population has a flexible application. Namely, that legal requirement is defined for the **obligatory** introduction of the language and script of a national minority into official use. On the other hand, the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities define that on the territory of a local self-government unit traditionally populated by members of a national minority, their language and script *can be* in equal official use, which actually means that such a local self-government unit can bring a language and script of a national minority into official use even if the share of that minority in the total population of the local self-government use is less than

15%. The possibility of bringing the language and script of a national minority the share of which members in the total population of that self-government unit is less than 15% into official use, is also made by the legal solution according to which the language of a national minority which was in official use in a local self-government unit at the time of the adoption of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities *will remain in official use*. Moreover, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia, with the amendments to the Law on Official Use of Language and Script, and to the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities which were made in 2018, which will be further discussed in the next Report, ensured that the language and script of the national minorities are in official use not only at the level of the entire local self-government unit, but also in the settlements of the local self-government units where there is no official use of the language and script at the level of the entire territory. According to these amendments to the laws, in settlements in local self-government units where the percentage of members of a particular national minority in the total number of inhabitants in the territory of the settlement is 15% according to the results of the last census, the names of the bodies that exercise public authority, the names of local self-government units, squares and streets and other toponyms are written in the language of the respective national minority, according to its tradition and spelling, also in cases when the language of that national minority is not in official use on the territory of the local self-government unit. The Assembly of the local self-government unit establishes by the statute such settlements, bearing in mind the traditional population of members of the national minority and the previously obtained opinion of the national council.

The table below contains the data on local self-government units where the language and script of national minorities whose members in the total population participate with less than 15% according to the official results of the 211 census, are in official use throughout the entire territory.

National minority	Local self-government units	Percentage representation
Albanian	Bujanovac	1.35%
	Medveđa	7.09%
	Preševo	13.51%
Hungarian	Bač	6.65%
	Bela Crkva	2.45%
	Vrbas	5.85%
	Vršac	4.35%
	Zrenjanin	10.01%
	Kovačica	9.98%
	Kovin	8.90%
	Kula	7.92%
	Novi Sad	3.88%
	Odžaci	3.94%
	Plandište	11.29%
	Sečanj	12.75%

	Sombor	11.49%
	Titel	5.22%
Macedonian	Plandište	9.19%
Romanian	Bela Crkva	4.85%
	Vršac	10.42%
	Žitište	8.38%
	Zrenjanin	1.75%
	Kovačica	6.11%
	Kovin	3.47%
	Plandište	6.92%
	Sečanj	4.27%
Ruthenian	Bačka Topola	0.76%
	Vrbas	8.02%
	Žabalj	4.58%
	Kula	10.64%
	Novi Sad	0.63%
	Šid	3.00%
Slovak	Alibunar	4.79%
	Bačka Palanka	9.09%
	Bačka Topola	0.36%
	Zrenjanin	1.67%
	Novi Sad	1.93%
	Odžaci	2.77%
	Plandište	5.43%
	Šid	6.25%
Croatian	Subotica	10.00%
Czech	Bela Crkva	3.71%

141. *The Advisory Committee also recommends that the authorities take steps to promote the recruitment of civil servants at local level who are proficient in the relevant languages, and recommends that the authorities make all the necessary resources available, and increase awareness, to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities can effectively exercise their rights in this field.*

Taking steps to promote the recruitment of civil servants at local level who are proficient in the relevant languages

The recruitment of civil servants at local level who are proficient in the languages of national minorities is discussed in more details in section III.12.

Ensuring resources and raising the awareness about the use of language and script of national minorities at local level

Available resources for a successful realisation of the use of language and script of national minorities at local level, apart from the staff capacities which include both the civil

servants, and recruitment of translators and authorised interpreters, cover also the following: available public publications, guides, notification and bulletin boards in the languages of national minorities, existence of official journals of local self-government units in languages and scripts of national minorities, publication of information on the official web sites of the local self-government units in the languages and scripts of national minorities, available documents and forms of various submissions (requests, applications, etc.) in languages and scripts of national minorities, conducting administrative proceedings fully in the languages and scripts of national minorities and issuance of certificates and other services of the officer of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages performed in the languages and scripts of national minorities. Table below contains the information about ensuring and using the mentioned resources in local self-government units in which language and script of a national minority are in official use.

Resources available in national minority languages	Number of local self-government units
Publications, written notifications and bulletin boards	37
Official journal	19
Official web page	24
Documents and forms	25
Conducting administrative proceedings	8 ¹¹⁶
Certificates and other services by officer of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages	41

Authorities of the Republic of Serbia undertook a number of activities in the reporting period in order to ensure resources and raise the awareness about the use of language and script of national minorities at local level. In that respect, it should be underlined that there are continuous trainings of persons in the Republic of Serbia keeping the register books with the aim to have a continuous implementation of legal provisions regarding the use of language and script of national minorities which was discussed in more details in section III.12.

Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities regularly makes public calls for the allocation of budget funds to bodies and organisations on the territory of the AP Vojvodina in which work languages and scripts of national minorities are in official use. The funds, *inter alia*, are granted for training the employees in the bodies and organisations in which they use a national minority language which is defined as a language in official use, especially at jobs where they make a contact with customers (attending courses, seminars, etc.) and for the development of the e-administration system for the work in multilingual conditions, which was discussed in more details in section III.12.

¹¹⁶ Possibility of conducting administrative proceedings in national minority languages exists in all local self-government units in which the language and script of a national minority is in official use. The number contained in the table means that only in 8 local self-government units in the reporting period there were requests of people to have the proceedings in the language and script of a national minority.

Apart from that, the funds on the mentioned public calls are awarded also for the creation of multilingual boards, forms and publications. Information about the amount of the funds awarded in these calls for the creation and printing of multilingual publications, contributing to the awareness raising and realisation of the rights of the members of national minorities is given in the table below.

2013	2014	2015	2016
1,430,000.00	694,000.00	574,348.00	505,000.00

The statements below contain illustrative examples on how some local self-government units presented their measures by which they ensure the members of the national minorities to efficiently realise their right in the field of official use of a language and script. Examples are given for some languages and scripts of national minorities.

Albanian language

In the municipality of **Bujanovac**, the information about the rights of members of national minorities is placed on the bulletin board and at the web site of the municipality of Bujanovac, both in Serbia and Albanian language. All boards with the names of bodies and information boards and other notifications for people are written also in Albanian. All acts published in the official journal are both in Serbia and Albanian, and the necessary form and other documents are also available in Albanian. In this municipality in the reporting period there were also administrative proceedings conducted in Albanian. In 2013, out of the total 303 cases, 159 cases were resolved which were bilingual; in 2014, out of the total 273 cases received, 152 cases were bilingual; in 2015, out of the total 304 cases, 142 were bilingual; and in 2016, out of the total 310 cases, 141 were bilingual.

Bosnian language

In the municipality of **Tutin** applicants can use the language of the national minority in writing using a form, and verbally in consultations. Names of the bodies, organisations, titles and professions and names of the civil servants are also written in Bosnian language. The web site and official journal of the local self-government unit are also published in Bosnian language. In the municipality of Tutin in the period 2012-2016, there were administrative proceedings conducted in Bosnian language, as follows:

- 2012 – 34 cases;
- 2013 – 35 cases;
- 2014 – 26 cases;
- 2015 – 38 cases;
- 2016 – 102 cases.

Bulgarian language

Members of national minorities in the municipality of **Dimitrovgrad** receive information about their rights by the civil servants within the Service Centre of the municipality of Dimitrovgrad. Also, the web page of the municipality of operational also in Bulgarian language. The municipality underlines that there is no need for constant information of minority members, since the municipality of Dimitrovgrad is small and all the activities and possibilities of the local self-government are already available as information for all the citizens, including the members of the national minority. All administrative proceedings can be conducted also in Bulgarian, issuance of documents in Bulgarian is also available, as well as the availability of official acts of the Municipal Assembly of Dimitrovgrad, Municipal Council and Municipal Administration in Bulgarian. All the information regarding the activities of the local community, as well as the election process is also available in Bulgarian. All official forms used by the citizens are also available in Bulgarian. They exist as bilingually written requests for issuance of certificates and excerpts from the citizens' book, as well as bilingual forms of the applications for issuance of various types of licenses issued by the construction service, and the applications for issuance of certificates for the matter of status of energy-protected customer.

Hungarian language

In the municipality of **Bačka Topola** the applicants have the possibility to use national minority languages which are in official use in the following manner: communication with administration bodies, obtaining information from administration bodies, conducting a proceeding in a national minority language which is in official use. The web page and the Official journal of the municipality of Bačka Topola are available in Serbian and Hungarian. Names of the bodies, organisational units and jobs, information boards and other notifications are also written in Hungarian, Ruthenian, and Slovak language.

Applicants have the access to 25 types of forms and applications in Hungarian by which they initiate administrative proceedings for the realisation of rights in various fields of social life, or procedures for issuance of certificates necessary for the realisation of their rights and interests.

In the municipality of Bačka Topola, in the period 2012-2016, there were also administrative procedures in Hungarian, the number of which is given in the table below:

Type of administrative procedure	Hungarian				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Procedure for correction of data in the registry	8	6	7	8	9
Procedure for change of personal name	10	12	11	9	8

Slovak language

Municipality of **Bački Petrovac** informs the members of the Slovak national minority about the possibilities to efficiently realise their rights in the field of official use of the language and script through the official web site of the municipality of Bački Petrovac, and also through written notifications placed in the reception desk of the Department of Municipal Administration, social services and general mutual services, as well as in local offices of Kulpin, Gložan and Maglić. Notification about working hours of the Municipal Administration at the entrance door of the municipal building, information boards about the office organisation, and the names and titles of elected, named and appointed persons and civil servants and employees of the state of the Municipal Administration, are written in both languages which are in official use. In the Municipal Administration in the reception desk various forms are available in Serbian and Slovak. The web page and the Official Journal of the municipality of Bački Petrovac are available also in Slovak. In the period 2012-2016, in only one of two cases an applicant insisted on having a procedure in Slovak, which was realised.

Croatian language

Apart from Serbia, in the city of **Subotica** in the official use are also Croatian and Hungarian. Subotica is by all means one of the best European examples of local self-government units where the use of language and scripts of national minorities is realised on a large scale. Starting from the roll-call system places at the entrance in the Service centre of the City Administration building, citizens select a language in which they want the civil servants to address them with and the script in which they want to submit their applications, complaints, submission, etc. and the language in which that act will be made. The confirmation on receiving the submission is issued in the script in which the submission was made and is registered based on a special record. Equal use of language and script is reflected also in the work of the Contact centre 024 addressed by the citizens on daily basis in all three languages.

All forms used for decision making by the city authorities and secretariats of the city administration are printed in all three languages. All forms used for communication with applicants are printed in all three languages in use. Applicants have the access to 44 types of forms and applications in Croatian and Hungarian by which they initiate administrative proceedings for the realisation of rights in various field of social life, or procedures for issuance of certificates necessary for realisation of their rights and interests. All competitions (applications for competitions and reports on used funds), decisions, orders in the field of culture, information, award of funds to religious communities, sport, youth sector, social humanitarian organisations, scholarships of secondary school pupils of profession in deficit of technical profession and scholarships of students, encouragement of development of young talents are published on the city web site in all three languages. All the office doors carry in all three languages the names of the secretariats, function and name of the person working in the

office. Starting of 2008, the city has regularly applied in the competitions organised by the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities for the costs of creation and placement of multilingual boards, for the development of the e-administration system for the work in multilingual conditions (improvement of the internet portal), for the development of the e-administration system and training of employees. Development of the e-administration system has been significantly improved by the participation of Subotica in the project *Improving human rights and protection of minorities in South-East Europe*, within which the launch of a specialised document management system (DMS) was ensured – software system for organisation of documents with possible control and monitoring the language of administrative proceedings and possibility of notifying the applicants about the processing of their request in the next phase, and about the end of the procedure. As a project result, the existing information system of the city administration was improved, and the representatives of more than 40 other local self-governments have undergone the training on the use of new information technologies which refer to the realisation of this project.

8. Article 11

Names and surnames in minority languages

146. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Serbian authorities intensify their efforts to train officers of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages as to the contents and proper application of the rules currently applicable in this field and to ensure that full information is available to persons belonging to national minorities on the procedures for registering names in minority languages.

Information about the trainings of officers of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the full access to information on the process of registration of names in minority languages is contained in section III.12.

Topographical signs

150. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities take the necessary measures to ensure that all local authorities where a minority language or languages are in official use comply with their obligation to display topographical indications in the relevant minority language or languages.

Authorities of the Republic of Serbia reported in the last report to the Advisory Committee about the legal framework of the official use of language and script of national minorities. We point out that the official use of language and script of national minorities is considered the use of language and script in: *writing* the names of places and other geographical

names, names of squares and streets, names of bodies, organisations and companies, publication of public calls, information and warnings for the public, as well as in writing other public signs, and that, apart from writing those names in scripts of national minorities, there is also a possibility of *defining the traditional names of settlements by the national councils of national minorities* which do not have to be identical to their official names, and the Advisory Committee was also informed about that in the previous report. In that respect, and in relation to the given recommendation, the obligation to display topographical indications in the relevant minority language or languages of national minorities can be observed in three different contexts: 1. as an obligation *to write* the names of settlements in national minority languages; 2. as an obligation to display boards with traditional names of the settlements; and 3. as an obligation of writing other geographical names, names of squares and streets in languages and scripts of national minorities. Since the applicable legal framework places the writing of the names of bodies, organisations and companies in national minority languages, as well as the topographic indications into the same context, the answer to this recommendation will indicate the realisation of that obligation as well.

The official use of languages and scripts of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia is possible not only at the level of the entire local self-government unit, but also at the level of a settlement in which the percentage of the members of a certain national minority in the total number of people living in the territory of the settlement reaches a certain threshold according to the results of the latest population census.

In the Republic of Serbia, in the official use are: Albanian, Bosnian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Czech.

The data obtained by local self-government units indicate that the boards with the names of settlements in the languages of national minorities are written in the largest number of places where the members of a certain national minority make the majority population or a significant percentage of the members of the national minority populate that place.

The data about the practice of use of language and script of national minorities in writing the names of settlements, and about the display of boards with the names of institutions in the language of national minorities in local self-government units in which the languages of national minorities are in official use, are given in the paragraphs below.

Albanian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Bujanovac	In half of the settlements	All boards with the names of the institutions are written in both languages
Medveđa	Boards with the names of settlements are written only in Serbian	All boards with the names of the institutions are written in both languages

Preševo	In all settlements	All boards with the names of the institutions are written in both languages
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Bosnian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Novi Pazar	In all settlements in both languages	In the City Administration for original and entrusted tasks and City Administration for collection of public revenues all bulletin and information boards for all city bodies, departments and branches, there are boards in both languages
Prijepolje	In all settlements in both languages	Boards and information at the entrance of the seat of the Municipal Administration are written in Bosnian language
Sjenica	In all settlements in both languages	All boards with the names of authorities are written in both languages
Tutin	In all settlements in both languages	Names of authorities and organisations are written in both languages

Bulgarian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Bosilegrad	Some boards are written in both languages	Some boards with the names of authorities are written in both languages
Dimitrovgrad	Written only in Serbian	All boards of the names of the authorities are written in both languages

Bulgarian language is also in official use in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Bulgarian is in official use	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Pančevo	Ivanovo	In both languages	All boards with the names of the authorities are written in both languages

Hungarian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Ada	All boards are written in both languages	All boards with the names of authorities are written in both languages
Bač	Not placed	Multilingual boards with the names of municipal, provincial and state authorities are placed
Bačka Topola	Boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian in Bačka Topola, Bagremovi, Bajša, Bogaroš, Gunaroš, Kavilo, Novo Orahovo, Pačir, Pobeda, Svetičevo and Stara Moravica	Names of the authorities and organisational units are written multilingual
Bela Crkva	Boards with the names of settlements Bela Crkva and Dobričevo are written also in Hungarian	All boards on public institutions and state authorities are written multilingual
Bečej	Boards with the names of settlements Bečej, Bačko Gradište, Mileševo and Bačko Petrovo Selo are written also in Hungarian	All boards of the authorities, institutions and public companies founded by the municipality of Bečej are bilingual
Vrbas	Board with the name of settlement Kucura is written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities and organisational units are also written in Hungarian
Vršac	Board with the name of settlement Šušara is written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities and public institutions are written also in Hungarian, regardless of whether they are local, provincial or state institutions and authorities
Žitište	Boards with the name of settlements Novi Itebej, Hetin, Banatski Dvor and Torda are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities, educational institutions and community health centres in all settlements of the municipality are written also in Hungarian
Zrenjanin	Boards with the name of settlements Zrenjanin, Belo Blato, Lukino Selo and Mihajlovo are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the institutions of the city of Zrenjanin are written also in Hungarian
Kanjiza	Boards with the names of all settlements are also written in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities of the municipality and organisational units of the municipal administration are written also in Hungarian
Kovačica	Boards with the names of settlements Debeljača and Kovačica are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the local and state authorities are written also in Hungarian
Kovin	All boards with the names of settlements in the area of the municipality of Kovin are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Kula	Board with the name of settlement Ruski Krstur is written also in Hungarian	Board on the municipal hall is written also in Hungarian
Mali Idoš	Boards with the names of settlements Mali Idoš and Feketić are written also in	Board on the municipal hall is written also in Hungarian

	Hungarian	
Nova Crnja	Board with the names of settlements Nova Crnja and Toba are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities of the municipality are written also in Hungarian
Novi Bečej	All boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Novi Kneževac	Boards with the names of settlements Novi Kneževac, Banatsko Arandelovo, Majdan, Podlokanj, Tabe, Siget, Srpski Krstur, Čala and Filić are written also in Hungarian	Board on the municipal hall is written also in Hungarian
Novi Sad	Boards with the names of settlements Novi Sad, Rumenka, and Kisač are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Odžaci	Boards with the names of settlements Odžaci and Bogojevo are written also in Hungarian	Displayed multilingual boards with the names of municipal, provincial and state authorities
Plandište	Boards with the names of settlements Barice, Velika Greda, Jermenovci, Margita, Plandište and Hajdučica are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Senta	All boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian	All boards in the seats of authorities are bilingual
Sečanj	Boards with the names of settlements Banatska Dubica, Jaša Tomić, Neuzina and Šurjan are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Sombor	Boards with the names of settlements Bački Monoštor, Bezdan, Čonoplja, Doroslovo, Svetozar Miletić and Telečka are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are also written in Hungarian
Srbobran	All boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian	Board with the name of the authority is written also in Hungarian
Subotica	Boards with the names of settlements Subotica, Nosa, Bački Vinogradi, Šupljak, Palić, Bikovi, Novi Žednik, Tavankut, Ljutovo, Ludoš, Dušanovo, Čantavir, Višnjevaca, and Kelebija are also written in Hungarian	All boards are written also in Hungarian
Temerin	Board with the name of settlement Temerin is written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian
Titel	Boards with the names of settlements are written in Serbian	Board with the name of the authority is written also in Hungarian
Čoka	All boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian

Hungarian language is also in official use in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Hungarian is in official use	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Apatin	Kupusina and Svilojevo	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are bilingual
Kikinda	Banatska Topola, Kikidna, Rusko Selo, and Sajan	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are bilingual
Pančevo	Vojlovica and Ivanovo	Boards with the names of settlements are written also in Hungarian	All boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Hungarian

Macedonian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Plandište	Boards with the names of settlements Barice, Velika Greda, Jermenovci, Margita, Plandište and Hajdučica are written also in Macedonian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Macedonian

Macedonian language is also in official use in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Macedonian is in official use	Board with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Pančevo	Jabuka	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual

Romanian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Alibunar	Boards with the names of settlements Alibunar, Lokve, Nikolinci, Seleuš are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of municipal and state authorities are written also in Romanian
Bela Crkva	Boards with the names of settlements Bela Crkva and Grebenac are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of municipal and state authorities are written also in Romanian

Vršac	Boards with the names of settlements Straža, Kuštilj, Mesić, Jablanka, Sočica, Mali Žam, Vojvodinci, Malo Središte, Markovac and Ritiševo are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of authorities and public institutions are written also in Romanian, regardless of whether it is local, provincial or state authorities and institutions
Žitište	Board with the names of settlement Torak is written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of authorities, educational institutions and community health centres in all the settlements of the municipality are written also in Romanian
Zrenjanin	Boards with the names of settlements Zrenjanin, Ečka, Jankov Most and Klek are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of the institutions of the city of Zrenjanin are written also in Romanian
Kovačica	Boards with the names of settlements Debeljača, Kovačica and Uzdin are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of local and state authorities are written also in Romanian
Kovin	All boards with the names of settlements on the territory of the municipality of Kovin are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Romanian
Plandište	Boards with the names of settlements Barice, Velika Greda, Jermenovci, Margita, Plandište and Hajdučica are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Romanian
Sečanj	Boards with the names of settlements Banatska Dubica, Jaša Tomić, Neuzina and Šurjan are written also in Romanian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Romanian

Romanian language is also in official use in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Romanian is in official use	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Pančevo	Banatsko Novo Selo	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual

Ruthenian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Bačka Topola	Boards with the names of settlements Bačka Topola and Novo Orahovo are written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Ruthenian
Vrbas	Board with the name of settlement Kucura is written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities and organisational units are written also in Ruthenian
Žabalj	Boards with the names of settlements Žabalj, Gospodinci and Đurđevo are written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities and organisational units are written also in Ruthenian

Kula	Board with the name of settlement Ruski Krstur is written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Ruthenian
Novi Sad	Boards with the names of settlements Novi Sad, Budisava, Rumenka and Kisač are written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Ruthenian
Šid	Boards with the names of settlements Bikić Do are written also in Ruthenian	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Ruthenian

Slovak language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Alibunar	Boards with the names of settlements Alibunar, Lokve, Nikolinci and Seleuš are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of municipal and state authorities are written also in Slovak
Bač	Board with the name of settlement Selenča is written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of municipal, provincial and state authorities are written also in Slovak
Bačka Palanka	Boards with the names of settlements Pivnice, Silbaš and Čelarevo are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of authorities and organisational units are written also in Slovak
Bačka Topola	Boards with the names of settlements Bačka Topola and Bajša are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of authorities and organisational units are written also in Slovak
Bački Petrovac	All boards with the names of settlements are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of the authorities and departments of the municipal administration are written also in Slovak
Zrenjanin	Boards with the names of settlements Zrenjanin, Aradac and Belo Blato are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of institutions of the city of Zrenjanin are written also in Slovak
Kovačica	Boards with the names of settlements Debeljača, Kovačica and Padina are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of local and state authorities are written also in Slovak
Novi Sad	Boards with the names of settlements Novi Sad, Budisava, Rumenka and Kisač are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of authorities are written also in Slovak
Odžaci	Boards with the names of settlements Odžaci and Lalić are written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of local, provincial and state authorities are written also in Slovak
Plandište	Boards with the names of settlements Barice, Velika Greda, Jermenovci and Margita, Plandište and Hajdučica are written also in Slovak	Board with the name of authority is written also in Slovak
Šid	Boards with the names of settlement Ljuba is written also in Slovak	Boards with the names of the authorities are written also in Slovak

Slovak language is also in official use in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Romanian is in official use	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Beočin	Lug	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual
Stara Pazova	Stara Pazova	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual

Croatian language:

Local self-government unit	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Subotica	Boards with the names of settlements Subotica, Nosa, Bački Vinogradi, Šupljak, Palić, Bikovo, Novi Žednik, Tavankut, Ljutovo, Dušanovo, Čantavir, Višnjevac, Kelebija, Bajmok, Mišičevo, Verušić, Stari Žednik and Đurđin are written also in Croatian	All boards are written also in Croatian

Croatian language is also used in some settlements:

Local self-government unit	Settlements in which Romanian is in official use	Boards with the names of settlements	Boards with the names of the institutions
Apatin	Sonta	bilingual	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual
Sombor	Bački Breg and Bački Monoštor	Board with the name of settlement Bački Monoštor is written also in Croatian	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual
Sremska Mitrovica	Stara Bingula	yes	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual
Šid	Sot and Batrovci	yes	All boards with the names of the authorities are written bilingual

Montenegrin language:

Local self-government unit	Boards at the entrance in a settlement with traditional names in Montenegrin	Boards with the names of the institution in Montenegrin
Mali Idoš	Boards with the names of settlements Mali Idoš and Lovćenac are written also in Montenegrin	Board with the name of the authority is written also in Montenegrin

Czech language:

Local self-government unit	Boards at the entrance in a settlement with traditional names in Czech	Boards with the names of the institution in Czech
Bela Crkva	Board with the names of settlements Bela Crkva and Češko Selo are written also in Czech	All boards with the names of public institutions and state authorities are written bilingual

Within the competition for allocation of budget funds to the authorities and organisation on the territory of the AP Vojvodina operating with the languages and scripts of national minorities which are in official use, the competent provincial secretariat awards the funds also for the creation of multilingual boards with the names of authorities and organisations, settlements and street names, etc. The information about the funds awarded in this competition for placing the boards with the names of authorities and organisations, settlements and street names is given in the table below.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
6,057,000.00	6,485,000.00	7,364,400.00	8,277,652.00	2,252,200.00

9. Article 12

Teacher training and textbooks

156. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Serbian authorities step up their efforts to ensure that the availability of textbooks in minority languages adequately reflects the needs expressed by national minorities. It emphasises in particular the importance of ensuring that approval procedures for textbooks are conducted expeditiously, that national minority councils are informed in good time where there is a need to resolve problems of harmonisation with the Serbian school syllabus and that low circulation does not constitute a barrier to the publication of such textbooks.

Information about the availability of textbooks in minority languages is contained in section III.14.

As for the recommendation of the Advisory Committee according to which the approval procedure for textbooks should be conducted expeditiously, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia underline that the provisions of the Law on Textbooks which was in force in the reporting period, defined that the request for the approval of textbooks should be submitted by the publisher to the Ministry within the time period defined by the Public Call, and in case when it is not done for the school year in which the public call is made, the publishers can apply every year within 30 days starting of 1 September. The request for the approval of textbooks in the language and script of a national minority which national council has the seat in the territory of the

autonomous province, would be submitted pursuant to the provisions of that Law, to the authority of the autonomous province responsible for education. The publisher who submitted the request for the approval of translations of the approved textbooks from Serbian into the language and script of a national minority, was also obliged to submit the previous approval of the national council of the national minority which could provide it within 45 days from the day of submission of the publisher's request. The Ministry would submit to the Institute of Improvement of Education the copies of the textbook manuscripts within 10 working days from the day of expiration of the deadline for submitting the textbook manuscript defined by the Public Call. The Institute would submit the textbook manuscript to the Committee competent for professional evaluation, within 15 days from the day of receiving the textbook manuscript. The Committee was obliged to provide an elaborated professional assessment and send it to the Institute within 90 days from the day of receiving the textbook manuscript. Based on the elaborated professional assessment the Institute would give the proposal to accept or reject the request for the approval of the textbook manuscript not later than 15 days from the day of professional assessment. The given legal provision actually meant that the entire approval procedure of textbooks could last no longer than 130 days from the day when the publisher submitted the request to the Ministry, not including the time period for giving the opinion by the national council defined by the Law.

In 2016, eight memorandums of cooperation in the field of textbook publication were concluded between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, PEI Institute for Textbooks and relevant national councils of national minorities for publishing the textbooks in Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak and Croatian. Those memorandums regulated the deadlines within which certain activities are undertaken regarding the translation of textbooks which were previously approved in Serbian (e.g. deadline for proposing translators and language editors, deadline within which the Institute, as the publisher, is obliged to conclude agreements with those persons, deadline for translation, etc.), and regarding the textbooks originally written in the language of a national minority (deadline within which the national council would propose the authors and language editors, deadline within which the Institute, as the publisher, is obliged to conclude agreements with those persons, deadline for writing and language editing of the textbook manuscript, etc.). At the same time, these memorandums define the obligation of the Ministry to coordinate and monitor the activities in terms of their realisation, provide the necessary administrative and technical assistance and provide the necessary available information, by which, *inter alia*, it ensures that national councils are informed in good time about (in)compliance with the syllabus of the education system.

With the new Law on Textbooks, adopted after the reporting period and which will be discussed more in the next Report, the approval procedure for textbooks is simplified and certain deadlines have been shortened significantly. With the new law, national councils are given the time period of 30 days to give their consent, while the professional assessment of the manuscript lasts 60 days.

Law on Textbooks from 2015 did not define any special solutions for textbooks of low circulation. The new Law defines that a textbook with low circulation is the one which direct and indirect costs of production are higher than the retail price and that textbooks in the language and script of national minorities fall in that category. According to the legal solutions, the retail price of textbooks and teaching materials with the VAT included, published in the language and script of a national minority, cannot be higher than the retail price of textbooks and teaching materials in Serbian, with the VAT included. Also, it defines that the publisher of a textbook is obliged to participate in ensuring the funds for the publication of textbooks of low circulation in the amount of 2% of realised net revenues from sold textbooks in the previous calendar year, and that the mentioned funds should be calculated and paid to the account of the public publisher for that purpose, not later than 31 March of the current year, except from the cases it publishes all textbooks with low circulation which have been approved. It is particularly important to underline that the new legal solutions define that the Government, in line with the available funds in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, makes a decision on co-financing the preparation and/or procurement of textbooks of low circulation, if the funds paid by the publishers are not enough for financing the publication or procurement of the textbooks of low circulation.

157. The authorities should ensure that adequate opportunities for teacher training of teaching in and of minority languages are provided and that the demands of national minorities in this regard are rapidly followed up.

Education of the teaching staff

Law on Fundamental of the Education System in Article 140 and 141 defines the adequate level of education of teachers, preschool teachers and professional associates for teaching in languages of national minorities. Activities of preschool teachers and class teachers can be performed by a person who acquired relevant knowledge in the language in which the activities are realised or passed the exam in the language with the methodology, according to the syllabus of the relevant higher education institution. Activities of teachers and professional associates can be performed by a person who acquired secondary, high or higher education in the language in which the teaching is carried out or passed the exam of that language according to the syllabus of the relevant higher education institution. The certificate on knowledge of Romani language is issued by a higher education institution or the National Council of Roma National Ministry based on the passed standardised test created by the Ministry.

Education of the staff for work in minority languages in preschool institutions is carried out in special pedagogical schools having the lectures also in minority languages:

- College of vocational studies for education of preschool teachers in Novi Sad (teaching is carried out in Serbian and Hungarian)
- College of vocational studies for education of preschool teachers in Subotica (teaching is carried out in Serbian and Hungarian)

- College of vocational studies for education of preschool teachers in Vršac (teaching is carried out in Serbian and Romanian and in Serbian and Romani language).

Education of teachers for teaching in minority languages in lower classes of primary education is carried out:

- At the Department of the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences from Sombor in Bački Petrovac, where the staff is educated to teach in Slovak.
- At the Department of the Belgrade Teacher Education Faculty in Vršac, where the staff is educated to teach in Romanian.
- At the Department of the Teacher Education Faculty in Subotica, where the staff is educated to teach in Hungarian.

Education of teachers to teach in higher classes of primary education is done within higher, university education. Apart from the departments and lectorates for studying language and literature, in the Republic of Serbia is possible to study also other sciences in the languages of national minorities providing the professional qualifications also for teaching in those languages in higher classes of primary and secondary schools.

Strengthening the initial education of teachers is part of the Strategy of Education Development in the Republic of Serbia until 2020¹¹⁷ with the aim to ensure professional staff for teaching in the languages of the national minorities. Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development has initiated mapping of the needs of higher education institutions realising study programmes in the languages of national minorities together with the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. From its foundation the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, has realised study programmes in national minority languages: Slovak Language and Literature, Hungarian Language and Literature, Romanian Language and Literature, and Ruthenian Language and Literature. With the completion of these study programmes students acquire not only teaching competences, but also the competences for other recognised professions (translation, language editing, work in media houses, etc.). Students can use professional literature in the languages of national minorities with a rich library fund of the Library of the Faculty of Philosophy. In addition to that, within the Language Centre of the Faculty, they can strengthen their language competences and learn professional terminology which they find necessary for further professional development.

International cooperation in education

Activities of mapping the needs with the aim to strengthen the capacities for learning the professional terminology for students who are members of national minorities, are continuously carried out through the ERASMUS+ programme and bilateral cooperation with the universities and line institutions in the countries of origin of national minorities.

¹¹⁷ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 107/2012

With the aim to ensure professional staff for teaching in the languages of national minorities the Ministry of Education cooperates with the National Council for Higher Education and the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. One of the proposed solutions in the pipeline is encouraging the mobility of students, future teachers, to visit the faculties in the countries of origin, which is in line with the Strategy for Education in the Republic of Serbia until 2020.

The data on realised mobility within the projects with the ERASMUS+ programme countries are given in the table below.

Country	Number of agreements concluded with the institutions from Serbia within the ERASMUSE+ KA1 mobility projects	Total number of realised mobilities of exchange students*	Total number of realised mobilities of exchange teachers or associates*	Total number of approved ERASMUS+ KA1 mobility projects/approved mobilities 2015/2016*	Number of ERASMUS+ KA2 projects on capacity building in higher education	Number of tempus projects
Albania	1				6	
Bulgaria	18	12/0	9/4	15/180	1	
Slovakia	10	2/10	1/3	8/159	2	
Romania	20	12/22	25/26	13/378		2
Hungary	15	3/13	2/15	14/273	3	1
Croatia	7	0/4	1/3	5/78	3	1
Czech Republic	7	1/3	1/1	7/144	4	
Macedonia	4			1/1	3	

* Total number of approve mobilities within ERASMUS+KA1 project means the number of planned mobilities but it does not mean that all mobilities will be realised. The final number of mobilities will be known once all the projects are completed.

Overview of the exchange mobilities within the CEEPUS programme is contained in the table below.

Country	Number of realised mobilities of arriving students 2015/2016	Number of realised mobilities of arriving teachers and associates 2015/2016	Number of realised and planned student mobilities 2016/2017	Number of realised and planned mobilities of arriving teachers or associates 2016/2017
Bulgaria	2	4		6
Slovakia		4	2	6
Romania	1	9		6
Hungary		5	1	7
Croatia	5	6	10	18
Czech Republic	4	4		3
Macedonia	4		2	

Republic of Serbia is active in the cooperation in the field of education with the countries of origin of the national minorities. This cooperation is reflected in student exchange, teacher exchange, and preschool teacher exchange and strengthening of linguistic competences. Universities in the Republic of Serbia are signatories of numerous agreements on cooperation with universities in the countries of origin with national minorities in the Republic of Serbia.

In the reporting period the following agreements i.e. programmes of cooperation in education were signed.

- Agreement between Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on cooperation in the field of education, signed on 6 June 2013;
- Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and Government of the Republic of Macedonia on mutual recognition of public documents on acquired education and on vocational, academic and scientific titles, signed on 21 February 2014;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and Government of the Republic of Macedonia on cooperation in the field of education, science and technology, signed on 16 February 2015.
- Programme of cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Republic of Slovakia in the field of education for the period 2016-2020, signed on 8 November 2016. This programme defines that the Slovak side will receive 30 preschool teachers, and teachers of primary and secondary schools in which Slovak language is used for teaching, for language courses which will last 14 days.

Cooperation in education with Hungary is realised based on the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on cooperation in the field of education, science, culture, youth, and sport, signed on 13 March 2006. In the period 2007-2013 the cooperation was realised through the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The funds were allocated for the Programme of Cross-Border Cooperation Hungary-Serbia 2007-2013. The territories covered by the Programme in Serbia are all Banat districts, as well as the counties Csongrad and Bacz – Kiskun in Hungary. The cooperation was realised in the following areas: exchange of scholarships for post-graduate studies, specialisation and scientific research, 20 months of scholarships annually based on reciprocity; exchange of scholarships for summer courses of Serbian, and Hungarian language; exchange of language editors – based on reciprocity; exchange of students within the CEEPUS Programme; exchange of experts in the field of education with the aim to exchange experience in education systems of the two countries.

The work of the University Alliance of the Central-East Europe is continued, which was established at the initiative of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia and the Provincial Secretariat for Education, at the Educons University in Sremska Kamenica. The academic university network makes the representatives of Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia. The primary objectives of establishing

the Alliance are to develop quality standards of higher education in the region and to promote science, education and multiculturalism.

Belgrade University signed the agreements on cooperation with the universities in Skadar and Tirana. Based on those agreements, the visiting professors from Albania give lectures at the Belgrade University.

Agreement on cooperation between the University of Zagreb and the Teacher Education Faculty, Belgrade University, was signed in 2016. Lectures of professors from Zagreb have been realised twice so far, and professors of the Teacher Education Faculty from Belgrade have been on study visits in Zagreb. On that occasion they gave several lectures, and became members of the editorial board of the reputable magazine *Croatian Journal of Education* which is a reference on the SCI list. On the other hand, professors from Zagreb became members of the editorial team of Serbian magazines *Innovations in Teaching* and *Methodical Practice*. Since signing this agreement several international scientific meetings have been held.

With the aim to improve the competences of the teaching staff for Ukrainian language, Summer schools of Ukrainian Studies are organised in Serbia every year, where lectures are given also by lecturers from Ukraine.

Continuous professional development of teachers

Article 42 of the Law on Fundamentals of the Education System defines that the Institute for Improvement of Education performs the professional activities which, *inter alia*, refer to: improvement and development of competence standards for the profession of teachers and preparation and continuous programme improvement. Provisions of Article 44 of the same Law define that the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, *inter alia*, performs professional activities of creating of educational standards and development of standards of quality of the work of institutions.

Rulebook on continuous professional development and acquisition of the title of teachers, preschool teachers and professional associates¹¹⁸ defines that the continuous professional development of teachers, preschool teachers and professional associates is realised in line with special programmes, which can be compulsory and elective.

In the Catalogue of programmes of continuous professional development of teachers, preschool teachers, professional associates and principals, apart from numerous programmes regarding the general matters of teaching, then programmes in the field of social and natural sciences and arts, programmes for provision of additional support to children/pupils in need, the approval is given to the programmes for professional development of teachers for teaching national minorities.

Catalogue of programmes of professional development of employees in education for the school year 2012/2014, contained 12 programmes for professional development of teachers for teaching national minorities or in relation to national minorities.

¹¹⁸ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 85/2013 and 86/2015 – other rulebook

In the Catalogue of programmes of continuous professional development of teachers, preschool teachers, and professional associates for the school year 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, there were 53 programmes of professional development of importance for teachers and associates teaching in national minority languages.

Situation of the Roma in the educational sphere

161. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to take all necessary steps to eliminate segregation of Roma children in education, whether it occurs within individual schools, between schools or through over-representation in special schools.

Information about the realisation of this recommendation is contained in section III.2.

162. It encourages the authorities to devise without delay policy measures to effectively increase access to mainstream education as well as to improve education outcomes for Roma children, including through providing facilitated access for pupils who lack complete documentation, promoting preschool attendance, supporting the presence of educational assistants in schools and providing support such as free textbooks to socio-economically disadvantaged families.

Providing facilitated access for pupils who lack complete documentation

In the reporting period and right before the end of the preparations of the final version of the Report, the procedures for enrolment in primary school have been simplified with the aim to increase the coverage of Roma pupils in primary education. Pursuant to the Law on Primary Education, children coming from vulnerable groups may enrol in school without the evidence of parents' residence and without the necessary documentation, but with the provided evidence of health examination of the child. Testing of the child is done after the child's enrolment in school, in the mother tongue of the child, with the application of standard procedures and instruments, recommended by the competent institute, i.e. authorised professional organisations. If the child cannot be tested in the mother tongue, the school hires a translator at the proposal of the national council of national minority, which actually means that it is possible also in Romani language. The same possibility of enrolment without the evidence of parents' residence and without the necessary documentation is defined by the Law on Preschool Education for the enrolment of children in preschool institutions, i.e. school realising the preparatory preschool programme. In the context of this part of the recommendation, the authorities of the Republic of Serbia indicate that according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the position of women and children in Serbia (MICS 5) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the position of women and children in Roma settlements in Serbia in 2014, conducted by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the percentage of children under five years of age registered in the Registry of Births at the level of the Republic is 99.4%, while in Roma settlements it is 95.3%.

Promoting the necessity of preschool attendance

Law on Preschool Education defines that when enrolling children in preschool institutions, founded by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province or local self-government unit, the priority for the enrolment is given to the children coming from vulnerable groups. Amendments to the Law on Preschool Education¹¹⁹ adopted right before the end of the final version of the Report, changed the name of Article “Children with Developmental Difficulties” into: “Support to Children from Vulnerable Social Groups”, by which the provisions referring to the provision of additional support were expanded so that now they refer to all the children from vulnerable social groups. According to the provision of that Law, a preschool institution enrolling a child from a vulnerable social group can identify the need for the provision of additional educational health or social support to the child. The initiative for starting the process of assessment of the child’s need for additional support performed by the inter-sectorial committee may be started by a parent, or other legal representative of the child and/or the preschool institution with the consent of the parent, i.e. other legal representative.

The data of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the position of women and children in Serbia (MICS 5) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the position of women and children in Roma settlements in Serbia in 2014, show that there big differences in the position of some groups of children depending on whether they live in urban or rural areas, the level of education and socio-economical position of their parents. According to the mentioned surveys, the percentage of children 36-59 months of age attending the programmes of preschool education in the general population is 50.2%, while in Roma settlements that percentage is 5.7%. On the other hand, if we compare the percentage data of children in the first grade of primary school having attended the preparation preschool programme, we come into a conclusion that the difference between the general population and the population in Roma settlements is not drastically big, since in the general population that percentage is 98.1%, and in Roma settlements 79.9%.

For having the whole picture about the coverage of children with the preschool education at the national level, we use the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. The data on the national affiliation of children and their families are not collected, but the reporting form of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia for the collection of data on preschool institutions for each school year contains, *inter alia*, the questions on the number of children in preschool institutions for whom Romani is their mother tongue, number of children from families who are beneficiaries of the financial social assistance, number of children whose parents are beneficiaries of child allowance, and the number of educational groups in which teaching is performed in two languages out of which one language is Romani and the number of educational groups in which teaching is performed in three languages out of which one language is Romani. According to the data available at the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, collected in the manner described above, for the school year 2016/2017, in preschool education

¹¹⁹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 18/2010 and 101/2017

there were 1.004 children whose mother (first) language was Romani and 26 children whose second language was Romani. Preschool education covered 5.974 children from families who are beneficiaries of financial social assistance and 13.280 children whose parents are beneficiaries of child allowance. At the same time, there were no educational groups in two or three languages out of which one language was Romani.

In the reporting period, many projects were realised with the aim to, *inter alia*, promote the necessity of attending preschool education for Roma children. Therefore, in the last years the Red Cross, within the Joint Programme for Inclusion of Roma and Marginalised Groups through education, provided support in various ways to the inclusion of children coming from vulnerable social groups in preschool education. In cooperation of the Red Cross, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and Ministry of Education, within the Joint Programme, activities were realised in order to ensure the continuity in attending preschool programmes for 322 children in 16 municipalities. The activities were participated also by the representatives of school administration, principals of preschool institutions and representatives of local self-government units: Zaječar, Velika Plana, Sombor, Zrenjanin, Ruma, Novi Pazar, Paraćin, Kragujevac, Knjaževac, Gadžin Han, Bela Crkva, Aleksinac, Vrbas, Smederevo, Trstenik and Tutin. The transition process was successfully realised for almost all the children.

Project *Initiative for support to development and learning of Roma children of early age in Serbia* is realised in the partnership of the Ministry of Education with the Romani Educational and Cultural Community “Romanipen”. The initiative is realised in 15 towns/municipalities in cooperation with 16 preschool institutions and 15 Roma non-government organisations. So far, 437 families have been covered, 642 parents and other family members and 681 children, who participated in subject workshops. Roma non-government organisations held 289 workshops in total, and 292 workshops with children, organised 84 joint activities for children and parents with the aim to connect the families and the local community and create possibilities to have the parents and children plan, learn, socialise, and create together. Roma non-government organisations realised 274 home visits covering 84 families with children up to two years of age. The percentage of children from three to five and a half years of age covered by preschool programmes in these municipalities has increased, with the project realisation, from 12% to 100% in 9 preschool institutions. There are 8 employees (educational assistants) involved in the project who are members of the Roma national minority.

Realisation of the project *Kindergartens without borders 3 – support to the promotion of the system of social care of children and preschool education at local level* started at the very end of the reporting period with the aim to empower local self-governments and preschool institutions to develop policies and programmes of preschool education adjusted to the needs of children and families. The project is realised in three preschool institutions in Belgrade and Zrenjanin and they cover 36 children from the Roma population.

With the aim to improve the access, quality and fairness of preschool education, especially for children from three to five and a half years of age from vulnerable social groups, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development started the realisation of the

Project of inclusive preschool education in Serbia. The project is worth 47 million euros, and will be realised from 2017 until 2022.

Supporting the presence of educational assistants in schools and mentorship with secondary school pupils

Recruitment of educational assistants is one of the most important measures for efficient increase of regular education and promotion of educational perspective of Roma children. The role of educational assistant is to support the Roma pupils in overcoming the language and the integration in the classes and educational system. In the reporting period the number of educational assistants who were recruited in local self-government increased. There are currently 175 recruited educational assistants, contributing to the inclusion and achievement of better results by the Roma pupils in education, and 35 of them provide support to children in preschool institutions. The jobs of all the educational assistants are financed at the national and local level.

All educational assistant are certified though the accredited modules within the Centre for Life-Long Learning in Kragujevac. So far there have been 191 educational assistants, and the introduction of 50 new educational assistants is expected.

With the support of educational assistants, the enrolment into preschool institutions has started. So far the preschool institutions, with the support of educational assistants, enrolled 1.300 children, which is of special significance, having in mind that in the previous period the attention was not paid to the preparation of education, which resulted in a high drop-out rate.

Within the 2012 IPA project *European Support to Roma Inclusion – We Are Here Together* a special attention is on the prevention of the drop-out among the secondary school pupils, and the pupils are provided with mentorship and peer support. The project supported a training and certification of 208 mentors who work with pupils in secondary school throughout Serbia.

Other form of support

Free textbooks for socio-economically disadvantaged families

Law on Textbooks, valid at the time of the reporting period defined that the Government, with the aim to ensure equal access to education to pupils and trainees from socio-economically disadvantaged families, in line with the available funds in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, can made a decision on financing the procurement and awarding, i.e. co-financing the procurement of textbooks, manuals and teaching material for the next school year. The provision of almost identical wording was included in the text of the new Law¹²⁰ adopted after the end of the reporting period, about which more information will be provided in the next report. Starting from school year 2015/2016, pupils of primary but also from secondary schools have received

¹²⁰ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 27/2018

free textbooks in line with the criteria defined by the Ministry – children of single parents, children from foster families and orphanages, children from families in which both parents are unemployed, and other pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged families, Serbian Government adopted a Decision on financing the procurement of textbooks with the funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia for school year 2016/2017¹²¹ which defines the right to award of textbooks have pupils of families who are beneficiaries of financial and social assistance and pupils with disabilities (with impaired sight), who apply in their schools for free textbooks award. The amount of funds allocated for the project of *Free Textbooks* remained the same every year and amounted to almost 600,000,000.00 dinars. Free textbooks of the last year of the reporting period (school year 2016/2017) were awarded to around 45.000 children.

Apart from the funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, free textbooks are procured with the funds of some local self-government units which independently decide on their amount, and the manner of distribution of those textbooks.

Affirmative action measures

For many years in the Republic of Serbia, one of the most important activities for the efficient increase of the access to mainstream education and improvement of the educational perspective of the Roma children are measures for affirmative actions for enrolment of children of Roma national minority in secondary schools and faculties. Adoption of the Rulebook on criteria and procedure for enrolment of pupils – members of the Roma national minority in secondary school under more favourable conditions for achieving a full equality¹²² in February 2016, which now became an integral part of the Rulebook on Enrolment in Secondary School,¹²³ finished the process of systemic regulation of this type of support. Data on the number of enrolled pupils of Roma national minority with the application of the affirmative action measures are contained in the table below.

School year	Number of pupils enrolled based on the affirmative action measures
2012/13	367
2013/14	330
2014/15	369
2015/16	422
2016/17	1632

Scholarships, accommodation and transport

In the Republic of Serbia there are measures of support such as scholarships, allocation of funds for the transport, accommodation and food of pupils, which are systemically realised.

¹²¹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 63/2016

¹²²"Official Gazette of RS", no. 12/2016

¹²³ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 23/2018

Ministry of Education allocates up to 10% for students and up to 10% for pupils from vulnerable social groups out of the total number of scholarships and loans. When it comes to students, those measures include also the exemption from tuition fees, and the measures based on which student centres within their accommodation capacities should use up to 10% of their capacities for that purpose. One of the results of providing scholarships to secondary school pupils is a reduction of the drop-out rate from 7%, to 3%, and the general school achievement of pupils receiving scholarships has improved, especially of girls. From the budget of the Republic of Serbia in the school year 2015/2016, 176 scholarships were awarded to Roma pupils with excellent achievement (out of whom 65% are girls). From the budget of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development for the school year 2016/2017, 150 pupil scholarships were awarded to Roma pupils in secondary schools with excellent achievement (out of whom 60% are girls). Apart from the funds allocated in the state budget, scholarships can be also provided from the budget of local self-governments. According to the available data, at the end of this reporting period, 10 local self-government units allocated funds in their budgets for the scholarships of pupils of secondary schools, but there are no data on the number of pupils of Roma national minority who are beneficiaries of these funds.

In the Republic of Serbia 15 local self-government units allocate funds for the transport of pupils of Roma nationality attending secondary schools.

Measures which refer to pupils returnees after readmission

Measures which refer to pupils returnees after readmission are also taken. In the school year 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 in primary schools in the territory of the Republic of Serbia there were 711 enrolled pupils returnees after readmission: 369 girls and 342 boys. Since primary schools have an affirmative approach in resolving the issues of returnees after readmission, they usually do not register these pupils separately, but apply the facilitated enrolment procedures, then hire a team for previous assessment of knowledge and include the pupils into regular education. Thanks to the flexibility of the system and the support measures, these children integrate very fast. So the children enrolled during a school year based on the readmission agreement are usually not treated as returnees, but after one month they become regular pupils. Additionally, if a child return in the same school year, the school does not treat the child as a newly enrolled pupil, but the child stay in the same class. In that way the child does not lose a year, the absence is justified, and children are provided with additional support in overcoming the material and the possibility to have additional classes in order to make up for the missed classes. Out of the total number of pupils returned based on the Readmission Agreement, 497 of them, which is 70% (292 girls and 205 boys) were enrolled in the age-appropriate classes.

Learning of Romani in the public education system

Data about the possibility to learn Romani in the public education system, and about the number of pupils covered by this measure, are given in section III.14.

Recognition of diplomas and equal opportunities in access to higher education

*167. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to pursue their efforts to ensure that diplomas delivered by educational institutions in Kosovo*¹²⁴ and other institutional establishments in the region are duly and rapidly recognised.*

168. It also strongly encourages the authorities to continue to support the provision of higher education in southern Serbia, to take all necessary measures to resolve the remaining difficulties in this context and to monitor and regularly evaluate progress achieved, in consultation with representatives of the national minorities concerned.

Information about the realisation of these recommendations is contained in section III.13.

10. Article 14***Teaching in and of minority languages***

174. The Advisory Committee encourages the Serbian authorities to continue providing education in minority languages and to ensure that restrictions are reduced during the process of revising the laws on primary and secondary education.

175. It further recommends that the authorities remove all unnecessary obstacles to the exercise of the right to education in minority languages, notably by ensuring that the legal provisions governing teaching in and of minority languages are applied consistently throughout Serbia, especially at local level, and that formal requirements for the opening of classes are not used as a means to hamper their opening in practice.

Information about the access to textbooks and education in national minority languages is contained in section III.14.

Serbian authorities inform the Advisory Committee that the amendments to the educational legislation in the reporting period, and the adoption of the new Law on Fundamentals of the Education System after the reporting period have not reduced the rights of members of national minorities in the field of education.

¹²⁴This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Requirements for opening classes in national minority languages

As the Advisory Committee has been informed, the legal framework of primary and secondary education in the Republic of Serbia defines that for members of national minorities the education is realised in the language and script of the national minority, i.e. bilingually, if when enrolling the first grade minimum 15 pupils want so. When teaching is performed in the language and script of a national minority, i.e. bilingually in the language and script of the national minority and in Serbian, the ministry competent for education, upon obtaining the opinion of the relevant national council of the national minority, gives the consent to teaching for less than 15 pupils enrolled in the first grade. In the territory of the autonomous province such consent is given by the competent provincial secretariat.

In practice, the requirements for the opening of classes in national minority languages are not used as a means to hamper their opening. On the contrary, according to the available data, in the Republic of Serbia in 575 cases, in a large number of schools, classes in language and script of national minorities were opened for less than 15 pupils. The table below contains the data on languages for which classes were opened for less than 15 pupils, average number of pupils in such a class, and the number of classes and number of schools in which such teaching is performed.

Language of teaching	Average number of pupils	Number of classes	Number of schools
Albanian	9.21	98	14
Bosnian	8.46	57	15
Bulgarian	6.33	3	1
Hungarian	9.31	295	60
Romanian	7.84	62	15
Ruthenian	7.92	13	2
Slovak	9.96	26	8
Croatian	6.86	21	4

11. Article 15

Representation in elected bodies

180. The Advisory Committee encourages the Serbian authorities to continue to promote the effective participation of national minorities in electoral processes. At the same time, they should consider reviewing the provisions in place regarding the election of members of parliament in order to avoid abuse of the more flexible provisions regarding national minority parties and promote a more effective participation of numerically smaller national minorities in elected bodies at national level.

Information on the effective participation of national minorities in electoral processes is given in section III.3.

Provisions on the facilitated winning of mandates of political parties of national minorities were introduced into the legal order of the Republic of Serbia in order to promote the efficient political participation of national minorities. In terms of the Law on Political Parties, political party of a national minority is a party which actions are particularly focused on the representation and presentation of the interests of a national minority and protection and improvement of the rights of the members of that national minority in line with the Constitution, law, and international standards, regulated by the memorandum of association, programme and statute of the political party. Having in mind that the memorandum of association, programme and statute of a political party must define that it is a party which action is particularly focused on the presentation and representation of the interests of one national minority and protection and improvement of the rights of the members of that national minority, it is clear that in the election process the voters have the option to get to know the fact and execute their political choice, *inter alia*, having in mind the that fact as well. In that aspect, the possibility of abuse the more flexible provisions on parties of national minorities in the reality of the political life is reduced to a minimum, basically due to the fact the electoral body is familiarised with the character of political parties participating in the elections, and during the pre-election campaign the organisation broadcasting radio and TV programme, founded by the Republic of Serbia, are obliged, starting from the day of announcing the elections, within political and information programmes which broadcast is ensured on the entire territory of Serbia, to ensure the presentation of nominators of electoral lists and candidates from the electoral lists, *as well as the statements and elaboration of the election programme of nominators of those lists*. It is clear, however, that the character of a political party of a national minority does not mean that such a political organisations is only in charge of the issues of protection and representation of the interests of one national minority, but that it is free to treat in its programme also other issues of wider social and political importance and to participate in coalitions in elections with other political parties, so that its voters can be also members of the majority population and members of other national minorities. That, at the same time, gives the possibility of making a more efficient participation of numerically smaller national minorities in the election bodies, especially because the Law on Election of Members of Parliament defines that the coalitions of political parties of national minorities participate in the distribution of seats even in cases when they got less than 5% of votes of the total number of voters who voted. According to the opinion of Serbian authorities, such solutions, with the necessary political organisation and active participation of minority members in the political processes which, in a democratic society depend only on them, create optimal conditions for an efficient participation of national minorities in the electoral processes. .

Participation in public administration and in the judiciary

186. The Advisory Committee reiterates its recommendation that the authorities collect comprehensive data on the representation of national minorities in public administration at all levels, while fully respecting international standards in the field of personal data protection.

Information about the representation of national minorities in public administration, public administration of the AP Vojvodina and administration of local self-government units is contained in sections III. 3, IV. 11. and in relation to the recommendation number 187 of the Advisory Committee and III. 12, while the information on respecting international standards in the field of personal data protection is contained in section IV. 1. and in relation to the recommendation number 52 of the Advisory Committee.

187. It again calls on the authorities to take vigorous measures to address the underrepresentation of national minorities in public administration, particularly at state level. Such measures should also be taken as regards the judiciary, in particular for the Albanian and Bosniac minorities. It strongly encourages the authorities to pursue their efforts to create a multiethnic police force, and to pay particular attention to ensuring adequate representation of Bosniacs in the police force in the Sandžak.

Information about the measures to address the underrepresentation of national minorities in public administration *at state level*, as well as measures for overcoming it is contained in section III. 3, while the information about the measures which refer to the representation of national minorities in public administration *at local level* is contained in section III.12.

Measures to address the underrepresentation of national minorities in the administration of the autonomous province

Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities, pursuant to Article 37 of the Provincial Assembly decision on provincial administration¹²⁵ is responsible to monitor and have an analytical review of the situation in the field of protection and realisation of the rights of national minorities, and propose measures to be taken in that field. In late 2016 and early 2017, Secretariat conducted a survey covering 23 bodies and organisations of the AP Vojvodina. Out of total 1.180 employees in the bodies and organisations of the AP Vojvodina, 175 people in total stated different national affiliation from Serbian, while 113 people did not state their national affiliation. The data on the number and percentage share in the total number of employees are given in the table below.

¹²⁵ "Official Journal of APV", no 37/2014, 54/2014 – other regulation and 37/2016

National affiliation of employees in bodies and organisations of the AP Vojvodina

Employees in bodies and organisations of the AP Vojvodina – total number of employees 1.180		
Hungarians	66	5.6 %
Croats	24	2.03 %
Slovaks	20	1.7 %
Montenegrins	19	1.6%
Ruthenians	13	1.1%
Romanians	10	0.85%
Roma	4	0.33%
Bunjevci	1	0.08%
Undeclared	113	9.6%
Others	18	1.5%

New solutions in the legislation created the conditions for a more efficient monitoring of the participation of members of national minorities in the administration of the AP Vojvodina. Article 192 of the Law on Employees in the Autonomous Province and Local Self-Government Unit, *inter alia*, define that the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, through its authorities, services and organisations, in line with this law and the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina closely regulates the human resource management. According to the abovementioned, the Provincial Government made a Decision on the human resource management service.¹²⁶ This decision defines that the Human resource management service keeps a staff record on employees and personal files of employees, and that the Provincial Government, with a special act, will regulate the keeping of the record and files. Therefore, the Provincial Government made the Decision of Staff records on employees,¹²⁷ and the Decision on Personal files of employees.¹²⁸ Decision on the Staff records on employees defines keeping the staff records in provincial administration bodies, which, *inter alia*, covers the data on national affiliation, mother tongue, languages in which primary, secondary and higher education of employees was acquired.

Measures to address the representation of national minorities in judiciary

Statistical data on the representation of members of national minorities as holders of public prosecutors' title, presented in the table below, were collected based on the Situation Analysis in public prosecutor's offices in 2016, based on voluntary statements.

Area of public prosecutor's office	Systematised number of holders of the public prosecutors' title	Filled number of holders of the public prosecutors' titles	Number of members of national minorities

¹²⁶ "Official Journal of APV", no. 65/2016

¹²⁷ "Official Journal of APV", no. 5/2017

¹²⁸ "Official Journal of APV", no. 5/2017

Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office Novi Sad	176	154	15
Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office Belgrade	249	222	7
Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office Kragujevac	184	155	6
Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office Niš	150	123	3

Statistical data on the representation of members of national minorities as holders of judge title, presented in the table below, were collected based on the Situation Analysis in courts in 2016, based on voluntary statements.

Area	Number of holders of judge titles stating the national affiliation of a national minority in the Appellate, Supreme and Basic courts
Appellate court Belgrade	7
Appellate court Novi Sad	36
Appellate court Kragujevac	17
Appellate court Niš	14

Having in mind the given data, the High Judicial Council, in the session held on 15 November 2016, adopted the Rulebook on the criteria and requirements for assessment of expertise, competences and dignity for the election of judges for a permanent judicial office in the second or higher court and on the criteria for proposing candidate for the president of the court¹²⁹, as well as the Rulebook on the criteria and requirements for assessing the expertise, competences and dignity of the candidate for the first-choice judge¹³⁰. These rulebooks, *inter alia*, contains the provisions *stating that in the election of judge and presidents of the court the attention will be on the national composition of the population, corresponding representation of members of national minorities and knowledge on professional legal terminology in the languages of national minorities in official use in the court*. These rulebooks specified and made operational the provisions of the Law on Judges, which created the conditions for the realisation of an adequate representation of members of national minorities in courts.

State Judicial Council, in the session held on 23 March 2017, adopted a new Rulebook on work of the State Judicial Council¹³¹, entering the provisions which closely regulate the

¹²⁹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 94/2016

¹³⁰ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 94/2016

¹³¹ "Official Gazette of RS", no 29/2017 and 46/2017

implementation of Article 82 of the Law on Public Prosecutor's Office¹³², with the aim to ensure a full and efficient equality between the members of national minorities and the members of the majority population. In that respect, Article 59 of the Rules of Procedure defines that the process of election is conducted by the Council taking care of the national composition of the population, proper representation of members of national minorities and knowledge about the professional legal terminology in the languages of national minorities in the official use in the court. The mentioned provision was made concrete also through the wording of Article 60 of the Rules of Procedures, defining special rules on decision making when making the decision on election, i.e. proposal of candidates for deputy public prosecutor in public prosecutor's offices in the area of local self-governments in which a language and script of a national minority is in official use, by establishing the obligation of the Council to collect the data on the national composition of the population of local self-governments, and on the national composition of holders of public prosecutor's titles in that public prosecutor's office. After that, if it is identified that the national composition of holders of public prosecutor's title is not proportionate to the national composition of the population in the area of scope of that public prosecutor's office, the Council shall, acting in line with the new Rulebook, *by rule elect, i.e. propose the candidate of the national affiliation which election, i.e. proposal, will contribute to a proportionality of the national composition, with the election or proposal for election of the top ranked candidate of that national affiliation, if his/her assessment, i.e. number of points are not below 90% of the assessment, i.e. number of points of the first ranked candidate.* In order to apply the mentioned provisions, it is necessary to meet the requirements referred to in Article 60, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure – candidates in the application declare their national affiliation and give consent to the Council for the application of special rules, since declaring national affiliation is voluntary.

Applying Articles 59 and 60 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Judicial Council, the Council decided in the competition held in September 2017 to increase the number of deputy public prosecutors of Bosniac nationality in the area of Novi Pazar.

Multi-ethnic police forces and ensuring the proper representation of Bosniacs in the police forces

Information about the measures to increase the number of members of national minorities in police forces is contained in sections III. 3. and IV. 4. regarding the recommendation number 106 of the Advisory Committee.

¹³² "Official Gazette of RS", no 116/08, 104/09, 101/10, 78/11 – other law, 101/11, 38/12 – decision of CC, 121/2012, 101/2013, 111/2014 – decision of CC, 117/2014, 106/2015 and 63/2016 - CC

Councils of National Minorities

200. the Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to pursue their work towards revising the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, in close consultation with representatives of all national minorities and of civil society. In so doing, particular care should be taken to remove conflicts with other laws; to lay down clear criteria for the transfer of competences to national minority councils; to ensure that all cases where conflicts of interests between two or more councils may arise are regulated on the basis of clear criteria; and to strengthen the legal provisions governing elections to national minority councils and their implementation, so as to ensure full respect for the principle of free self-identification.

Information of the realisation of this recommendation is contained in section IV. 4.

201. The authorities should abstain from intervening in the internal functioning of national councils of national minorities.

Authorities of the Republic of Serbia do not have legal means to arbitrarily intervene in the internal functioning of national councils of national minorities, nor to discretionary decision-making on status issues of national councils. Amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities made in 2014, introduced the administrative-legal, as well as judiciary protection against the acts made by authorities in the process of elections of national councils of national minorities, or by which they make decisions on status issues of national councils. In that respect, it should be underlined that those amendments define that a national council is obliged to submit a request for registration of changes of data entered into the Register within ten days from the day the changes occurred, to along with the request for registration of changes of data provide the evidence on the change, and along with the request for registration of amendments to the statute provide the minutes from the session in which those amendments to the statute were adopted and two copies of the decision on the amendments to the statute, and that the decision defining the request for registration of changes of data is final and that an administrative proceeding can be initiated against it. The decisions on the deletion of a national council from the Register in the case of being dissolved due to the suspension of the procedure of choosing a national council¹³³, or because the number of its members has been reduced below half, are also specified, and that the decision to delete it from the Register is final and that an administrative proceeding may be initiated against it. Deletion of a council from the Register does not mean disabling if from exercising the right to a national council election, as it is also stipulated that a

¹³³ Reasons for the suspension of the election procedure are listed in the Law – decision to suspend the election procedure for a national council is made if: 1) the electoral assembly is not attended by minimum number of electors defined by the law; 2) no electoral list applies for the election of members of a national council; 3) none applying electoral list may be announced; 4) the collective electoral list is not established for the reasons prescribed by the law.

national minority which national council is deleted from the Register shall have the right to elect a new national council, on the day of elections for members of all national councils are held.

Amendments to the Law on National Councils from 2014, regulate the issue of dissolution of a national council. According to the decisions of that year, Ministry dissolves a national council: if a new convocation of a national council is not constituted within 30 days from the definition of the final election results; if the election process for a national councils is suspended; if a national council fails to have sessions for more than six months; if a national council fails to elect the president of the national council within 30 days from the constitution of the national council, or from the cessation of the office of the former president; if the number of members of the national council is reduced below half. The given possibilities of dissolution of national councils are in the function of unimpeded exercise of public authority that performed by the councils in various areas of social life. Against the decision to dissolve a national council, a legal protection has been provided, since it is envisaged that such a decision is final and may be subject to an administrative proceeding. In the event of the dissolution of a national council, the Ministry shall establish a temporary interim management body of the national council from the pool of members of the national council, taking into account the presence of electoral lists from which the members of the national council are elected. The temporary interim management body shall perform the current and immediate tasks within the competence of the national council until the constitution of a new convocation of the national council. As in other cases, against this decision to establish the temporary interim management body of the national council, legal protection is provided, since it is envisaged that such a decision is final and may be subject to an administrative proceeding. When a national council is dissolved, new elections for its members are called within 60 days of dissolution and will be held in the next 45 days. Exceptionally, if the period from the dissolution of the national council until the end of the term of office of the national council is less than a year, Minister shall call new elections for the members of the national council at the same time when he calls elections for members of all national councils so they are held on the same day.

Given provisions prevent the discretionary and arbitrary treatment of the authorities and are in function of the lawful and unimpeded functioning of the councils and realisation of the rights of national minorities to self-management in the field of culture, education, information and official use of language and script. With their adoption, the issues related to the constitution of national councils, mandate periods, as well as status issues, both directly elected councils and councils elected in electoral assemblies, are overcome.

202. The Advisory Committee recommends that the authorities promote the establishment and effective functioning of councils for inter-ethnic relations at local level in all municipalities with an ethnically mixed population.

Information on the realisation of this recommendation is contained in section IV. 16.

Participation in socio-economic life

207. *The Advisory Committee calls on the Serbian authorities to pursue their efforts to improve the situation in the Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa municipalities with a view inter alia to strengthening development in this region as well as the participation of persons belonging to the Albanian minority in the economic life of the region.*

Detailed information about the incentives for regional development, *inter alia*, also in municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, is contained in section III.15.

Strategic priorities of Serbian Government for the south of Serbia is to recover the companies, support to small and medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurs and cooperatives and to attract investment in these three municipalities.

In terms of the improvement of the situation in municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, the Service of the Coordination Body of Serbian Government for municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa ensures funds and makes a call for awarding grants for subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurs and cooperatives in these municipalities.

The creation of the Programme for awarding funds for subsidies with the aim to develop the economy, every year is participated also by the representatives of local self-governments in which Albanian national minority participates as well as the Office for Local Economic Development of municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa.

Starting of 2012, the Service of the Coordination Body, based on the programme adopted by the Government every year, has approved grants for 100 entrepreneurs in the total amount of around 240,000,000.00 dinars. The number of newly employed according to the projects realised by the entrepreneurs was over 200 people. The tables below contain the data on the number of entrepreneurs and the total amounts granted as subsidies to the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac, and Medveđa.

Municipality of Preševo

Year	Number of entrepreneurs who received subsidies	Total amount of subsidies
2012	5	15,000,000.00
2013	8	21,040,858.86
2014	5	11,864,806.00
2015	5	13,584,301.00
2016	6	16,743,552.40

Municipality of Bujanovac

Year	Number of entrepreneurs who received subsidies	Total amount of subsidies
2012	7	17,000,000.00
2013	10	26,959,141.14
2014	14	34,891,480.30

2015	12	31,451,928.00
2016	8	21,657,227.60

Municipality of Medveđa

Year	Number of entrepreneurs who received subsidies	Total amount of subsidies
2012	3	8,000,000.00
2013	4	11,582,131.80
2014	1	3,000,000.00
2015	1	2,999,500.00
2016	1	1,599,220.00

208. *It urges the Serbian authorities to adopt positive measures aimed at addressing the situation faced by persons belonging to national minorities living in economically disadvantaged areas, in consultation with representatives of the national minorities concerned. Particular emphasis also still needs to be placed in this context on effectively addressing the problems identified regarding the access of Roma to employment.*

Position of members of national minorities living in economically disadvantaged areas

Information about the positive measures adopted by Serbia authorities aimed at addressing the position of members of national minorities living in economically disadvantaged areas is contained in section III. 15. and section IV. 11. regarding the recommendation number 207 of the Advisory Committee.

Addressing the problems identified regarding the access of Roma to employment

As explained in the previous Report, the strategic framework of the employment policy in the Republic of Serbia is the National Employment Strategy¹³⁴ defining also special vulnerable groups in the labour market, while the National Employment Action Plan, adopted at the annual level, defines the categories of hard-to-employ people, including the Roma.

Registration of people in the records of the National Employment Services, i.e. the manner of keeping the records and the content of personal data are defined by the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance¹³⁵ and the Rulebook on detailed content of the data and the manner of keeping the records in the field of employment¹³⁶. Nationality or ethnic affiliation is only one of personal information defined by Article 5 of the mentioned Rulebook. The data is registered based on the statement given by the person, i.e. statement is not compulsory, having in mind the legal provisions which refer to the prohibition of discrimination in job seeking and employment.

¹³⁴"Official Gazette of RS", no. 37/2011

¹³⁵ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 36/2009, 88/2010, 38/2015, 113/2017 and 113/2017 - other law

¹³⁶ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 15/2010

All unemployed people registered at the National Employment Service (hereinafter referred to as: NES), regardless of their national affiliation, can use the services of the NES in the scope of mediation in employment (based on the data about the scope and structure of demand and supply in the labour market), but also programmes and measures from the system of active employment policy (improvement of employment through acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competences, support to employment and self-employment), based on current public calls and competitions.

Having in mind the extremely unfavourable position of members of the Roma national minority in the labour market, this category of unemployed persons have the status of hard-to-employ people and also have priority in entering programmes and measures of active employment policy, with the aim to ensure labour-social activation and improvement of employability, for a more competitive representation in the labour market. Activities being realised, aimed at the increase of the access to, and equal opportunities in, the labour market for the Roma, are in line with the strategic framework of the employment policy, activities defined by the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 (field of employment) and the Reform Programme of Employment Policy and Social Policy in the process of accession to the European Union.¹³⁷

In 2015, 150.953 unemployed persons in the records of the National Employment Service were covered with the measures of active employment policy. In this period, the total of 13.141 members of national minorities were included in one of the measures of active employment policy (8.7% of the total people covered with active measures), and out of that number 12.845 people who are members of national minorities belong to some of the categories of hard-to-employ people.

In line with the National Employment Action Plan for 2015¹³⁸, status of hard-to-employ people and priority in the inclusion in the measures of active employment policy had: the unemployed youth up to 30 years of age, redundant employed and unemployed people over 50 years of age, unemployed without qualifications and low-qualified workers, people with disabilities and the Roma. Also, a special attention was given to encouraging the labour activation of the beneficiaries of financial social assistance.

According to the NES data, on 31 December 2015, in the records of unemployed people there were 22.930 Roma, out of whom 10.669 were women.

Observed from the aspect of education level, the most numerous people were those without qualifications (I and II secondary education) 20.376 people, which is 88.86% of the total number of the registered, then people with finished secondary level of education– 2.435, with high 83 people, and with higher level of education 36 (0.16%) Roma men/women.

Observed from the aspect of age structure, a significant share of young Roma men/women are up to 30 years of age – 7.400 people (32.23% of the total number of unemployed members of the Roma national minority).

¹³⁷ Conclusion 05 Number: 101-11047/2015-7 since 31 May 2016

¹³⁸ "Official Gazette of RS", no 101/2014 and 54/2015

According to the NES data, in 2015, there were assessments of the employability and the individual employment plans were defined with 18.479 unemployed members of the Roma national minority (8.289 women), including the revised plans. The services from the professional orientation system covered 257 unemployed Roma (information, selection, classification), out of whom 114 were Roma women.

In 2015, the measures of active employment policy covered 4.241 Roma in total, out of who 1.879 were women. The measures of active job seeking covered 2.978 Roma men and women from the records of unemployed. The programmes of additional education and training covered 648 Roma, while the most by programmes of functional primary education of adults (635). Programmes of subsidized employment (subsidies to employers for opening new jobs, subsidies for self-employment, subsidies for employment of beneficiaries of financial social assistance who are able to work, subsidies for salaries for the Roma – people with disabilities without work experience and measures for support to Roma – people with disabilities) covered 179 people, while 436 Roma were recruited through the programme of public works.

Through the realisation of local employment action plans (programme of co-financing of programmes or measures of active employment policy defined by local employment action plans with the funds from the state budget) the measures of active employment policy covered 173 unemployed Roma (out of whom 35 were women).

With the aim to improve the quality of service and professional-advisory work with the unemployed Roma, within the project *Strengthening the social cohesion in the labour market through the support to marginalised and vulnerable groups*, realised by UNOPS, a training was organised *Prevention of discrimination in employment of Roma*, attended by 34 employment advisors of the NES.

In 2015, there were 249 private entrepreneurs employing Roma workers. Through the 2012 IPA project *We are here together – European support for Roma inclusion*, support was ensured for 17 Roma enterprises employing around 60 Roma in the value of 500,000 euros. The support included equipment, expert assistance, and professional trainings.

The focus of the employment policy in 2016, in line with the National Employment Action Plan for 2016¹³⁹ was further encouragement of employment in the private sector, directing the measures of active employment policy towards underdeveloped/undeveloped areas and increasing the inclusion of people from the hard-to-employ category, including the members of the Roma national minority. The Roma as a category of hard-to-employ people are also one of six categories of unemployed people for whom employers from the private sector may realise the right to subsidies for employing an unemployed person from the category of hard-to-employ people in 2016.

Number of unemployed people in the records of the National Employment Service on 31 December 2016 was 700.947 people, of whom 360.877 women (51.48%). Out of the given number 26.065 unemployed people declared to be members of the Roma national minority (of whom 11.993 were women), which is the share of 3.72% in the total registered unemployment.

¹³⁹ "Official Gazette of RS", no. 82/2015

Overview of the trend of registered unemployment of Roma men and women

SITUATION ON 31 DECEMBER 2016			
	2014	2015	2016
Total	21.791	22.930	26.065
Roma women	10.053	10.669	11.993

Source: NES

Data on unemployment of Roma men/women given in the table do not reflect an increase in unemployment due to the loss of jobs, but an increase of the interest of Roma men/women for the measures of active employment policy.

Observed from the perspective of education structure, people without qualification, i.e. with a low level of qualification (I and II of secondary education) make almost 90% of the registered unemployed Roma men/women, which is a significant aggravating factor of their competitiveness in the labour market and makes an impact on the low level of interest of employers to recruit/hire them.

In 2016, the measures of active employment policy covered 146.891 unemployed people, of whom 4.308 were Roma. The Roma are, to a large scale, included in trainings on active job seeking (1.665 people), employment fairs (1.247 people), then in the programme of functional primary education (661) and public works (318). A certain number of Roma entered into employment with the subsidies to the employer for opening new jobs (93), and a number of Roma, who had successfully completed the training for entrepreneurial development, started their own business with the subsidies for self-employment (65) and the mentorship support in the first year of work.

Inclusion of Roma men and women in the measures of AEP in 2016

MEASURE OF ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICY	Roma	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>
Training on active job seeking	1.665	725
Training on self-efficiency	34	14
Workshop for overcoming stress due to job loss	2	1
Job seeking club	34	19
Employment fairs	1.247	513
Training on entrepreneurial development	155	61
Professional practice programme	8	3
Practical knowledge acquisition	4	1
Trainings on labour market	6	4
Trainings at employer's request	13	7
Functional primary education of adults	661	368
2012 IPA First-time workers	1	0
Subsidies for self-employment	65	26
Subsidies for employment of the unemployed from the category of hard-to-employ	93	37
Subsidies for part of salaries of beneficiaries of financial social assistance	1	0
Public works	318	72
Subsidies for salaries of people with disabilities without work experience	1	0

Source: NES, Report on realisation of Performance Report of NES for the period January-December 2016

Including 31 December 2016, the measures of active employment policy defined by local employment action plans, covered 173 Roma, of whom 37 were Roma women.

12. Article 18

Bilateral agreements and regional co-operation

212. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to pursue their efforts with respect to regional co-operation and dialogue.

Serbian authorities in section 18.1 of the Second report on the implementation of the Framework Convention informed that the Republic of Serbia is a party of bilateral agreements on protection of national minorities concluded with Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, and Croatia, which ensure preservation and development of national, linguistic, cultural, and religious identity of national minorities in state parties. For following the provisions of those agreements, establishment of intergovernmental bodies is planned.

With the appointment of new co-presidents, the Joint Intergovernmental Committee with Hungary and Joint Board with the Republic of Croatia kept having sessions on discussing the current and topics regarding Serbian minority in Hungary and Croatia, i.e. Hungarian and Croatian minority in Serbia. In the reporting period the following sessions were held: intergovernmental Joint Committee for national minorities with Croatia held the Sixth session on 22 and 23 October 2014 in Zagreb and Vrhovine, while the Intergovernmental Joint Commission on national minorities with Hungary held the fifth session in Subotica on 4 April 2016.

Though in the reporting period the Intergovernmental Joint Committee for national minorities with Romania did not meet, the dialogue within the Intergovernmental Joint Committee was continued. In 2013, there were two round tables for the consultations of co-secretaries, which served for a detailed discussion about the progress made in terms of the realisation of the recommendations. Meetings were intensified of the Serbian part of the Intergovernmental Joint Committee and the work was continued on harmonising the proposals in the Minutes from the Third session of the Intergovernmental Joint Committee of the Republic of Serbia and Romania for national minorities.

Intergovernmental Joint Committee for national minorities with the Republic of Macedonia has not met so far, though both countries formed their delegations to the Committee in the previous period.

Enhancing the regional cooperation is also done through the agreements and programmes on international scientific, cultural, educational, and youth cooperation. In the reporting period the issues of protection of national minorities were covered by the following agreements from the mentioned fields: Memorandum of Understanding on taking the exam for obtaining a

German language diploma of the Conferences of Ministers of Culture of the Provinces in the Federal Republic of Germany in schools in the Republic of Serbia (signed in 2012), Agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sport of Ukraine in the field of youth policy, physical education and sport (signed in 2012), Agreements between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on cooperation in the field of education (signed in 2013), Cooperation Programme in the field of culture between Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Culture of Ukraine (signed in 2013), Agreement on cooperation between Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of Slovakia 2012-2016 (signed in 2012), Cooperation Programme in the field of culture and art between the Ministry of Culture, Information and Information Society of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2012-2014 (signed 2012), Agreement between Serbian Government and Macedonian Government on mutual recognition of public documents on acquired education and on professional, academic and scientific titles (signed in 2014), Cooperation programme between the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2015-2019 (signed in 2015), Protocol between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia on cooperation in the field of education (signed in 2013), Memorandum of Understanding between Serbian Government and Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on youth cooperation (signed in 2014), Cooperation Programme in the field of education, science, and culture between Serbian Government and Hungarian Government for the period 2015-2017 (signed in 2015), Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of sport and youth policy between the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Education of Montenegro (signed in 2014), Cooperation Programme between the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Science of Montenegro for the period 2015-2017 (signed in 2015).

Republic of Serbia participates in seven programmes of cross-border and two programmes of transnational cooperation in the programme period 2014-2020 funded within the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II): programmes of cross-border cooperation with Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, and in two programmes of transnational cooperation: Transnational Programme “Danube” participated by 14 countries of the Danube region and Adriatic-Ionian Transnational Programme participated by 8 countries in the region.

In the programme of cross-border cooperation Bulgaria – Serbia 2014-2020, the leading partners are local self-government units and organisations from the Republic of Serbia, which are part of the approved projects for financing (territory of the programme covers Zaječar, Nišava, Jablanica, Pčinja, Pirot and Toplica districts).

A significant contribution to enhancement of the regional cooperation and dialogue is made by local self-government units populated by members of national minorities which in a large number of cases have concluded various memorandums and protocols on cooperation with the relevant units in the countries of origin of national minorities. According to the available data, 38 local self-government units¹⁴⁰ have over 160 such memorandums and protocols concluded with more than 130 relevant units in the countries of origin. The forms of cooperation most frequently defined in these protocols are joint projects in various fields, starting from culture to economy-infrastructure projects.

¹⁴⁰Ada, Apatin, Babušnica, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bačka Topola, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Bečej, Boljevac, Vrbas, Vršac, Golubac, Dimitrovgrad, Žitište, Irig, Kanjiža, Kikinda, Kovačica, Kovin, Kula, Mali Idoš, Negotin, Nova Crnja, Novi Bečej, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Pančevo, Plandište, Priboj, Sečanj, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Stara Pazova, Subotica, Surdulica, Temerin and Šid.

V. Appendix

1. Appendix of the National Council of Hungarian National Minority

Regarding **Article 2** of the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, National Council of Hungarian National Minority points out that the symbolic paying the respects of Presidents of Hungary and Serbia to innocent victims of the Second World War in 2013 in Čurug initiated the period of good neighbourly relations between the two countries. Hungarian community in Serbia is definitely one of the largest beneficiaries of the good-neighbourly relations and enhanced cooperation between the countries.

Regarding **Article 5** of the Framework Convention, we point out that in 2016, in the process of rationalisation of the workforce in the City Library “Karlo Bijelicki” in Sombor, without any affirmative measures, members of Hungarian national minority, who were generally underrepresented in the staff structure were fired – e.g. in the City Library “Karlo Bijelicki” in which, due to the rationalisation, 10 people were fired, 5 of them were members of Hungarian national minority (50%). As a results of that, the library became one of the bad examples of wrong rationalisation – since the jobs were not cancelled in the excessive administration department of the institution but the jobs of librarians in rural branches of the institution. These rural libraries, due to this act, ceased to have the workload as before, they are open only for a couple of hours a week, and librarians serving the Hungarian population do not speak their language and do not have the necessary knowledge to deliver the books to the elderly Hungarian population in their mother tongue. It should be noted that as the only institutions of culture in villages, these libraries had a great significance to preserve the culture in villages, and apart from the library activity, they were also centres of the entire cultural life of the village, familiarizing the people with Hungarian language and culture, and all this is reduced now, even their right to access the culture in their mother tongue. This act has made the access of the members of the Hungarian national minority to culture much difficult or even fully impossible, and the conditions of members of the national minority to preserve and develop their culture and preserve the essential elements of their identity: language, traditional and cultural heritage, have been impaired, which explicitly violates Article 5 of the Convention.

Regarding the aforementioned **Article 5**, and also **Articles 10 and 12** of the Framework Convention, we point out that the ban of employment introduced in 2014 has caused a substantial damage to the institutions used by the members of Hungarian national minority to realise their minority rights especially in the field of culture and education. The ban of employment has had a negative impact, apart from the right of the members of Hungarian national minority to communicate with public services and other holders of public authorities in their mother tongue, on other spheres of minority life as well, such as culture – jeopardizing the work of the institutions of culture –, on public information – inadequate staff equipment of public services –, but also on education – proscribing the obligation of take over the redundant staff from other institutions regardless of their language competences for teaching in minority language.

Regarding **Article 6** of the Framework Convention we believe that it is necessary to reintroduce the study of the language of the community – national minority language – in multicultural communities, which would contribute to a better integration of the entire population, and also to the encouragement of the spirit of tolerance, improvement of mutual respect and understanding and cooperation among all the people living on those territories, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity of individuals.

Regarding **Article 9** of the Framework Convention the National Council of Hungarian National Minority underlines the negative impact of privatisation of the media on the access of minorities to the media. Though the public services in minority languages are not completely cancelled, there is a very big negative impact on the contents caused by the shutdown of local public services. Due to privatisation or a simple shut down of local media – where the share of minority population is higher and thus the need for media contents is much higher – public services, in terms of quality and quantity, degraded to a large extent. The remaining public services, on the other hand, are struggling to survive due to the lack of staff caused by the ban of employment. That has a large negative impact on the access to the means of public information in Hungarian language.

Though it is not *de iure*, but only *de facto* ban to broadcasting in minority languages in terms of Article 9, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention, certainly an unavoidable impact is of the association for copyrights protection for broadcasting radio and television programmes in Hungarian language. AFPS and SOKOJ with their requirements and overburdening without objective grounds jeopardise the functioning of minority media, sometimes even events, which are necessary to preserve the minority identity, especially in diaspora.

Regarding **Article 10**, apart from the aforementioned, we additionally point out the issue with the branch offices of some central state organisations (Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, National Health Insurance Fund, Tax Administration, etc.) operating at local level. Unlike decentralised administration, such deconcentration of the administration often forgets the right of national minorities to official use of their mother language and script.

In the past there used to be complaints to the National Council of Hungarian National Minority about Public Notaries i.e. Notaries appointed for the areas where Hungarian is in official use, who, when verifying the documents in Hungarian language, collect the fee for a translator with clients, to whom this right to official use of language and script is denied. Since then, we have been informed about the improvements made to this end, but until a norm for this issue is made, we cannot be sure that the issue is over.

Regarding **Article 11** we point out the disproportionate and unequal practice of display of boards and signs in Hungarian language. Though there are great examples of this practice, there are still places where – contrary to the need in reality – this practice is almost completely non-existent.

Regarding **Article 12**, apart from the abovementioned, we point out that the access to textbooks in Hungarian language for primary school is adequate, for almost all subjects there is a published textbook. Unlike primary schools, in secondary schools there is a huge lack of

textbooks, for grammar schools, but especially for secondary vocational schools with around 5500 secondary school pupils attending education in Hungarian language, and the need for these textbooks is indisputable (although their publication of economically unprofitable).

Serbia has failed for years already – opposed by the autonomy of higher education institutions – to harmonise the work of the Law Faculty of the University of Novi Sad, and eliminate the unfavourable treatment of members of national minorities and their right to use their own minority language in taking the entrance exam. With such a resistance, this higher education institution, for years now, has been attended by fewer and fewer students of Hungarian nationality and Hungarian mother tongue. Due to the specificity of the legal profession regarding the public administration, public services and judiciary, a negative impact of this to the participation of the Hungarian national minority in public sector is even higher. We underline that in 2018 the court identified that this treatment discriminates the members of Hungarian national minority, so we hope that after this we will be able to make an agreement with this institution.

2. Appendix of the National Council of Ruthenian National Minority

Article 3

- 1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.**
- 2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.**

Article 4

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

To the knowledge of the National Council of the Ruthenians, members of the Ruthenian national community in the observed period did not have any negative experience in terms of Articles 3 and 4 of the Framework Convention.

Article 5

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

As for the conditions necessary to maintain and develop their culture and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, language, tradition, cultural heritage, the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, but also other laws (Law on Culture, Law on Fundamentals of the Education System, Law on Local Self-Government...) ensured that members of national minorities through their national councils establish the necessary institutions, to take over the foundation rights over the institutions of culture and education, national councils propose, give opinions and consent for the issues directly related to the realisation of rights in the field of culture, language, education. Also, it is ensured that local self-governments from their budgets finance the work of the national councils of those minorities whose language is in official use on their territory.

Establishing the institutes of culture by national councils of national minorities is conditioned by the amount of funds they have, which means that only those national councils which are numerous, having a big financial support of their origin countries, can establish their own institutions to function smoothly. The transfer of the foundation rights to national councils to a large extent depends on the good will of a local self-government (most often they are the founders of the institutions interested in by the councils).

Opinions and proposals provided by national councils in the procedures of appointing management bodies in institutions or in the allocation of funds through a competition, which provision is defined by the law, are not binding and are often only formally sought in practice, while decisions are made either without or contrary to the opinion of the national council, and there are no legal penalty provisions for such a treatment of a national council.

The publishing activity of the members of the Ruthenian community is mainly concentrated on the issues of the Press and Publishing institution "Rusko slovo", and is mainly financed from the budget of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information. However, in 2016, the allocated from this Secretariat for culture of national minorities were drastically reduced and it directly jeopardised the publishing activity in Ruthenian language, theatre creativity, traditional cultural creativity (amateur actions of the local cultural associations whose main goal is to preserve the traditional culture of the Ruthenian national community). No increase in the amount of these funds has occurred yet.

National council of the Ruthenians established about 20 events of the Ruthenians, which have their programmes to offer the best representations of all types of culture of the Ruthenian community and which are funded from the budget of the National Council. If this co-financing did not exist, the present conditions for having these events would be even more uncertain.

In the financial sense, local self-governments treat differently the national minorities living in their territory. The cultural and artistic associations of national minorities receive funds through public competitions for their projects, however, in practice the largest funds are allocated for the associations which are close to the current government, and the quality of the projects is neglected.

The legal obligation of local self-governments to finance the work of those national councils of national minorities whose languages are in official use in their territories is not equally implemented in practice. Some local self-governments allocate more funds according to the clear criteria (Novi Sad), some allocate more symbolic funds, according to non-transparent criteria, while there are also those local self-governments which do not allocate funds for this purpose at all, and suffer no consequences for that.

Regarding paragraph 2 of this Article, there were no measures adopted with the aim to assimilate members of the Ruthenian national minority.

Article 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

In 2016, the Institute of Culture of Vojvodina Ruthenians started the projects "Carpathian Parallels" which aim was to bring closer the mutual understanding of the majority population and members of Ruthenian, Slovak and Romanian national minorities.

In late 2016, the Office for Human and Minority Rights organised for the first time the Fair of National Minorities, where national councils present to each other and to the majority population their culture, tradition, cuisine, modern achievements...We expect this event to become traditional and with time to correct small mistakes and shortcomings in the organisation.

National Council of Ruthenian National Minority estimates that within the Ruthenian national community there was no need to undertake measures referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

Article 7

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

National Council of Ruthenians is not familiar with any case of absence of respect for the right of persons belonging to the Ruthenian national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 8

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

As in the previous report, there are still the same difficulties in organising religious teaching in schools for members of Greek Catholic Church.

Article 9

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

Privatisation of local media was officially ended on 31 October 2015, and based on the Conclusion of the Privatisation Agency on the suspension of the privatisation process, the Assembly of the municipality of Vrbas, in the session held on 29 October the same year, made the decision on the shutdown of the Public Enterprise for Information Vrbas, by which it shut

down the TV “Bačka” and Radio “Vrbas”. These media had a regional frequency, programmes in Ruthenian language covering the territory on which almost half of the members of the Ruthenian national minority live.

Other local media, after the privatisation, kept the existing programme scheme, which actually was their obligation, but the deadline of 5 years defined for keeping the programmes schemes will expire soon, and there is a concern that after the expiry of that time period the information in minority languages will gradually cease to exist.

The funds allocated through public competitions for the field of realising the public interest in the field of information at local level, in most cases are allocated in a non-transparent manner and it is rather difficult to follow the realisation of those funds, i.e. whether the funds allocated for the programme in a minority language is really used for that purpose.

In the radio and TV editorial offices in Ruthenian language in the public service of the Radio and Television of Vojvodina, the situation compared to the previous report remains mostly unchanged.

Article 10

The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system,

including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

The legal regulation for the official use of language and script is relatively good, but in practice it is seldom implemented. Names of streets, public authorities, etc. are mostly written also in the language of a minority where it is in official use. National Council of Ruthenians made a new Decision on traditional names of settlements in 2016, published in the official journal of APV, and it was sent to all local self-governments in which Ruthenian is in official use.

In the authorities of the provincial government (Vojvodina) there are 5 languages of national minorities in official use, and there are no issues in the communication in Ruthenian language. In local self-governments there are difficulties in communication with administrative authorities in Ruthenian both in writing and verbally, due to the lack or insufficient number of employees who know Ruthenian.

The biggest problem is in verbal and written communication with judicial bodies. Though there are court interpreters for Ruthenian, there are not enough judges, public prosecutors, public defenders and court personnel who know Ruthenian, which is why the judges see the requests of parties to have the preceding in Ruthenian mostly as an attempt to prolong the judicial process and make it subject to a statute limitations.

In the legal regulation there is an obligation in state authorities and public service stating that there must be a proper representation of the members of a national minority, however, declaring national affiliation is voluntary (which is quite alright), which makes it quite difficult to conduct any survey in order to identify the actual state in these authorities. Also, the law on the ban of new employment is in force which prevents the representation of members of national minorities to be given a satisfactory framework.

Article 12

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

Article 13

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

Article 14

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

Compared to the previous report, in the Ruthenian community there is a smaller number of pupils both in mainstream education and in studies of mother tongue as an elective subject, mostly to the negative birth rate.

In the observed period there were some issues in ensuring textbooks in Ruthenian, but a positive progress was made in early 2016 by signing the agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Education, the national councils of national minorities who have primary education their own language and the public enterprise for publishing textbooks, which significantly improved the access to textbooks in national minority languages. Not all issues have vanished, but we hope to find adequate solutions to them with time.

Article 15

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

Insufficient representation of members of national minorities in public administration authorities is an obstacle to an effective participation in public life and relations. More information is provided for Article 11.

Law on National Councils of National Minorities was amended in 2014, in part due to the decision of the Constitutional Court on the unconstitutionality of certain provisions, by which those provisions were deleted, and in part due to the elections for national councils, so the law was amended in the part which refers to the that process. Representatives of national councils

were involved in the working group for the amendments to the law, but apart from that, certain remarks they made were not accepted.

Action Plan for national minorities for the negotiation chapter 23 defines the amendments to the Law on National Councils of National Minorities and the Law on Protection Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities. The deadline for the realisation was the 4th i.e. 2nd quarter of 2016. No amendments were made in the defined period of time. The working groups included also the representatives of national councils of national minorities, however, since one group numbered 25 members, only 5 of them were members of national councils, and a vast majority of proposals was not accepted. Both laws should yet, in the 2nd quarter of 2018, be sent to the National Assembly for adoption. The joint opinion of all national councils is that these amendments also do not define the legal status of national councils; on one hand they are regulated as citizen associations but are imposed obligations and control as they were state authorities; there are numerous sanctions for national councils if they fail to fulfil their obligations (primarily of technical-administrative character), and there are no sanctions defined for public administration authorities which fail to act in compliance with the opinion or proposal of a national council; the very rights of national councils are reduced compared to the law which is still valid.

Article 16

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

There were no measures which alter the proportion of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to the Ruthenian national minority.

Article 17

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

National council, as other associations of Ruthenians smoothly establish and maintain contacts with persons and organisations of Ruthenians in other countries, without the interfering by the government.

Article 18

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

National council of Ruthenians was the initiator of signing two interregional agreements the AP Vojvodina signed with the Zakarpattia Oblast in Ukraine and the Prešov Region in Slovakia, with the aim to improve the cooperation between the members of the Ruthenian community in Serbia and in these countries, primarily in the field of culture and education, and also in other fields.

3. Appendix of the National Council of Czech National Minority

The field of public information – implementation of the framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Serbia.

Publications –printed media

National Council of Czech National Minority is the publisher of the bilingual printed publications (Czech and Serbian language) “*Češka beseda*” which in the period from 2011 until 2017 had 17 (seventeen) issues. Per years in 2011 - nine, in 2012 - two, in 2013 - three, in 2016 – double issue, in 2017 - one.

In 2011, publication of newspaper “*Beseda Češka*“ was realised in 300 copies on monthly level. In the competition of the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Information Society the project/programme of establishing and preparation of 7 (seven) issues – publications of the National Council of Czech National Minority „*Newspaper of the Czech national minority in Serbia - Beseda Češka*“ was supported. That publication was given a single code - ISSN number and it was catalogued in the Library of Matica srpska in Novi Sad.

Media–printed media which are leaders in publishing articles on the Czech community, in 2011, 2012, and 2013 are:

- “*Vršaćka kula*“, a regional weekly magazine with articles in Serbian, with author’s own articles, with a good position, often on colour pages, and significant space devoted to photos;
- “*BC Fleš*“, a local newspaper with articles in Serbia and Czech, with big allocated space;
- “*Dnevnik*“, daily media with occasional inserts of reporters from Bela Crkva, in Serbian.

Radio (media content)

Radio programme of one hour in Czech is broadcasts every Monday throughout the year via radio station of BC Info - radio Bela Crkva. (Broadcasting is financed by the National Council of Czech National Minority).

In 2012, the Ministry of Culture and Information allocated funds for co-financing the projects/programme in the field of public information in Czech for JIP “BC Info“, Bela Crkva for radio show “Beauty of living in a multi-ethnic community”.

Medial – radio media which are leaders in broadcasting on the topics related to the Czech community in the period 2011-2016:

- “BC Info“, a local radio broadcasting mainly in Serbian, with author’s contents by journalists in Czech

Television (media content)

Bilingual shows (Czech and Serbian language) 28 series of “*Besede Češke*“ production of TV Banat Ltd. with the support by the Ministry of Culture and Information were realised in the period 2011-2013. In chronological order per years in 2011 - one, in 2012 - thirteen, in 2013 – fourteen.

Media - TV media which are leaders in broadcasting on topics related to the Czech community, in the period 2011-2016:

- “Radio Television of Serbia – RTS”, public broadcasting service, in the show Citizens, broadcasted on RTS 1 and RTS 2;

- “Radio Television of Vojvodina – RTV“, provincial broadcasting service, with report stories on the Czech community in Dnevnik, Morning programme and show *Čigra* (intended for the youth). Production of media contents of RTV is the leaders in broadcasting bilingual (Serbian and Czech) media contents, broadcasted on RTV 1

- “Prva“, television with the national frequency, show *Exploziv* in the insert on the life of citizens and the Czech Museum in Češko Selo

- “Pink Info 3“, broadcaster of satellite programme, broadcasting contents prepared by the Minority News in the show *Chronicles of National Minorities*

- “TV Banat Vršac“- television with the regional frequency, media contents mostly cover the events of Czech associations

- “TV Kragujevac“- television with the regional frequency, broadcaster recognising the small Czech community in the field of culture and Czech-Serbian cooperation in Šumadija district.

Co/financing the production of media contents – in chronological order

- 2011 and 2012 – Culture-Education Association “Czechs of South Banat” as a support to the printed media *List jižního Banátu* in the total amount of 54,000.00 dinars (AP Vojvodina)
- 2011 – “Newspaper of Czech National Minority in Serbia - *Beseda Češka*“ with 220,500.00 dinars (Ministry of Culture, Information and Information Society, Number: 451-04-1771/2011-14)
- 2012 - JIP “BC Info“ for show “Beauty of living in a multi-ethnic community” with 113,000.00 dinars (Ministry of Culture and Information, Number: 451-04-766/2012-04/1)
- 2012 - TV Banat Ltd. for the production and broadcasting the series “*Besede Češke*“, with 200,000.00 dinars
- 2013 - TV Banat Ltd. for the production and broadcasting the series “*Besede Češke*“ with 150,000.00 dinars (Ministry of Culture and Information, Number: 451-04-259/2013-04)
- 2016 - UG Cultural information and education association *Prosperitet* series “Czech customs and culture” with 508,320.00 dinars (Ministry of Culture and Information, Number: 401-01-171/2016-04)
- 2017 - Radio Bela Crkva for series “The fortune of a common life in a multi-ethnic community“ with 400,000.00 dinars (Ministry of Culture and Information, Number: 401-01-222/2017-04)
- 2017 - Cultural information and educational association *Prosperitet*for shows “A Step Forward” in the amount of 100,000.00 dinars (AP Vojvodina-Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities)

The impression and the main opinion is that the representatives of the Czech community, as other small national minorities, mostly an object, rather than a subject in the realisation and production of media contents in the period 2012-2016.

The adoption of the Law on Public Information and Media (“Official Gazette of RS”, no 83/2014), made it difficult to publish the only printed publication (*Česká beseda*) of the Czech national minority of the published National Council of the Czech National Minority, due to the ban of co-financing the programmes /projects in the field of information of the beneficiaries of budget funds. The legal solution led to a selective rights to information of the members of national minorities, i.e. the transitional provision which prevents co/financing of only some (printed) media which foundation rights have been transferred to the national councils of national minorities. Publishing in this period mostly boils down to the funds provided by the Office for Human and Minority Rights, to annual quotas of National Council of Czech National Minority in the field of Information in the amount of 15,940.00 dinars for 2015, 10,156 dinars for 2016, and 13,504.00 dinars for 2017.