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**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

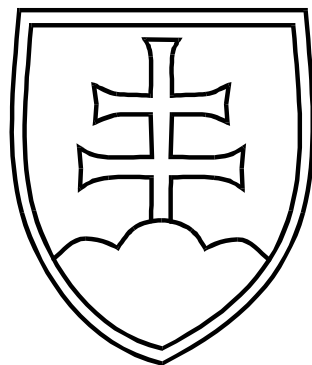


CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Fifth Report submitted by the Slovak Republic

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
received on 31 January 2019**



***The Fifth Report on the Implementation of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
in the Slovak Republic***

Bratislava 2018

I. Introduction

1. The Slovak Republic is an active Party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). It participated in its preparation and ratified it as the third member state of the Council of Europe ("CoE") on 14 September 1995
2. The presented Fifth Report on the Implementation of the FCNM has been prepared in accordance with the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE (hereinafter referred to as "Committee of Ministers") (97) 10, setting the five-year periodicity of the implementation reports and in accordance with the guidelines for national reports to be submitted under the fifth monitoring cycle.
3. The report is based on the resolution of the Committee of Ministers CM/ResCMN (2016)6 on the Implementation of the Framework Convention in Slovakia, as well as the opinion of the Advisory Committee on the FCNM (hereinafter referred to as "FCNM Advisory Committee") on the fourth Implementation Report.
4. The results of the fourth monitoring cycle were the subject of the Slovak Government session on 11 January 2017 as publicly available material. The material also included the Report on the progress and results of the fourth monitoring cycle, which contains essential information on the FCNM, its control mechanism and the previous monitoring cycles. The material also included the fourth evaluation report of the FCNM Advisory Committee, together with the opinion of the Slovak Republic on it and the related resolution of the Committee of Ministers. The Government of the Slovak Republic has obliged the relevant ministers and the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities (hereinafter referred to as "Plenipotentiary for RC") to acquaint themselves with the results of the fourth monitoring cycle, to assess the possibility of their implementation and to inform about the measures taken during preparation of the fifth implementation report. Prior to the session of the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Report on the Progress and Results of the Fourth Monitoring Cycle was discussed by the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as "Committee"), which was approved by Resolution No. 85 of 13 September 2016.
5. Slovakia also continued the dialogue with the FCNM Advisory Committee through a follow-up seminar on the implementation of the results of the third monitoring cycle of the FCNM in Slovakia. The seminar was organized by the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as "Plenipotentiary for NM") in cooperation with the FCNM Secretariat. At the event, members of the FCNM Advisory Committee presented the main conclusions and basic recommendations of the Fourth Evaluation Report on the Slovak Republic. The following panels, including the Public Defender of Rights, the Representative of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as "Government Council"), were aimed at promoting tolerance, mutual respect and intercultural dialogue, upbringing and education of national minorities. The themes of the seminar also included the protection and development of the culture and languages of national minorities, where the State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MoC SR"), the spokesperson of the Hungarian Round Table, the

representative of the civic association (hereinafter referred to as "CA") In Minorita, the director of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM and the representative of the Round Table of Rusyns of Slovakia had their speech during the discussion. At the end of the seminar, the fourth thematic comment under the title *Scope of the FCNM* was presented by the Committee members. The Plenipotentiary for NM appreciated the high level of the discussion between members of the Advisory Committee and the present representatives of central government bodies, representatives of national minorities as well as experts from the academic and scientific community concerned with the protection of the rights of national minorities.

6. The Slovak Republic welcomes this form of dialogue with the FCNM Advisory Committee, which, thanks to the experience, knowledge and expertise of its members, is of great assistance to FCNM contracting parties in helping to effectively implement the convention into practice. Therefore, after the fifth monitoring cycle, a follow-up seminar is planned.
7. The presented fifth implementation report focuses primarily on the presentation of the development of legislation and social practice in the protection of national minorities, i.e. preserving their national awareness and promoting their spiritual, cultural and linguistic identity as well as preventing and suppressing persistent manifestations of discrimination of ethnic minority members on an ethnic basis, in the monitored period from 2013 to December 2018. The process of preparation of the implementation report included the inclusion of members of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic through their delegated representatives in the Committee.

II. General information

8. Tasks in the area of the preservation, development and promotion of the rights of members of national minorities and the implementation of systemic measures to improve the status of national minorities are under the authority of the Plenipotentiary for NM. The activity of the Plenipotentiary for NM is provided by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, incorporated into the organizational structure of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Government Office"). After the elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "NC SR"), which took place on 5 March 2016, the Government of the Slovak Republic appointed László Bukovszky as the Plenipotentiary for NM on 13 April 2016.
9. Within its competence, the Plenipotentiary for NM fulfills the tasks resulting from the Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2016-2020 (hereinafter referred to as "Program Statement"). The Program Statement supports the European democratic traditions of freedom, human dignity and tolerance in the fight against fascism and right-wing extremism. On the basis of this democratic conviction, the Slovak Government is ready to strengthen the policy of understanding and reconciliation of Slovak citizens of all nationalities with a unique opportunity to start a new phase of support for national minorities.
10. In accordance with the Program Statement, the Government of the Slovak Republic regards the protection and promotion of the development of national minorities as a natural mission for the formation of a modern society. It will provide effective protection for national minorities and for the rights and freedoms of these minorities within the rule of law, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The Government of the Slovak Republic guarantees dignified conditions for the development of every national minority in accordance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and international treaties and conventions, while preserving the balanced relations of the majority population with national minorities through tolerant dialogue in the Slovak society. National minorities represent an important part of our society with great cultural wealth and an important historical heritage. The Government of the Slovak Republic is committed to protect national minorities, which is important for stability, democratic security and peace throughout the whole continent. It will create conditions for the development of national minorities in the area of the preservation and development of their identity, language, culture and traditions.
11. In the Program Statement, the Government of the Slovak Republic undertook to ensure the alignment of the Railways Act with Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of the Language of National Minorities as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities") in the field of railway stations and stops name designation in nationally mixed areas and to adopt Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities and on the Amendment and Supplement of Certain Acts (hereinafter referred to as "Fund Act") in order to provide systematic support for the cultural and artistic activities of all of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic, support the exemption of all schools with a small number of students from compulsory quotas in linguistically mixed territories, increase the support and ensure the development of the education of children and pupils belonging to national minorities in their native language, support the change of the methodology of teaching Slovak language at minority schools in the interest of its better mastery, promote vocational education and training in schools with the language of instruction of national minorities, including vocational education and training in the dual education system, to strengthen the material and technical provision of schools, the

creation of textbooks and other educational resources, and the continuous education of pedagogical and professional staff in schools with the language of instruction of national minorities; prepare the concept of the development of the teaching of the Rusyn language and culture in kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools, support teaching at primary schools and secondary schools about the life of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and their history in the context of preventing and combating extremism, nationalism and extreme behavior, support specific roles in the missions of universities in the area of the development of national minorities, their culture, language, research of their history, ethnology, etc., and taking into account these specific tasks in the assessment of the activities of higher education institutions. In addition, the Government of the Slovak Republic undertook, on the basis of an analysis on a nationally mixed territory, to create conditions for the harmonization of practice with the applicable Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.

12. In the area of Roma integration, the Slovak Government has committed itself to continue to pay special attention to the inclusion of the Roma in the majority society, in line with the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma Inclusion by 2020 (hereinafter referred to as “NRIS”) and the commitments of the Slovak Republic as a Member State of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as “EU”) , resulting from the Council Conclusions – EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020 as well as a number of specific measures in this area.

13. The Government of the Slovak Republic adopted Amendment No. 4 to the statutes of the Plenipotentiary for NM by Resolution No. 489/2017 on 18 October 2017, and on 31 October 2018, Amendment No. 2 to the Organizational Rules of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, which from 1 January 2018 is divided into the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM and the Union of the Position and Rights of National Minorities, was approved. The amendment also changed the periodicity of drafting a report on the status and rights of members of national minorities, which is submitted by the Plenipotentiary for NM to the Government of the Slovak Republic, from the original once a year to twice a year. At the same time, in accordance with the Amendment, the Plenipotentiary for NM may submit, within its competence, proposals for legislative and non-legislative measures relating to the use of languages of national minorities.

14. The Committee serves as an institutionalized consultation mechanism on the involvement of members of national minorities and ethnic groups in dealing with matters affecting them. The Committee is a permanent expert body of the Government Council for issues concerning national minorities and ethnic groups and their members for the area of the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter referred to as "Charter for Languages") within the meaning of Art. 7 paragraph 4 and in the meaning of Art. 15 of the FCNM.

15. Four regular committee meetings were held each year in the period under consideration. In July 2017, the majority of members of the Committee for National Minorities ended their term of office. In this context, an Election Assembly of the Committee was held on 3 and 12 July in which representatives of 100 national organizations, prominently engaged in promoting the maintenance and development of the identity and culture of members of national minorities, elected members and alternates of the Committee. The electoral commission, whose members were representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MESRS SR"), MoC SR, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter

referred to as “MFEA SR”), the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MoI SR"), the Government Office and the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM monitored its course.

16. On the XXVIII Committee meeting on 9 February 2018, members of the Committee debated and by Resolution No. 116 approved a proposal for a new amendment to the statutes of the Committee. Compared to the original statutes, primarily changes relating to the creation of a bicameral system, the extension of voting rights to all members of the two chambers, the modification of the way in which a representative opinion is adopted, determining the number of members who are permanently called, changing the one-year periodicity of the evaluation reports to two years, and extending the term of office of members of the committee from three to four years occurred. At present, the committee consists of two chambers. One chamber consists of representatives of the committee for national minorities; the second chamber is made up of representatives of the committee for central state administration bodies. Members of both chambers of the committee are entitled to vote. The members of the Committee of the Chamber for National Minorities are representatives of national minorities nominated and recalled by the chairman of the Committee on the basis of the results of the elections of the Election Assembly. Members of the Chamber of Committees for National Minorities are representatives of the following national minorities and ethnic groups:

- 5 representatives for the Hungarian minority,
- 4 representatives for the Roma minority,
- 2 representatives for the Czech minority,
- 2 representatives for the Rusyn minority,
- 2 representatives for the Ukrainian minority,
- 1 representative for the German minority,
- 1 representative for the Polish minority,
- 1 representative for the Moravian minority,
- 1 representative for the Russian minority,
- 1 representative for the Bulgarian minority,
- 1 representative for the Croatian minority,
- 1 representative for the Jewish minority,
- 1 representative for the Serbian minority.

17. Organizations that are demonstrably engaged in the promotion of the preservation and development of the identity and culture of members of national minorities nominate candidates for members of the Chamber of the Committee for National Minorities and their alternates through an Election Assembly convened by the Chairman of the Committee. Organizations of individual national minorities shall register for the Election Assembly with the Committee secretariat and the Election Assemblies are held separately for each national minority. The members of the Chamber of Committees for central state administration bodies are representatives of the central state administration bodies, namely:

- Plenipotentiary for RC,
- Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the development of civil society,
- General Director of the Section for International Law, Consular and Crisis Management of the MFEA SR,

- General Director of the Department of National and Inclusive Education of the MESRS SR,
- General Director of the Section of Public Administration of the MoI SR,
- General Director of the Cultural Heritage Section of the MoC SR,
- General Director of the Section for Social and Family Policy of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MLSAF SR"),
- Director of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MoJ SR").

Permanently invited Committee members without the right to vote, nominated and recalled by the chairman of the Committee include:

- Public Defender of Rights,
- A representative of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights and National Minorities,
- Vice-Chairman of the Government Council,
- Director of the Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as "Fund"),
- Executive Director of the Slovak National Center for Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as "SNCHR"),
- A representative of the Radio and Television of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as "RTVS"),
- Two prominent professionals working in the field of the status and rights of members of national minorities who are engaged in publishing, analytical, educational or other similar activities in that field,
- A representative of the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as "ATMS"),
- A representative of the Union of Cities of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to "UCS"),
- A representative of the Association of Self-governing Regions SK 8.

18. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, in cooperation with the Committee, has been actively involved in the process of preparing a National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Human Rights Protection and Promotion Strategy"). An expert working group was set up to develop a part of the strategy on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, consisting of representatives of national minorities, experts in the field of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and representatives of the public administration. The Working Group has prepared the Starting Material on a part of the Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, related to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups that was presented to the general public in 2014 in workshops in Košice and Bratislava. The workshops were aimed to create a space for the participation of the professional public on the discussion on the current issues of the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups. In 2015, the process of implementing the Government's resolution on the Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights was continued, which was based on the results of the previous period. In 2015, the Office of Plenipotentiary for NM, in cooperation with the Committee in a participatory way, with the participation of representatives of national minorities developed

the draft of Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2016 – 2020 (hereinafter referred to as "Action Plan").

19. The Action Plan identified the provision of an effective, transparent and reliable system of protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, including the strengthening of its institutional security as the main objective in this area. This objective has been divided into seven operational objectives focused on:

1. ensuring a comprehensive approach to the creation of legislation on the rights and status of national minorities,
2. improving the system of promoting the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups,
3. more efficient consideration of the specific educational needs of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups,
4. improving the conditions of the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice,
5. improving public awareness of national minorities and ethnic groups through the media,
6. improving mechanisms for the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in decision-making on matters concerning them,
7. raising the knowledge base for better identification of target groups – national minorities and ethnic groups and their needs through statistical surveys and research.

20. Each of the operational objectives is developed to the level of specific measures and activities that include performance indicators, deadlines, responsible administrators, co-operating bodies, and funding resources. The final draft of the Action Plan was approved by the Committee on 17 December 2015 and the Government Council on 20 June 2016, which also recommended that the Government of the Slovak Republic approve the draft.

21. The Action Plan was approved on 26 October 2016 by Government Resolution No. 492/2016. By this Resolution, the Government of the Slovak Republic ordered the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and the relevant Ministers, as well as the head of the Government Office and the Plenipotentiary for NM to ensure the fulfillment of the tasks resulting from the Action Plan by 31 December 2020. By 31 December 2020, it also required the submitting of information on the implementation of the tasks of the Action Plan to the Head of the Government Office who, at the same time, is obliged to draw up and submit a report on the implementation of the Action Plan tasks with a proposal for updating them to the Government of the Slovak Republic for discussion by 31 March 2021. At the same time, the Government of the Slovak Republic recommended that the Chairperson of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "SO SR"), the Executive Director of SNCHR, the Chairman of the ATMS, the President of UCS, the Director General of RTVS and the Director General of the Slovak National Museum (SNM), should participate in the implementation of the tasks of the Action Plan and submit the documents for the processing of the report on the fulfillment of the Action Plan's tasks to the Head of the Government Office by 31 December 2020.

22. To fulfill the main objective of the Action Plan – to ensure an effective, transparent and reliable system for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to

national minorities and ethnic groups, including the reinforcement of its institutional security - the Plenipotentiary for NM established a Coordination Commission to fulfill the tasks arising from the Action plan (hereinafter referred to as "Coordination Committee") in December 2016. The members of the Coordination Commission for National Minorities are thirteen representatives of minorities nominated by the members of the Committee, each for one national minority, as well as 18 representatives for state bodies.

23. In connection with the implementation of Operational objective 1 of the Action Plan to ensure a comprehensive approach to the creation of laws governing the rights and status of national minorities, the Plenipotentiary for NM established a working group as well as an informal working group composed of legal experts. Both groups are continually working on analyzing the current legal situation and finding possible solutions. Operational objective 2 on improving the system of support for the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups was mainly achieved by the adoption of the Fund Act. Operational objective 3 is being implemented in co-operation with the MESRS SR and the State Pedagogical Institute.
24. The implementation of Operational objective 4 of the Action Plan to improve the conditions for the use of national minority and ethnic group languages in practice is closely linked to the establishment of a Advisory Group by Plenipotentiary for NM to ensure the alignment of practice with the right on the use of the languages of national minorities. The Advisory Group consists of five separate sub-groups, namely Hungarian, Rusyn, Romani, Ukrainian and German languages. The main task of the advisory group is to prepare background materials to ensure uniform professional terminology in the languages of national minorities, informative language versions of legislative texts, official forms, documents on methodological materials in the use of languages of national minorities regulated by the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.
25. In order to improve the mechanisms for participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in decision-making on matters concerning them, under the Operational objective 6 of the Action Plan, the Plenipotentiary for NM has organized an international workshop called *Models of Participatory Mechanisms for Members of National Minorities in Europe*, which took place on 20 September 2017 in Bratislava. The seminar concerned the fulfillment of the operational objective of the Action Plan to improve the mechanisms for the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in the decision-making process in matters concerning them. The main topic of the workshop was the new challenges and impulses in finding effective mechanisms for the participation of national minorities, models of participatory mechanisms of persons belonging to national minorities in selected European countries. Within the workshop, a space for the presentation of foreign guests was created and the topic of the panel discussion which ended the program of the workshop was the current state and vision of participation of national minorities in the Slovak Republic.
26. As regards to the implementation of the Operational objective 7 of the Action Plan focused on increasing the knowledge base for the better identification of target groups and fulfilling the tasks resulting from the National Action Plan for the Population and Housing Census 2021 for 2017-2020 (hereinafter referred to as "NAP PHC 2021"), an expert working group was set up to prepare a population census methodology from the point of view of nationality or ethnicity, and it is currently performing the given tasks.

27. In accordance with the Program Statement of the Government, which undertook, on the basis of an analysis on a nationally mixed territory, to create conditions for reconciling practice with the applicable Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, the Plenipotentiary for NM initiated measures in the field of language training for civil servants. The original legislation did not explicitly state the possibility of training civil servants aimed at increasing the level of mastery of minority languages. Decree of the Government Office No. 126/2017 Coll. laying down the details of the training of civil servants states, inter alia, that language competency education is aimed at maintaining and improving the level of mastery of the language of the national minority for the group of civil servants performing civil service in municipalities as defined in a special regulation. For the purposes of this Decree, a special regulation is to be understood as Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. listing the municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to the national minority constitute at least 20% of its population (hereinafter referred to as "Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll."), as amended by Government Regulation No. 534/2011 Coll., amending the Slovak Republic Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll.
28. In accordance with the statutes of the Committee, the Evaluation Reports on the Promotion of National Minority Cultures, the Reports on the State of National Education and the Reports on the Use of Languages of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as "Evaluation Reports") are regularly drawn up and submitted for approval to the Government Council. The evaluation reports are elaborated by experts for individual national minorities in accordance with the principle of participation. The evaluation reports provide a space for ethnic minorities to articulate their needs, problems and difficulties as well as visions and goals. The evaluation reports are approved by the Committee after their deliberations, which are subsequently followed by the opinion of the concerned ministries.
29. Until the end of 2017, one of the most important tools of the direct support for culture and the language of national minorities and the instruction and education on the rights of national minorities included the grant program Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as "CNM Grant Program") of the Government Office, which was under the administration of the Plenipotentiary for NM. Under the CNM grant program, grants were provided for support under three sub-programs focusing on:
- the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities,
 - education on the rights of national minorities,
 - inter-ethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between the national majority and ethnic minorities and groups.
30. The purpose, conditions, scope and method of providing subsidies within the competence of the Government Office was laid down in Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of grants within the scope of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Government Office Grant Act"). The method of the funds allocation among the various national minorities was based on a mathematical model of the calculation of financial resources, which takes into account a number of criteria for the conversion of the amount of the allocation for each national minority with a view to a transparent and equitable distribution of funds, which is annexed to the Directive of the Head of the Government Office on the provision of grants. These allocation rules have been drafted and approved by the Committee. The allocation of funds for individual national minorities under the CNM 2017 grant program was approved by the Committee according to the percentage allocation of funds in 2016. The table shows the amount of funds allocated to the

CNM grant program in 2015–2017. The ratio of the distribution of funds to the support activity is stipulated in Section 22 of the Fund Act. The table shows the funds allocated to individual national minorities.

National minorities	Allocated funds in EUR			
	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018
Bulgarian national minority	35,504	35,504	41,400	76,000
Czech national minority	229,815	229,815	266,400	281,200
Croatian national minority	48,064	48,064	55,800	76,000
Hungarian national minority	1,955,296	1,955,296	2,268,00	4,028,000
Moravian national minority	30,489	30,489	35,100	106,400
German national minority	88,880	88,880	103,050	136,800
Polish national minority	64,683	64,683	75,600	106,400
Roma national minority	664,152	664,152	770,400	1,702,400
Rusyn national minority	294,032	294,032	340,650	486,400
Russian national minority	53,377	53,377	62,100	83,600
Serbian national minority	28,706	28,706	33,300	53,200
Ukrainian national minority	100,673	100,673	117,000	152,000
Jewish national minority	52,825	52,825	61,200	83,600
multicultural and interethnic activities	232,754	232,754	270,000	228,000
Total:	3,879,250	3,879,250	4,500,000	7,600,000

31. In the year 2015, two calls were announced under the CNM 2015 grant program. Under both grant calls, 1,960 projects were submitted. The evaluation commissions recommended a total of 1,240 projects from 599 applicants in the amount of EUR 3,872,696 under both calls for approval. In the CNM 2016 grant program, a total of 1,846 projects were submitted under the call. The evaluation commissions recommended a total of 1,231 projects from 555 applicants for a total amount of EUR 3,879,250 for approval. For the year 2017, a total of 1,917 projects were submitted to the CNM grant program, and fifteen commissions for project evaluation under the CNM 2017 grant program recommended supporting a total of 1,342 projects in the amount of EUR 4,500,000, i.e. the full amount of funds allocated. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM tried to maintain the trend of the prompt conclusion of contracts and grant payments over the period in question. In 2018, 7 calls to apply for grants or scholarships were announced by the fund. The expert culture councils for each national minority evaluated a total of 2,127 applications, out of which 1,447 applications for a total amount of EUR 7,394,538 were submitted to the Director for decision.

32. In order to ensure the systematic support of the cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities in the Slovak Republic, the Government of the Slovak Republic has set the goal of adopting the Fund Act in its Program Statement. On the basis of the Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2017, the MoC SR prepared a draft Act on the Fund, which came into effect on 1 July 2017 - apart from Articles II, III and V., points 6, 13 and 19, which entered into force on 1 January 2018. In the area of support for the culture of national minorities, competence has been transferred from the Government Office to a new public institution independent of central state administration bodies represented by experts from all national minorities since 1 January 2018.

33. The aim of the Act was to transform the Government Office grant program and to establish an institution providing effective and systematic support for the cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities in the Slovak Republic, administratively independent of central state administration bodies, represented by experts from all national minorities. The law exhaustively determines the ratio of the amount of funds for individual expert councils expressed as a percentage. The purpose of the fund is primarily to preserve, express, protect and develop the identity and cultural values of national minorities educate on the rights of national minorities and to develop and support intercultural dialogue and understanding between Slovak citizens and citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovak Republic. The law in question replaced the existing system of support for national minorities, which was governed by the Government Office Grant Act.

34. In order to ensure the widest possible participation of minority representatives in the drafting of this key legislative measure, the Plenipotentiary for NM, in accordance with its Statutes, set up a Temporary Working Group for the drafting of the Fund Act for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016. The Working Group consisted of the Head of the Working Group, which was the Plenipotentiary for NM and ten members of the national minorities appointed by the Plenipotentiary for NM. In accordance with the principles of its work, the Working Group held a total of three meetings. The Committee participated in the drafting of the Fund Act and discussed the individual parts at its meetings. The members of the committee commented on it and were regularly informed of individual steps in the process of its creation.

35. The main role in the functioning of the Fund was performed by professional councils represented by the professional public, whose members are elected by national minority organizations in a democratic way. The new concept of supporting the cultural and scientific activities of national minorities living in Slovakia is based on the following main principles:

- the establishment of the Fund as the main financial instrument aimed exclusively at supporting the cultural and scientific activities of minorities,
- defining the tasks and objectives of the Fund's supportive activity and transparent rules on the use of its resources,
- securing independence and decision-making expertise in key fund bodies,
- defining the purpose of using funds and mechanisms to control their use,
- the definition of the financial resources of the Fund.

36. Under the new mechanism for the promotion of the culture of national minorities, each minority can set up systematic support for its cultural and artistic activities. By increasing the amount of funds, more space will be created to highlight the cultural values of members of national minorities and to present the richness and diversity of their culture as well as their mutual tolerance and respect. With regard to determining the amount of the state contribution to the Fund at EUR 8 million, the requirement of a reasonable amount of material support is ensured with sufficient funding to develop the culture of national minorities.

III. Issues requiring an immediate solution

Increase attention to minority rights as an integral part of human rights in the government agenda and ensure effective inter-institutional coordination on all issues pertaining to human and minority rights protection, in close consultation with national minority and civil society representatives;

37. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (hereinafter referred to as "MARD SR"), as the managing authority for the Integrated Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 (hereinafter referred to as "IROP"), ensured during 2017 the implementation of calls for submission of applications for a non-repayable financial contribution, within which the horizontal priority under the heading "*Promoting equality between men and women and non-discrimination*" was applied, which are also linked to measures to compensate for the opportunities of disadvantaged groups of the population.

38. The IROP does not set out a specific strategy to contribute to addressing the specific needs of the geographical areas and target groups affected the most by poverty, which are defined at the level of the Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic, i.e. in relation to marginalized Roma communities (hereinafter referred to as "MRCs"). The IROP is implemented through regional integrated territorial strategies. Measures within the framework of the IROP are implemented on the whole territory of the Slovak Republic, while the realization of activities is also valid in the municipalities defined in the Atlas of the Roma communities.

39. The implementation of activities under IROP Priority Axis 2 called "*Easier access to efficient and higher quality public services*" contributes to addressing the main need, i.e. to create the conditions for an independent and fulfilling life for people. In addition to the risk of poverty, MRC members also suffer from a high degree of social exclusion due to unequal access to education. Under the IROP, Priority Axis 2, Investment Priority 2.2, calls were announced at the end of 2016 as part of a specific objective called *Investing in education, training and professional training, skills and lifelong learning through the development of educational and training infrastructure* in relation to education and children from disadvantaged groups of the population:

- Call 2.2.1. for submitting applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to increase the capacity of the kindergarten infrastructure; in the total amount of EUR 79,757,690 (EU source),
- Call 2.2.2 for submitting applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to increase the number of pupils in secondary vocational schools in practical training; in the total amount of EUR 98,832,378 (EU source),
- Call 2.2.3. for submitting applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to build and improve technical equipment in language classrooms, school libraries,

vocational training classrooms of various kinds at primary schools; in the total amount of EUR 35,601,822 (EU source).

40. The calls under the IROP Investment Priority No. 2.1 called *Investments in Healthcare and Social Infrastructure* contributing to national, regional and local development, reducing health inequalities, promoting social inclusion through better access to social, cultural and recreational services, and the transition from institutional to community-based services in the context of improving health care, or social services for disadvantaged groups of the population:

- Call for the submission of applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to support the transition of social services and social protection of children and social guardianship from an institutional form to the community (process of the deinstitutionalization of existing facilities); in the total amount of EUR 67,449,470 (EU source),
- Call for applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to the modernization of the infrastructure of the facilities providing acute medical care, in order to increase their productivity and efficiency; in a total amount of EUR 70 million (EU source)
- Call for the submission of applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to support the provision of new and existing social services and social protection for children and social guardianship at the community level, totaling EUR 72,363,394 (EU source),
- Support for the provision of new and existing social services and social protection of children and social guardianship in community-based facilities.

41. Call within the IROP Investment Priority No 4.2 called *Investing in the Water Sector* to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and addressing the needs identified by the Member States in relation to investments beyond these requirements in order to increase the share of population with improved drinking water supply also for disadvantaged population groups:

- Call for the submission of applications for a non-repayable financial contribution to improve drinking water supply, waste water treatment, sewerage; in the total amount of EUR 55,000,000 (EU source).

At the same time, we provide further information:

- the reason for the disadvantage – racial or ethnic origin, belonging to an ethnic minority,
- the area in which disadvantages are to be eliminated – healthcare, social services, education and the environment,
- expected implementation period – Program period 2014-2020 (project implementation),
- selected method of eliminating disadvantages – The non-repayable financial contributions granted will be used to implement projects to improve the quality and availability of higher quality services and improve conditions and access to drinking water for disadvantaged population groups.

42. In 2018, calls were planned with the following focus:

- support and development services for children up to three years of age at the community level,
- the integration of primary health care through the development of centers of integrated health care,
- increasing the capacities of the kindergarten infrastructure,
- increasing the number of pupils in secondary vocational schools in practical training,
- the creation of creative centers and supporting demand for creative creation (emerging talents).

43. Chapter 5 of the IROP effectively addresses the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or target groups most at risk of discrimination or social exclusion, with particular regard to marginalized communities and people with disabilities.

44. Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic for 2014-2020 (hereinafter referred to as "PA SR"), an integrated approach will be applied to address the specific needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty, most at risk of discrimination or social exclusion, implemented for the MRC target group. The interventions for MRC will be implemented through the Human Resources Operational Program (hereinafter referred to as "HR OP"). The objective of support from the European Structural and Investment Funds (hereinafter referred to as "ESIF") is to achieve greater integration of separated and segregated Roma communities into society, including in relation to the fulfillment of NRIS priorities.

45. In addition to the risk of poverty, MRC members also suffer from a high degree of social exclusion due to unequal access to education, employment, health care and housing. The main cause of poverty of people of working age, including MRC, is unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, where there is a risk of an intergenerational reproduction of poverty. However, low wages and minimum qualifications can also cause a phenomenon called the poverty trap.

46. The IROP implemented through regional integrated territorial strategies will be implemented across the whole territory of the regions, while implementation of IROP activities will be justified also in the municipalities defined in the Atlas of Roma communities. While defining the scope of support from IROP and HR OP, there will be no duplication of MRC support. As it is an indirect effect of future interventions, it is not possible to estimate the expected impact in advance.

47. Part of the IROP support will be guided directly to the provision of social services and social protection for children and social welfare, targeting people at risk of social exclusion on account of their age and disability. These include families, seniors, children and young adults and people with disabilities. The implementation of activities under the IROP priority axis 2 will contribute to addressing the main need, i.e. to create the conditions for the independent and fulfilling life of people who are provided with social services or alternative care.

48. In the IROP, the social aspect in public procurement will be used, which should lead to higher labor market participation not only for MRC, but should also promote job opportunities for the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the labor market. Act No. 25/2006 Coll. on public procurement also made it possible to take into account the social aspect of public procurement through special conditions of performance of

the contract in the program period 2007 – 2013. A more detailed social aspect from the point of view of implementation is contained in the management system for the 2014 – 2020 program period. Outline of the IROP contribution to address the specific needs of geographical areas and target groups most affected by poverty:

Target group/geographical area	The main type of planned activities, which are part of an integrated approach	Priority axis	Investment priority	Fund	Region category
Families, children and young adults, seniors, persons with disabilities	Deinstitutionalization of the provision of social services and social protection of children and social guardianship	2	2.1	EFRD	Less developed region
Families, children and young adults, seniors, persons with disabilities	Deinstitutionalization of the provision of social services and social protection of children and social guardianship	2	2.1	EFRD	More developed region

49. In 2017, the MARD SR submitted a draft Act amending the Act of the Slovak National Council No. 330/1991 Coll. on land consolidation, the arrangement of land ownership, land offices, land fund and land associations, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Land Act").

50. The amendment to the Act deals with a topic which has been sensitive for years in connection with the need for the arrangement of ownership and usage ratios for land located under settlements, i.e. urban settlements under the populations of marginalized populations (hereinafter referred to as "settlement") and land in farm yards, which manifested in the expansion of grounds for the implementation of the land consolidation in Section 2 paragraph 1. On account of the need for application practice, the provisions of Section 2 in paragraph 2 and 3 defined the reasons for the regulation or permit for land consolidation. In the system of co-operation with the MARD SR, basic legal implementing provisions were set by Act No. 153/2017 Coll., amending the Land Act and supplements certain acts. By means of amendment 23, a new Section 8g *"Simple land consolidation for the arrangement of ownership and use conditions to land under settlements"* was introduced into the Land Act, creating a legal instrument for the implementation of national projects (hereinafter referred to as "NPs"). This process was followed by the issuance of Decree of the MoJ SR No. 213/2017 Coll. within the system of cooperation, amending Decree No. 492/2004 Coll. on the establishment of the universal value of the property, as amended. This Decree redefines the starting unit value of the land under the settlements, also regulating the value of the coefficient of its functional use. The Decree also modified land sites which are located under a settlement of marginalized groups in the system of position differentiation. Based on the amended Decree, a legal instrument for the determination of the value of land and both legal

regulations was created and due to the procedures of the legal regulators, the NP legal instruments under the title "*Support for Land Consolidation in MRC*" were developed.

51. In contrast to the previous legislation, the amendment has unequivocally modified the procedural provisions of simple land consolidation. At the same time, it also addresses the issues that arose in the past in connection with the change of the state border. In this case, the amendment defined a proposal for a central state administration, on the initiative of which the change of the state border was made, while the central state administration is obliged to secure financial resources from its budget chapter for the implementation of land consolidation. Settlement shall be granted only in cases provided by the Slovak Land Fund (hereinafter referred to as "SLF") or by the administrator, giving the owner new land in the same size and type of land as the land that has passed to the territory of another state.
52. In the case of land plots under a settlement, the amendment to the Act gives landowners and owners of co-ownership shares the opportunity to decide for settlement, namely; in new plots, in plots under a settlement or in money. If the landowner of the affected plots chooses land for the purpose of settlement or money, his original land, or his co-ownership shares of the original land, under the MRC settlement will be transferred to the municipality, while the municipality may not scuttle or burden the land except for the transfer of ownership to the inhabitants of the habitation.
53. The amendment to the Land Act, effective from 1 September 2017, allows to address the issue of the arrangement of ownership and usage ratios to land located under settlements in the form of land consolidation. If land consolidation is successful, the land under the settlement will be acquired by the municipality, which may subsequently sell it to the Roma. According to the amendment to the Act, it is always a proposal procedure, which can only be submitted by the municipality on whose territory the settlement is located. Administrative authorities will only allow proceedings if the conditions laid down by the law are established.
54. The Government of the Slovak Republic pays increased attention to the Roma national minority in the program statement 2016-2020, which is highlighted by the commitment of the Government of the Slovak Republic special attention to the implementation of the NRIS strategy. The program statement contains a specific direction of government policies, especially in the 4 core areas of NRIS for Education, Employment, Health and Housing in each section. The new NRIS action plans for the area of non-discrimination and the area of approach towards the majority society under the title *Roma Inclusion Initiative through Communication* prepared by the Plenipotentiary for the RC became part of the development of NRIS. The Government of the Slovak Republic approved these action plans by Resolution No. 424/2017, which is another measure of the Government of Slovak Republic complementing harmoniously the strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, which also contains the Action Plan on Non-Discrimination and the Action Plan on Education on Human Rights. The NRIS was formed in a participatory way with representatives of the Roma national minority and representatives of civil society throughout its development.
55. Public health authorities are involved in fulfilling the tasks of the Action Plan called *Health* in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC. Public health authorities participated in several working sessions organized by the Plenipotentiary for NM. The meeting took place in connection with the fulfillment of the objectives of the individual NRIS action plans. The NP called *Healthy Communities*, which has been provided by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MoH SR") since 2014

in cooperation with the Healthy Regions subordinate organization. The aim is to support the health of segregated and separated Roma communities through awareness-raising and health education. In order to protect and support the health of disadvantaged communities, public health authorities have long been cooperating with schools with a higher concentration of pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment (hereinafter referred to as "SDE") and children from Roma communities in the framework of fulfilling the NRIS tasks in the health priority. Pupils are repeatedly intervened in areas such as healthy lifestyles and environmental hygiene, dental hygiene, first aid and accident prevention, education for responsible marriage and parenthood, healthy nutrition, human body care, substance abuse and drug addiction, smoking, alcohol, prevention of parasitic infections and infectious diseases, adolescence and changes in the physical and mental sphere.

56. During the implementation, 264 positions of Health Promotion Assistants (hereinafter referred to as "HPA") were created, 24 positions of HPA coordinators and 8 HPA in hospital settings. 194 sites are involved in the project. The NP has a positive impact on the 200,000 inhabitants of the Roma minority and members of MRC urban settlements. In order to cover the Bratislava region (the town of Malacky and 5 other municipalities in the Malacky district), the NP called *Healthy Community 3A* was created, the awarding authority of which is the MLSAF SR. The allocated amount of the state budget and the ESIF for this NP is the sum of EUR 303,557. Between 2018 and 2019, it is planned to employ a total of 279 employees in HPA positions in more than 300 municipalities across all regions of the Slovak Republic through the *2A Healthy Communities* and *3A Healthy Communities* projects. The number of employees in the Healthy Communities project as of 11 June 2018 was 278, of which the number of Roma was 184 (originally planned target – 90). With regard to anti-discrimination measures, it should be noted that both these staff and those in the NPs who are under the authority of the Plenipotentiary of the RC are qualified as employees implementing policies and measures to prevent discrimination or social inclusion in the public and non-public sectors. Coordination between NRIS in the area of the Action Plan D.2.3 The area of health and NP activities is provided by the Plenipotentiary for the RC.

57. Under Section 14 paragraph 2 of Act No. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services and on Amendments to Certain Acts as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Employment Services Act"), a citizen has the right to employment without any restriction in accordance with the principle of equal treatment in employment relationships and similar legal relations established by Act No. 365/2004 Coll., on equal treatment in certain areas, on protection against discrimination, (hereinafter referred to as "Anti-Discrimination Act"). In accordance with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination on the grounds of marital status and family status, color, language, political or other beliefs, trade union activity, national or social origin, disability, age, property, gender or other status is prohibited.

58. Within the framework of the applied Active Labor Market Measures (hereinafter referred to as "ALMM") and in accordance with the Act on Employment Services, the following measures are provided in the Slovak Republic:

ALMM aimed at promoting employability:

- providing reimbursement of part of the travel expenses of the applicant for employment related to the completion of an entry interview or a selection procedure with the employer (Section 32 paragraph 12 (d)),
- information and advisory services (Section 42);

- expert advisory services (Section 43),
- education and training for the labor market for job applicants (hereinafter referred to as "JA") (Section 46);
- contribution to the pursuit of graduate practice (Section 51);
- contribution to activation activity in the form of smaller local services for the municipality or in the form of smaller services for the self-governing region (Section 52),
- contribution to activation activity in the form of volunteer service (Section 52a).
- mediation of employment (Section 32, except for Section 32 paragraph 12 (d)),

ALMM aimed at increasing employment

- contribution to self-employment (Section 49);
- contribution for the employment of disadvantaged job applicants (hereinafter referred to as "DAS") (Section 50),
- contribution to support the development of local and regional employment (Section 50j),
- a contribution to support the creation of a job position in the first regularly paid employment (Section 51a),
- contribution to newly created job positions (Section 53d)
- contribution to setting up a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace (Section 56);
- the contribution for citizens with disabilities for self-employment activities (Section 57).

ALMM aimed at supporting job retention, maintaining existing jobs and preventing job cuts or collective redundancies include:

- education and training for the labor market of the employee (Section 47),
- contribution to support the maintenance of jobs (Section 50k),
- contribution for commuting (Section 53),
- contribution to promoting mobility for work (Section 53a)
- contribution for transport to employment (section 53b)
- contribution to maintaining a disabled citizen in employment (Section 56a),
- contribution to work assistant activities (Section 59),
- contribution to cover the operating costs of the sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace and the cost of staff transporting (Section 60).

59. The NPs called *Field Social Work in Municipalities I*. (hereinafter referred to as "FSW") and *Support for Selected Social Crisis Intervention Services at the Community Level* under the Department of Social Services of the MLSAF SR for the 2014-2020 program period, contribute in particular to promoting the integration of marginalized groups, including Roma and individuals or groups at a risk of discrimination, poverty or social exclusion, and increasing labor market participation.

60. NP FSW in municipalities I. is implemented over a period of 4 years (10/2015 – 09/2019) in all regions of the Slovak Republic, including the Bratislava Self-governing Region with a total amount of non-refundable financial contribution of EUR 29,340,353. The project is aimed at helping people who are at risk of poverty, at risk of social exclusion or who are socially excluded. This assistance is provided through the direct support of these

persons or by increasing the availability and quality of services, the overall social infrastructure and other aid instruments through preventive measures, education, professional training, research and health care. NP FSW contributes to increasing the active participation of people in dealing with their social situation, streamlining existing and introducing new tools with active participation of target groups, development and accessibility of selected social services and also contributing to the fulfillment of the objectives set out in Priority Axis 2 of HR OP Initiative to promote the employment of young people. The main objective is the sustainability of the integration of young people, especially those who are not employed or in the process of education or training on the labor market, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalized communities, including the implementation of a system of guarantees for young people. In March 2017, a notice was published on the possibility of joining the NP FSW I for organizations that deal systematically with social work with homeless people in selected cities of the Slovak Republic (Bratislava, Trnava, Žilina, Trenčín, Prešov and Martin) 233 subjects (224 municipalities and 9 non-governmental organizations, of which 1 non-governmental organization implements FSW in 2 municipalities) are currently involved in the project. FSW is implemented in 234 municipalities and towns. In 2017, 40,425 clients benefited from the project, out of 560,759 interventions, 11% from employment, 18% from finance and management and 7% from education. Compared to 2016, the number of connected clients increased by approximately 7 thousand.

61. The NP called *Support for Selected Social Crisis Intervention Services at the Community Level* is being implemented over a period of 4 years (10/2015 – 09/2019) in all regions of the Slovak Republic, with a total amount of the non-repayable financial contribution of EUR 20,915,000. The main objective of this NP is to support the development of providers of selected social crisis intervention services at the community level to provide accessible, standardized professional activities, service activities, other activities and activities undertaken to support the social inclusion of persons in a socially disadvantaged situation, threatened by social exclusion or a limited ability to socially integrate and solve their own problems. The specific objective is to increase the participation of the most disadvantaged and threatened persons in society on the labor market. Through the implementation of the project, the scope of the provided professional activities and activities carried out in the area of support for persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the regions was broadened and at the same time the support of registered social service providers of crisis intervention at the community level was extended - community center to support low-threshold day centers (hereinafter referred to as "LDC") and low-threshold social services for children and family (hereinafter referred to as "LSSCF "). From the point of view of specific activities aimed at employment, for example, work counseling, reading and writing, language and computer courses, financial literacy courses, activities to support and maintain work habits, communication courses, social and work incubators and others are implemented within the NP.

62. NP FSW and FW in municipalities in the presence of MRC is aimed at the comprehensive support of the integration of MRC members into society, especially the improvement of their employability and employment. The goal is to provide the best quality and most effective services to clients and consequently to professionalize social work in MRC. The FSW provides assistance to people who lack basic skills and functional literacy and are therefore indispensable for integrating MRC members into society. NP TSW and FW defines the basic intervention for socially excluded MRC residents whose implementation is essential for the success of any other interventions aimed at the development of MRC. The

important goal of the project is also to support the availability of FSW and FW itself. At the same time, there is a large scope dedicated to training, supervising and increasing the professionalism of FSW and FW staff. The total amount of the non-repayable financial contribution is EUR 26,511,131. There are currently 142 municipalities involved in the NP (in the September assessment there were 138 municipalities). In the rest, contract and employee selection processes are in progress.

63. The NP called *Community Centers in Cities and Municipalities in the presence of MRC* - Phase 1 focuses on the operation of community centers and the development of community work aimed at promoting social inclusion and positive changes in municipalities in the presence of MRC. This project will provide support for community centers to implement community work, community planning and low-threshold services to support poverty reduction and the level of social exclusion of MRC members through community activation to address their problems, support for non-formal education for children, youth and adults in order to improve their success in the education system or labor market placeability and to solve the problems of coexistence between marginalized people and the majority society in municipalities. Public and non-public social service providers in the community center have the possibility of joining the NP. In addition to support for the operation of community centers, the project focuses on the creation of methodological procedures for the support of community planning and the organization, coordination and methodological support of the operation of community centers and the building of professional capacities through education. The total amount of the non-repayable financial contribution is EUR 18,688,726. Currently, 59 social service providers (including 13 non-public and 46 public providers) are involved in the NP. There are 52 in operation. In the rest, contractual and employee selection processes are taking place. The number of community centers employees is 153. The number of clients participating in activities carried out in the community centers is 6,422. Compared to the third and fourth quarters of 2017, when the NP was realized, the number of clients grew by almost 2,600. The most frequently provided activities of a group character are: assistance in preparation for school teaching, preventive and interest activities. For activities of an individual nature, the community centers focused on advice and assistance in exercising rights and the rights of protected interests.

64. The recipients of the two abovementioned NPs are the MoI SR and the Plenipotentiary for the RC. The NPs are implemented in 150 municipalities identified in the segregation index, or the underdevelopment on the basis of the agreed methodology in accordance with Annex 8 of the HR OP. These municipalities are the least developed and socially excluded affected or threatened and segregated MRCs. The list of 150 municipalities is composed of all self-governing regions, apart from the Bratislava Self-governing Region.

Intensify efforts to effectively protect Roma from discrimination in all spheres of life by raising rights awareness and ensuring that law enforcement officers are adequately trained to properly investigate and follow-up all cases of racial discrimination, including through the initiation of independent investigations of alleged cases of police abuse;

65. The basic priorities of the MoI SR include restoring and maintaining the trust of Slovak citizens in the activities and duties of the police force and the related election of a new police president and also the Roma issue. In the Slovak Republic, the situation in the area of radicalization and extremism can be considered stable and without significant incidents that threaten the stability of the state. Due to the increase in the radicalization of the population of some EU Member States, the Slovak Republic also needs to focus on preventing radicalization and eliminating the factors that condition it.
66. Over the past years, the MoI SR has taken several preventive measures and has developed various activities in the field of combating extremism. The activities in question took the form of various information campaigns, training sessions or specific legislative measures.
67. The Government of the Slovak Republic has adopted a strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, which contains priority No. 6, declaring its commitment to adopting systematic and comprehensive measures aimed at the prevention and elimination of all forms of intolerance. Due to the need to implement specific measures that meet the priorities of the strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, the Slovak government has committed itself to adopting several action plans in the individual thematic areas of the strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights. In the area of racism, xenophobia and similar manifestations of intolerance, such a program document shall be the Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance for 2016-2018 (hereinafter referred to as "Action Plan for the Elimination of Racism").
68. The aim of the Action Plan for the Elimination of Racism is to prevent prejudice, stereotypes and hate speech conditioned by national, racial, ethnic, religious and other similar intolerance as well as to prevent the emergence and spread of attitudes and activities aimed at promoting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. It involves the implementation of systemic, preventive and protective measures, including measures in the field of education, and the availability of objective information on historical experiences, the nature, causes and consequences of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, in order to eliminate the sources of such attitudes as well as their manifestations.

69. The action plan for the elimination of racism builds on previous strategic documents on the prevention of racism and discrimination. In the context of the preparation of the strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, its content has been re-evaluated and divided into two areas – the area of prevention and elimination of racism and other forms of intolerance and the area of prevention of discrimination. In accordance with Government Resolution No. 71/2015, the area of prevention and elimination of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance was identified as a topic for its preparation. It can be said that in the Slovak Republic in recent years, there have been a whole series of action plans and other strategic documents focused on specific disadvantaged groups of the population as well as the currently existing Concept of the fight against extremism defining the priorities of the Slovak Republic in the field of the prevention and elimination of radicalization, extremism and the associated anti-social activities that threaten the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons and the foundations of a democratic rule-of-law.
70. The Department of Crime Prevention of the Office of the Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic regularly contributes by its articles to a children's magazine called *Mladý záchranár* (Young Rescuer). In September 2016, the main topic was the fight against extremism. As the magazine is designed for elementary school pupils, the article took into account this age category and the information was provided in the form of writing a Slovak child's diary, who moved to a foreign country along with his parents where he was bullied. The article was intended to change the view of children on the subject of migrants and to encourage children toward the tolerant acceptance of differences in our society.
71. The campaign of the project called *Effective Monitoring, Detection and Explaining the Expressions of Violent Extremism in the Cyberspace* funded by the MoI SR and the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as "EC"), based on an agreement with some news web portals, concluded that on 9 September 2016 the front page of their online edition would be published in old-brown color. The brown sepia symbolized not only the contemporary historical context (9 September is the day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust), but also fascism, which is indicated by brown in the colors of the political spectrum. Besides the color change itself, the portals on their front page had a campaign banner that linked to the newly created campaign site www.protinnavisti.sk.
72. In videos named *Let's not allow hate to mask the truth*, the surviving victims of the Holocaust and the descendants of the victims of the Roma Holocaust speak about their experiences. They talk about how hatred affected their lives and how they perceive it today, while reproducing their powerful life story. Both types of videos (the short and long version) can be found on the campaign site www.protinnavisti.sk. The people in the video who address the audience have lived through the experience with the Holocaust, persecution and violence. Due to the strength of the story and the visual and artistic side of the videos, it is an emotionally strong and forthright performance.
73. A training program covering all relevant areas of extremism is created for members of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "PF") dealing with the issue of extremism. Under the program, PF members are continuously retrained to identify extremist groups and their impact on society, as well as to search for and investigate crimes of extremism. In order to thoroughly document the investigation of the crime of extremism, instructional and methodical courses are carried out in which the members of the PF are

trained from the new trends in committing the relevant crime, its investigation and also the observance of human rights. In the Slovak Republic, an inter-ministerial working group of experts focused on the elimination of racially motivated crime, extremism and spectator violence is also operating within the Slovak Republic within the framework of the Expert Coordination Body for Fighting Crime, which participates in the mutual exchange of information on new forms, methods and ways of committing a racially motivated crime and extremism.

74. As part of the training program entitled *Training Against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement* (hereinafter referred to as “TAHCLE”), training in law enforcement authorities in hate crimes was conducted in Bratislava in 2017. The aim of the TAHCLE training was to prepare a select group of participants as trainers to be fully equipped to disseminate training to all relevant recipients (students from the PF Academy and Secondary school pupils studying to be police, current police officers, so-called first contact and investigators as part of their further education). In August 2018, the National Implementation Working Group on Education of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (hereinafter referred to as “OSCE”) and the Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as “ODIHR”) met with the main task of approving the draft program, and a timetable ensuring sustainability while maintaining the cascade method of implementing the training in question. In November 2018, further training of TAHCLE trainers focused on hate crimes were held in the presence of several participants from various areas (representatives of the National Anti-Terror Unit (hereinafter referred to as “NAKA”), the National Criminal Police Presidium of the Slovak Republic PF, representatives of the Police Department of the Presidium of the PF of the Slovak Republic, the representatives of the Police Department from each Regional Directorate of the PF in the Slovak Republic, representatives of the PF Academy in Bratislava, representatives from each secondary technical college of the Police Force, representative of the SNCHR).
75. The NP entitled *Improving access of victims of crime to services and establishment of contact points for victims*, to be implemented in 2017-2020, aimed at improving access of victims of crime to services has been in implementation since November 2017. Many of the activities of the NP concerned also include training that aims at first educating contact persons in client centers or district offices at the headquarters of the county to increase the success of identifying victims of crime. One of the training sessions of coordinators and assistant coordinators at the regional level took place from 4 to 6 September 2018 in Piešťany. The topics of the training were "the prevention and elimination of violence against women as a specific form of crime", "Communication with selected target groups", and training with the President of the civic association Fórum for helping the elderly, Mrs. Ľubica Gálisovou, who presented examples of good practice and information on the Senior line 0800 172 500. In 2018, regional office workers traveled through towns and villages and lectured the most important target group of senior citizens about not being a victim of a crime.
76. The PF Academy in Bratislava focuses on issues of discrimination, racism and extremism as well as issues of human rights as part of the systematic teaching and organization of various workshops for students.
77. In order to streamline the fight against terrorism and extremism in the Slovak Republic, the National Anti-Terrorism Unit (hereinafter referred to as “NPTJ”) was created within the structure of the National Criminal Agency (hereinafter referred to as “NAKA”). As part of the task of detecting, clarifying and investigating crimes of extremism and

terrorism, NPTJ members also focus on identifying organizations that encourage and support racial discrimination. The manifestations of racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance have lately been gradually shifting from the "street" to the "virtual space", so in many cases this crime is committed through social networks on the Internet. Within the NPTJ, an extremist screening center has been established to focus on, analyze and use information obtained from Slovak security services and foreign security agencies focusing on gathering information on performers, bearers or supporters of extremism in the Slovak Republic. This police department also ensures, within its scope of competence, the collection of statistical data on crimes of extremism, which are summarized annually in the NAKA activity information for the relevant calendar year for the public. The collection of statistical data is also ensured by the Department of Administration of Information Systems of the Police Presidium of the PF. Through the strengthening of the NPTJ, the intensifying of the search for, monitoring and analysis of information, suggestions and expressions of racially motivated crime on the Internet and on social networks is expected.

78. In order to improve the detection of unlawful conduct related to racially motivated acts committed in the virtual environment, NPTJ members participated in a training organized by the CSIRT.SK (Computer Security and Incident Response Team) in 2017. They also took part in the EMICVEC (Effective Monitoring, Investigation and Counterfeiting of Violent Extremism in Cyberspace) project, which aims to increase effectiveness in monitoring, detecting and explaining cybercrime extremism.

79. In the section of socially excluded groups, the role of the senior officer for work in communities is established within the PF in the regional departments of the PF in the individual regional directorates of the PF. The largest number of these members of the PF operates within the Regional Directorate of the PF in Košice, Prešov and Banská Bystrica. Based on regular safety analyzes of socially excluded groups, the number of these police officers is growing steadily.

80. On 18 July 2017, a seminar of the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance (hereinafter referred to as "VRAX") was held to address the dissolution of the political party *de lege ferenda*. The invited guests from Masaryk University in Brno and the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC discussed ways of combating extremist political parties, refusing to register a political party, temporarily banning party activities, disqualifying the electoral candidate list, repressing the party for certain program points, excluding the party from state funding, criminal repression against individual members for their actions in relation to party activity, criminal repression against party members for their membership or position in the party, annulment of the election result after a victory or other success of the political party and banning the party. The main conclusion of the seminar was the need for the official registration of the Slovak Republic into the concept of defending democracy: "A defending democracy is such a democracy that actively uses legal, power and discursive instruments against its ideological enemies within the system, even before these enemies initiate the fulfillment of the main threats that arise from their existence, in particular serious disturbances in the stability of the constitutional establishment or its destruction. These enemies are exposed to repression, which, however, is the result of a democratic political process and does not interfere with fundamental human rights." The definition of a defending democracy is based on the work of Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse, who call this concept a "Streitbare demokratie" in the form in which they were used in the publication of Miroslav

Mareš and Štěpán Výborný: "Militant Democracy in Central Europe" (Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2014).

81. In the field of legislation, an amendment to the Criminal Code aimed at the more effective investigation of crimes of extremism and racially motivated crimes was adopted on 1 January 2017. The state of facts regarding the new criminal offence of apartheid and discrimination against a group of people was introduced, reflecting the fulfillment of the Slovak Republic's obligations under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The object of the offence is, in particular, the prohibition of any discrimination against a certain group of people, that is to say the breach of the principle of equality as guaranteed in Art. 3 paragraph 1 of the Charter of fundamental rights and freedoms. The amendment introduces a change in the definition of extremist material, changes in the definition of a special motive, treatment of the exhaustive calculation of crimes of extremism and also changes in the factual nature of the crime of inhumanity. In connection with the strengthening of the fight against extremism, these crimes have fallen within the competence of the Special Prosecutor's Office, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Prosecutor's Office") and the Specialized Criminal Court since January 2017. The specialization of law enforcement bodies will make it possible to combat the manifestation of extremism more effectively.
82. An educational seminar for VRAX members was held in Jerusalem in October 2017 in the presence of the director of the Sereď Holocaust Museum. It was hosted by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem.
83. Other activities related to the Holocaust in the first half of 2018 included talks with prominent personalities, namely the writer and journalist Veronika Homolová Tóthová (author of the work *Mengeleho dievča* (Mengele's girl) and director of the Sereď Holocaust Museum Martin Korčok, who presented two documentary films about Slovak female survivors of the Holocaust. The documentary films were produced with the financial support of the MoI SR within the framework of the grant for the financing of activities in the area of crime prevention and the fight against crime.
84. The MFEA SR, in cooperation with the ODIHR, the MoI SR, the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia and the Museum of Jewish Culture (hereinafter referred to as "MJC"), organized an event at which the Practical Guide of the Office of the OSCE ODIHR entitled *How to understand hate crimes against anti-Semitism and addressing the security needs of Jewish communities* was presented in June 2018. The issues of anti-Semitism will also be addressed during the presidency of the Slovak Republic in the OSCE in 2019. MFEA SR, in cooperation with ODIHR, is preparing a high-level conference on the given issue in Bratislava in February 2019.
85. The motive of criminal offences based on race, color, origin, nationality or ethnicity is a special qualification term in the general part of the Criminal Code stated in the provisions of Section 140 (e) according to which *a special motive means committing a hate crime towards a group of persons or an individual for their actual or alleged race, nationality, ethnic group, for their true or presumed origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs.*

86. Such a special motive imposes the application of a higher criminal penalty and is qualified by the facts of the offences listed in a special part of the Criminal Code. Thus, if the offender commits an offence on account of a special motive, the law provides for the imposition of a stricter punishment for specified facts. In Slovakia, the legislation is in line with recommendations and law enforcement bodies and courts are required to comply with the legally established procedure and prosecute all racially motivated offences.
87. The mechanism for recording and collecting statistical data on racially motivated crime from the point of view of police statistics was first altered significantly in 2015 in a manner allowing for the monitoring of the collection of data in the Statistical System of Criminality not only as the total number of crimes committed under a special motive under Section 140 (e) Criminal Code, i.e. hate crimes for the year in question, but also according to individual types and forms of hatred, or, as the case may be, prejudices.
88. In 2017, the police statistics in question were supplemented by other monitored prejudices (ethnic, religious), which are not explicitly included in the Criminal Code, in the facts of the case of the offence reflecting the definition of a hate crime. The list of prejudices was expanded to streamline data collection for OSCE ODIHR, for example by adding anti-Semitism prejudice and prejudice against the Roma community.
89. In connection with the strengthening of the fight against extremism, these criminal offenses have fallen within the competence of the Special Prosecutor's Office, the Prosecutor's Office and the Special Criminal Court since January 2017. The specialization of law enforcement bodies will make it possible to combat the manifestation of extremism more effectively.
90. Within the provision of funds, the Department of Crime Prevention of the Office of the MoI SR annually announces calls based on Act No. 526/2010 Coll. on the provision of grants within the scope of the MoI SR (hereinafter referred to as "Act on the provision of grants within the scope of the MoI SR"), which largely support the issue of the fight against extremism. In 2017, 11 applications for grants were supported in total as part of the calls, of which 4 supported applications related to the issue of extremism in the total amount of EUR 44,500. In the context of the Call of the Slovak Republic Government Council for Crime Prevention to submit applications for grants from the state budget for the financing of projects in the area of crime prevention, in 2018, grants from the Call of the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Crime Prevention in the amount of EUR 138,000 were provided on the issue of extremism and from Call No. VII KMV 2018 in the amount of EUR 46,475.
91. As part of the updating of NRIS, the Plenipotentiary for the RC submitted for negotiation to the Government the Updated NRIS Action Plans by 2020 for 2016-2018 for the following areas:
- D.2.1 Area of Education,
 - D.2.2 Area of Employment,
 - D.2.3 Area of Health,
 - D.2.4 Area of Housing,
 - D.2.5 Area of Financial Inclusion.

The Government has approved the mentioned Action Plans by Resolution No. 88/2017. After the submission by the Plenipotentiary for the RC, the NRIS also included the following action plans:

- D. 2.6 Area of non-discrimination
- D.2.7 Area of approach to the majority society – Roma integration initiative through communications approved by the government in its Resolution 424/2017.

The NRIS thus contains a mutually interconnected set of tasks and measures in the integration process, which also contain tasks and measures in the area of Roma protection against discrimination. Based on the task stated in Action Plan D.2.6. – the area of non-discrimination, the Plenipotentiary for the RC implemented projects aimed at raising the awareness and legal awareness of the Roma about the possibilities of protection against discrimination in 2017. The lecture entitled *Roma in the State* aims to clarify to students in a comprehensible way the status of a citizen in the state, what constitutes state power, and which means of resources can be used to ensure that students can effectively assert their interests and rights. Emphasis is placed on local government during the lecture. Application practice in the field of the enforcement of the Anti-Discrimination Act and other generally binding legislation containing anti-discrimination provisions is also addressed by the Plenipotentiary for the RC in cooperation with the SNCHR, by the Office of the Public Defender of Rights as well as with other human rights institutions in the field of public administration.

92. As part of the Action Plan for Area of non-discrimination D.2.6., sub-objective 2, measure 2.2. under the heading *Raising the level of knowledge about Roma discrimination among decision-makers*, activity 2.2.4 under the heading *Supporting sensitization and education activities aimed at reducing and preventing Roma discrimination for members of the PF*, with the implementation criterion by 2020, is among the activities aimed at raising sensitivity. These activities include measurable activities called *Number of supported sensitization activities* and *Number of people who have completed education*. In this context, the Plenipotentiary for the RC may refer to the above-standard cooperation with the section of personnel and social activities of the MoI SR, which is responsible for the training of police officers in the field of vocational secondary education and further qualification training for PF members. The mentioned Action Plan also includes the sensitization and educational activities of judges and senior judicial officers in the area of the non-discrimination of the Roma.

93. In the framework of education in 2016, the Plenipotentiary for the RC participated in the training of the European Roma Rights Center (hereinafter referred to as "ERRC") under the title *Powers and transgressions - prohibition of discrimination in the performance of the service activities of PF members in Roma settlements*. This training was targeted at representatives of local self-government and mayors of municipalities and the non-governmental sector. In 2016, on the basis of the above-mentioned cooperation of the RC with the CoE in 2016 in Zvolen and Donovaly, the National seminar for journalists in the field of antidiscrimination of the Roma was organized, focusing on ethical reporting on Roma communities. The seminar was an expression of the RE's efforts to support the implementation of the Strasbourg Declaration on the Roma of 20 October 2010 and to help Member States to improve the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights.

94. In the system of security, the Plenipotentiary for the RC together with the PF accepted all the available training offers of the PF. This fact is evidenced by the previous contractual base with the CoE - Support Team to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues, in which, together with the trainers of the CoE and the ERRC, a national seminar on Roma in the area of Roma antidiscrimination was carried out in 2015 on topics such as:

- international standards and judicature on the protection of human rights and their application to professional and service activities, including interventions under unified command,
- international standards on effective investigations related to the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or inhuman treatment, the right to a fair trial and the right not to be discriminated against,
- ethical principles and specificities of police interventions in Roma communities.

A special benefit was the topic represented by Mr. Herman Rennes, international instructor on the subject of hate crimes, called the *Police Response to hate crimes*, as well as the topic of the evaluation of the pilot project entitled *Anti-conflict team*, in which the recommendations of the Venice Commission in relation to freedom of assembly were also reflected. It also included the methodology of the PF procedures in the case of ultra-right, extremist rallies with anti-Roma themes. The system of inclusion of the staff of the PF departments in this seminar consisted of a proportional share of older officers for work in communities at the level of the organizational parts of the basic departments of the district directorates and the regional directorates of the PF and the members assigned to the individual worksites of the Office of the Inspection Service. The Plenipotentiary for the RC in these systems of activities and on the basis of the relevant CoE documents monitors both components of functional PF tasks, that is to say, protective functions against negative phenomena threatening both from the inside and from the external integration process of the Roma.

95. The ERRC, in cooperation with the Plenipotentiary for the RC in 2015, organized a national seminar on the topic *Roma and the Right to Housing - International Standards*, including case studies and procedures in line with international law. Also thanks to the acceptance of the legislative activity of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, after agreement with the MESRS SR, it issued a measure of 17 May 2017 (Notice No. 129/2017 Coll.) amending the Decree of the MoI SR (Notice No. 414/2008 Coll.). A consequence of the above-mentioned amendment to the generally binding regulation is the fact that under the newly introduced civil studies at secondary vocational police schools MRC members will be admitted for further vocational secondary education, who, after the successful completion of the training, will have the conditions created for admission to the PF, according to the principle that the policemen working in the Roma community be policemen for that community. The MoI SR accepted another legislative initiative of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, when preparing this general regulation, by introducing a legal structure according to which, during this civil education system, the pupils, i.e. MRC members, will not need to cover the costs of accommodation and boarding, on the basis of the conclusion of a special agreement under the Civil Code. This temporary equalizing measure is all the more important in the entire complex in that the postgraduate qualification study of pupils who are not police officers will last for at least two years and the mentioned post-secondary qualification study in the field of security service focusing on basic police training for pupils who are not police officers will contain a new qualification in the education system, also applicable in civilian fields.

96. A new merit in 2017 in access to further qualification training for PF members, especially older officers for work in communities, is the systematic shift in the position of education programs of accreditation. In 2016 and 2017, the Plenipotentiary for the RC could participate in an accredited special educational program entitled *Specifics of performance of a senior community service provider*. The project's guarantors are the Secondary vocational school of the Košice PF and the Department of Riot Police of the Presidium of the PF. Within the framework of partnership cooperation for the provision of this education system, the Plenipotentiary for the RC also provided an academic pedagogue, a Romani studies and Cultural Anthropologist, free of charge, who provided education in this accredited qualification course of further education on the relevant specifics of relations in the MRC. The share in this periodic training of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, MoI SR and the Presidium of the PF has a permanent character. The subject of this education was, and is, facts such as origin, norms and characteristic value orientation in socially excluded groups, the history of the Roma, norms, customs, traditions, lifestyle, present living conditions as well as current strategies for solving problems in socially excluded groups. One of the topics of this accredited educational program also includes the issue of racism, extremism and discrimination, including the tools to prevent the emergence of these negative phenomena, as well as the correct and effective communication procedures of the PF in these cases.
97. In the system of departmental university study co-operation, the PF Academy created the possibility of participation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC in assigning topics of diploma theses with an emphasis on the methods and procedures of the PF in the MRC environment in 2017. In addition to this fact, since 2011, an expert conference organized by the Department of Criminology of the PF Academy has been held, focusing on the current issues of the PF authority in the MRC environment.
98. In 2017, the Plenipotentiary for the RC, on the basis of a mandate given by the MoI SR, accepted on behalf of the whole PF the OSCE ODIHR offer for cooperation in a training program entitled *Effective Police* aimed at police activities in the MRC, with an emphasis on respect for human rights. The Plenipotentiary for the RC in cooperation with the MFEA SR, the Presidium of the PF and the Control and Inspection Service of the MoI SR held a meeting with the Director of the CRPSI (the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues) – Mr. Dan Pavel Doghi, on 27 June 2018, at which the PF expressed its willingness to undergo OSCE ODIHR training for PF members with a focus on contact with the Roma community. From the point of view of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, it was also accepted that the PF participated in the TAHCLE training organized by the OSCE in 2017, and the PF is also scheduled to undergo further training in this activity. The PF has clearly adopted other measures to implement the recommendations resulting from the training in the secondary vocational education curriculum as well as in the PF Academy.
99. In the systems for the prevention of the deployment of anti-riot force measures, the co-operation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC and the Presidium of the PF continues in the development of methods of work for older officers for working in communities. The Regulation of the Presidium of the PF No. 37/2017, amending the Regulation of the President of the PF No. 22/2013 on the activities of the basic departments of the Riot Police of the PF, as amended, has changed the basic tasks of the older officer for work in communities, with an emphasis on the preventive and educational component of the activities. This legal status has also been preserved in the Regulation of the Presidium of the PF No. 80/2018 on the activities of the basic departments of the Riot Police of the PF.

100. Since 2013, the Plenipotentiary for the RC has consistently submitted legislative proposals for the amendment of the institutes, proposals for individual cameras for individual interventions, as well as the making of video-audio recordings during interventions under uniform command within the scope of Act No. 171/1993 Coll. on the PF (hereinafter referred to as "PF Act"). Amendment to the Regulation of the MoI SR No. 3/2007 on the procedure for searching for persons and items supplemented Art. 39 on the new paragraph 6, which reads as follows: *The commander of a search operation shall ensure the production of video, audio or other records from the location of the search, in particular if there is a need to deploy a greater amount of forces and means and where several non-interested persons may be concentrated if the operative situation and nature of the intervention so permits, and such a recording can be technically done.* This Internal by-law of the MoI SR came into force on 14 January 2014.
101. In a further cooperative approach, on 22 May 2015, an order was issued by the President of the PF to order the production of an video and audio recording in the course of service operations under a single command and during planned security measures involving more than 15 policemen. This order of the President of the PF therefore expanded the obligation of PF members to make video and audio recordings not only in search operations, but also during security measures and in service operations under a single command.
102. The co-operation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC and the President of the PF also continued in the scope of the preparation and issue of the Regulation of the MoI SR No. 137/2015 on the riot police units of the PF, Art. 8 and 9. The mentioned internal regulation establishes the obligation to provide, through the audiovisual technique of documenting the course of the deployment of a riot police unit, in particular violators of public order committing an offense, as well as the orders, commands and instructions of the commander and the activities of the Riot Police Unit before, during and after the termination of a service intervention or other service activity.
103. From 2015 to 2017, based on the cooperation between the Plenipotentiary for the RC and the Presidium of the PF, the testing of the individual cameras that were part of the equipment and mounted on the uniform was carried out. At the same time, the PF also carried out other processes in relation to the technical solution and the legal conformity of the storage of video and audio recordings on technical equipment. The PF, after the conclusion of the public procurement, plans to install around 2,000 cameras on the personal equipment of the first contact PF members. On the basis of the cooperation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, the MoI SR and the Presidium of the PF, legal space has already been created for the timely adoption of such an amendment to the PF Act. In the past, the PF installed cameras in PF patrol vehicles for the same reason - documenting illegal acts, but also the approaches and procedures for enforcing the law. The acquired application practice can be used in accordance with the legislative proposals of the Plenipotentiary for the RC. In this area, the PF is also analyzing the need to establish stationary cameras in MRC settlements in order to protect public order as well as community protection and, of course, to control the execution of the service and procedures for enforcing the law of PF members. The aim will also be to combat usury, the (publicized) cases of hate speech and extremism, the fight against all forms of drug addiction, and so on. In these objectives, educational cooperation between NAKA, NPTJ, the Department of Crime Prevention of the Office of the MoI SR and the Office of the Criminal Police of the Presidium of the PF is ongoing. This cooperation provides new programs for the protection of members of the Roma national minority residing in MRC urban settlements.

Currently, the mentioned processes of the partial introduction of audiovisual recordings are creating the legal necessity of adopting a comprehensive legal regulation by themselves.

104. A special benefit of the Plenipotentiary for the RC in partnership with the MoI SR were local public order service projects. In the system of the fulfillment of the activation tools defined in individual plans of the least developed districts in the area of renewal of the Institute of Roma Citizens' Patrols and local public order services in municipalities with the presence of MRC, the Plenipotentiary for the RC cooperated extensively on the announcement of the call of the Intermediate Body of the HR OP entitled *Support for the comprehensive provision of local public order services* in municipalities with the presence of MRC, funded by HR OP, priority axis no. 5 called *MRC Integration*. The indicative amount of the funds of the EU - European Social Fund - was set at EUR 10 million in the first phase, and later the process of increasing this funding to EUR 19 million took place, bringing about the increase of the number of municipalities and places where local public order services currently operate to 147. This has also boosted overall employment activation tools in the system of action plan measures of the least developed districts. In the system of the creation of the internal regulations of the MoI SR, to establish a cooperation platform for decisive players in the field of Roma integration and sections and departments of the MoI SR and the PF in the MRC urban settlements, with the aim of the Roma gradually taking over the civil responsibility for maintaining public order and the level of civic co-operation, the Plenipotentiary for the RC cooperated with the MoI SR on the preparation of measure No. 122/2017 on a working group for tackling the issue of socially excluded groups. The goal of the procedures of the Plenipotentiary for the RC was a new approach to the application of non-invasive methods with the elimination of attributed characteristics and stereotypes, the elimination of conflict situations between the minority and the majority, while eliminating the profiles of right-wing extremism concepts.

105. With regard to the adoption of generally binding regulations creating instruments which although not directly anti-discriminatory, their implications create the prerequisites to avoid the effects of methods and procedures with the consequences of discriminatory indices, for example in the field of forced eviction procedures, it is necessary to point out the following cooperation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC with central state administration bodies in the drafting of legislation:

- creation of legislation on the arrangement of legal relations to the land on which the dwellings and buildings are built in the urban settlements of MRC, while preparing a new NP,
- in the field of the concentration and increased efficiency of financing and more comprehensive treatment of social housing, it manifested, for example, in the cooperation between the Plenipotentiary for the RC and the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "MTC SR"), especially in the preparation of Act No. 249/2017 Coll., amending Act No. 443/2010 Coll. on grants for housing development and social housing as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act on grants for housing development and social housing") and Act No. 244/2017 Coll., amending Act No. 150/2013 Coll. on the State Fund for the Development of Housing, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "SFDH"). A legal instrument was created through these generally binding legal regulations to finance the cost of a flat from SFDH resources up to 100% of the acquisition cost, and also the price limits were raised. The title of the purchase of land conditional on the construction of rented flats was also included into the title of financing from the

SFDH resources. At the same time, the concept of a start-up flat in the regular standard flat category was introduced and modified in the respective regulatory scope of both legal standards.

106. Another step of participation in the creation of instruments in the field of Roma employment was the participation of the Plenipotentiary for the RC in the framework of the interministerial commentary procedure in the creation of Act No. 112/2018 Coll. on the social economy and social enterprises and on the amendment and supplement of certain acts in which not only the concept of a positive social impact, whether in the form of meeting a public interest or community interest, was modified, but also the terms social economy, social economy entities, social enterprise, as well as individual types of registered social enterprises, i.e. a publicly-beneficial enterprise, a community-based enterprise, an integration enterprise, a social housing enterprise and other registered social enterprises. The mentioned act also deals with the status of a registered social enterprise and public funding, in the form of investment aid, compensatory aid and grants. In the housing access system, the mentioned legal standard stated that the positive social impact of renting a flat is considered to have been achieved if a social housing enterprise rents at least 70% of its dwellings for rent corresponding to the cost of the flat. The rent corresponding to the cost of the flat includes the necessary costs associated with the acquisition, management and operation of the residential building in which the apartments are located. Authorized persons for the purposes of this Act are natural persons forming a household and whose monthly income does not exceed four times the total amount of the subsistence level. If a member of the household is also a natural person with severe disabilities who does not belong to the jointly assessed persons under the Act on the subsistence level and on the amendment and supplement of certain acts, the natural person with severe disability is considered as another jointly considered adult physical person when calculating the income.

107. These activities of the Plenipotentiary for the RC are also in line with the other tasks of the D2.6 Action Plan for Non-Discrimination, for example, to provide accessible and high-quality legal assistance for the Roma in matters of the violation of anti-discrimination legislation. Interventions in this area are carried out by the Plenipotentiary for the RC itself as well as in cooperation with the Legal Aid Center. The MLSAF SR announced a call in 2018 funded by the ESIF within the framework of the HR OP under the title *Counseling and education in the field of prevention and elimination of discrimination II*, specific objective:

- the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination (an indicative allocation of EUR 10 million of which EUR 7 million is to be allocated to the least developed districts).

In the context of focusing on the target group of members of the Roma ethnic minority living in urban settlements at risk of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, the allocation from the ESIF budget and from the state budget is anticipated at EUR 3,182,744, which could be contracted in 2018. The target groups of this call are staff members implementing policies and measures to prevent discrimination or social inclusion in the public as well as in the non-public sector, as well as entities and activities carried out in the public interest.

108. As part of Action Plan D.2.6 on non-discrimination, three research tasks were carried out in 2017, taking into account multiple instances of Roma discrimination. In the framework of the measure D.2.6, the MoJ SR supported 2 projects of non-governmental organizations focused on working with persons belonging to MRC, where there was a risk of multiple

discrimination, in 2017. Two other projects were aimed at raising public awareness on MRC discrimination issues. Further details on the implementation of the Action Plan are contained in the NRIS Monitoring Report for 2017 submitted by the Plenipotentiary for the RC. The Report also includes the outputs of the Action Plan under the title *Area of the approach towards the majority society – Roma Inclusion Initiative through communication*, which complements the application area of the elimination of discrimination. The Action Plan D.2.6 aims to increase the effectiveness of Roma protection against discrimination and unequal treatment, sensitize public opinion, mitigate mutual stereotypes and prejudice, and strengthen cohesion between the Roma population and the majority society. The Action Plan on non-discrimination, through its objectives and measures, is also aimed at eliminating the emergence of preconceptions of discriminatory procedures based on negative stereotypes on civil society, the media as well as entities in the public and private law, deciding on or contravening the rights of members of the Roma ethnic minority, including minorities living in urban settlements of MRC in the area of social security, health care, provision of goods and services and in education.

109. The Plenipotentiary for the RC updated the document entitled *Methodological Interpretation for Effective Application of the Principles of Desegregation, Deghettoization and Destigmatization* in 2017. The aim of this document was to define the basic strategic principles of the NRIS, namely desegregation, deghettoization and destigmatization (hereinafter referred to as "3D").

Comprehensively address anti-Gypsyism in the education and put in place the necessary measures to ensure that Roma children are systematically placed in integrated regular classes. Placement in special schools must be reserved for specific and exceptional cases only;

110. The first major amendment to Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (hereinafter referred to as "Education Act") was implemented by the adoption of Act No. 188/2015 Coll. Particularly in paragraph 2 Section 107, the mentioned amendment has been in force since 1 January 2016, according to which a child or pupil whose special educational needs arise solely from his development in the SDE, cannot be admitted to a special school or to a special kindergarten, primary school or secondary school class. In paragraph 3 of Section 107, an amendment has been introduced under which children from an SDE or a pupil from an SDE are enrolled in a kindergarten, primary school or secondary school class together with other children or pupils. Pursuant to paragraph 4, primary schools receive a contribution to improve the conditions for the education and instruction of pupils from the SDE. From the above-mentioned contribution, inter alia, a primary school, which educates more than 85 pupils from an SDE, is obliged to use at least 50% of the total contribution to improve the conditions for educating and instructing pupils from the SDE for the elementary school on the personal expenses of a teacher assistant for pupils from the SDE or a social pedagogue. Act No. 188/2015 Coll. brought about a stricter control over the activities of educational facilities for educational counseling and prevention, created a space for the review of diagnostic methods while a tool for examining a child's personal file in a counseling facility as well as other pedagogical documentation was put in place in cases of a reasonable suspicion that it is not in conformity with the educational needs of a child or pupil. This act also introduced a classification of a serious deficiency in the operation of a special educational facility or school

equipment of educational counseling and prevention of the application of incorrect diagnostic methods, thus extending the control instrument of the State School Inspection (hereinafter referred to as "SSI").

111. The subsequent amendment of Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on the funding of primary schools, secondary schools and school facilities, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act on Funding of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities") with effect from 1 September 2017, amended Section 4e in paragraph 7 to which part of the School Act was added on the provision of contribution to improve the conditions for the education and training of pupils from the SDE. At the same time, Section 9f of the transitional provision stipulates the purpose of providing a contribution to improve the conditions for the education and training of pupils from the SDE environment and pupils who are members of a household which is being assisted in material need, and the pupil's legal representative demonstrates this fact to the head of the primary school. This contribution goes beyond the standard norm for a pupil.
112. The MESRS SR has consistently paid attention to the improvement of the educational process at all levels of education for all pupils of national minorities and is intensively seeking to establish a comprehensive and uniform system of education and training for disadvantaged children and pupils within the inclusive education. The Government of the Slovak Republic approved the National Program for Development of Education and Training by Resolution No. 302/2018. The NP is a reform for the next 10 years, to be implemented through two-year action plans containing specific measures, a timeframe and budget. One of the NP's pillars is inclusion, inspired by the Finnish model. During the creation of the NP, also based on the long-term activities carried out in accordance with the CoE recommendations, EU legal acts, as well as recommendations from other human rights treaties, the following tasks were also assigned to the NP implementation program: introduction of a legal right to pre-primary education of a child from 3 years old, a new form of support of children and pupils from the SDE, increasing the number of professional staff in schools, especially teachers' assistants, social pedagogues, school psychologists and special pedagogues, improving the quality of educational facilities for educational counseling and prevention, including the provision of appropriate testing tools for the correct diagnosis of special educational-instructional needs of children and pupils, including special educational-instructional needs of pupils resulting from their development in the SDE and the use of cultural and linguistically neutral test batteries in MRC environments. Another task is to develop the education of children and pupils belonging to national minorities in their native language, focusing on increasing the qualifications for teaching Romani language, literature, life and institutions, in particular by creating missing framework curricula and by accrediting new or modifying existing study programs for the specificities of teaching the Romani language.
113. Important support of the MESRS SR in this area is realized through the European Social Fund, based on the strategy of the HR OP, which is aimed at supporting education, employment, social inclusion and vulnerable groups on the labor market. The NP called *School open to all* began to be implemented within the priority axis of the HR OP under the title *Education* with a planned duration of 46 months with a total allocation of EUR 29,877,073. The primary objective of the project is to promote inclusive education, improve professional competencies, ensure equal access to quality education and improve the results of children in kindergartens and pupils at primary schools. An important part of this project is the development of local desegregation plans in 130 primary schools. At the same time, a demand-driven call entitled *Greater Success in Primary Schools* was announced with an

allocation of EUR 50 million, aimed at supporting inclusion in primary schools through teacher assistants, pedagogical assistants and an inclusive team (school psychologist, special pedagogue and social pedagogue) within the priority axis of HR OP *Education* on 30 December 2016. The MESRS SR, as an Intermediate Body for Priority Axis Education of the Human Resources Operational Program announced a call for the support of inclusion on 12 November 2018. The call entitled *Greater Success in Primary Schools II* was declared as a follow-up to the successful call of the same name that supported 478 primary school projects aimed at creating new jobs for pedagogical assistants, teacher assistant for pupils with health disabilities or members of inclusive teams in the allocation of more than EUR 38 million from the European Social Fund, of which 22 projects were in the Bratislava Self-governing Region in the amount of almost EUR 1.4 mil. Primary schools are thus re-enabled to create new jobs beyond the existing places in schools for positions of pedagogical assistants, school psychologists, social pedagogues, special pedagogues, or teacher assistants for pupils with health disabilities.

114. On 25 August 2016, the MESRS SR approved a Framework Curriculum (hereinafter referred to as “FC”) for primary Schools with the language of instruction of a national minority as part of the Innovated Public Education Program (hereinafter referred to as “IPEP”) for primary schools with effect from 1 September 2016. The document is published on the website www.statpedu.sk. Schools can choose from two framework curricula:

- FC for primary schools with the language of instruction of the national minority valid from 1 September 2015,
- FC for primary schools with the language of instruction of the national minority valid from 1 September 2016,

115. In the case of the selection of the FC for primary schools with the language of instruction of the national minority valid as of 1 September 2016, the school must observe the content and performance standards (valid from 1 September 2015) of the following subjects: music education in the 1st grade, English language in the 3rd grade and national history in the 4th grade.

116. The MESRS SR approved Amendment No. 1, amending the FC for primary schools with the teaching of the language of a national minority. The approved amendment is effective from 1 September 2017, beginning with the 1st year of primary school. The school can choose one of two framework curricula:

- FC for primary schools with the teaching of the language of a national minority valid from 1 September 2015,
- FC for primary schools with the teaching of the language of a national minority, amendment to the IPEP for primary education effective from 1 September 2017.

The MESRS SR approved, with effect from 1 September 2017:

- FC for grammar schools with an eight-year study program teaching the language of a national minority,
- FC for grammar schools with a four-year study program teaching the language of a national minority.

On 24 April 2017, the MESRS SR approved the FC for pupils with developmental learning disabilities for primary education and lower secondary education with the language of instruction of the national minority as part of the Education Program for pupils with developmental learning disabilities, the International Standard Classification of Education (hereinafter referred to as "ISCED") – ISCED1, ISCED 2 with effect from 1 September 2017. The document is available at www.minedu.sk. On the basis of a request from the MESRS SR, the State Pedagogical Institute prepared:

- educational standards for the subject Russian language and literature for primary and lower secondary education for schools teaching the Russian language. The subject materials were approved on 27 February 2018,
- educational standards for the subject German language for primary and lower secondary education for schools teaching the German language. The materials were approved on 19 March 2018 with effect from 1 September 2018.

117. In its control activity carried out in the school year 2016/2017, the SSI found in a group of 35 controlled subjects educating pupils from the SDE of the MRC, that three schools educated pupils from these communities in classes separately from the majority population, in violation of the provisions of the School Act. In the school year 2015/2016, similar findings related to four schools and two schools in the school year 2014/2015. Strengthening the competences of SSI is already showing positive changes in favor of the education of Roma children in the mainstream of education. The first concrete case was the decommissioning of the Private special primary school in Rokycany.

118. The implementation of expert-methodological assistance to schools in which the signs of segregation appeared was assigned to the plan of the main tasks of the Methodological and Pedagogical Center for the year 2018 by the MESRS SR. Priority is to be given to schools listed in inspection reports. In order to ensure this task, the MESRS SR allocated funds for the Methodological and Pedagogical Center.

119. The MESRS SR has adopted several measures in the ministerial regulation such as the Educational and Organizational Guidelines for the respective school year: the strict application of the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and segregation, the elimination of undesirable phenomena such as spatial, organizational, physical and symbolic exclusion or separation of Roma children and pupils due to their ethnicity (often combined with a social disadvantage) and pupils with disadvantages from other children and pupils. Creating appropriate conditions for their education in schools and classes together with the majority population. Applying appropriate pedagogical and professional interventions to implement inclusive education for children and pupils, for whom such training is appropriate, in all kindergartens, elementary schools and secondary schools, i.e. public, private and ecclesial, using specific teaching methods. Creation of inclusive teams composed of pedagogical and professional staff, implementation of the principles of inclusion, creation of a school climate for mutual co-operation. Pedagogical diagnostics should focus primarily on taking into account the hidden potential in education, identifying barriers and inequalities in education and their subsequent removal and identifying risk factors. An important priority is to spread the ideas of tolerance, accepting differences and improving attitudes towards disadvantaged groups of the population. Schools and educational establishments, in particular those in which the SSI has identified features of segregation, will cooperate mainly with the Methodological and Pedagogical Center and with the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in Bratislava in providing expert-methodical assistance.

120. These measures of the MESRS SR are linked to the NP under the title *School open to all* which is implemented within the HR OP in the context of an accredited educational program under the title **Cooperation of pedagogical staff and professional staff in the system of inclusive support of children and pupils. Currently, training in 20 groups of 25 participants** is being implemented.
121. SSI cooperates with the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology during inspections in counseling facilities in the area of children diagnosing. The consistent and uncompromising approach of the SSI in this area of ensuring equal access to education is documented by its annual reports - the last being the Report on the status and level of application of the principle of equal access to education when admitting pupils to special primary schools in the school year 2017/2018 in the Slovak Republic.
122. By adopting the transitional provision in Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on state administration in education and school self-government and on the amendment and supplement of certain acts as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government”), from 1 September 2017 to 31 December 2018, educational facilities for educational counseling and prevention are not included in the network of schools and school facilities. The aim of the MESRS SR is to set up an effective counseling system and to improve the provision of care, including diagnostic activity in the conditions of the education sector. For this purpose, a working group for systemic changes of pedagogical-psychological and special-pedagogical counseling has been created.
123. To ensure better access to education for children from MRC in kindergartens with effect from 1 January 2018, a contribution is provided to partially cover the cost of instructing and educating kindergarten children who are enrolled in a network of schools who have one year to compulsory school attendance or are members of a household, whose members are assisted in material need, and the child's legal guardian proves this fact to the director of the kindergarten. The group of recipients of the contribution to the education and instruction of children in kindergarten has expanded as the legal guardians of children have been exempted from the obligation to contribute to partially cover the costs. The aim of the legislative amendment was to eliminate the problems of application practice in the admission of children to the kindergarten and to motivate municipalities to create places for pre-school education of children from a weak socio-economic background.
124. The Plenipotentiary for the RC as part of its coordinating function in fulfilling the tasks of the NRIS, also in accordance with the program statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic, paid special attention to the non-discriminatory access of the Roma to education. To this end, it presented a new Action Plan D.2.1 for education, which was approved by the Slovak Government in its Resolution No. 87 of 22 February 2017. With a link to individual tasks, the sub-objective No. 2 of Action Plan D.2.1 includes a system of measures aimed at achieving lower secondary vocational education for all children, members of MRC in the status of pupils from an SDE during compulsory education and early primary school-leaving programs through second chance programs. The partial objective of the Action Plan D.2.1 is also to improve the education process in the education of pupils from MRC and SDE and to improve the results of primary Schools with the representation of pupils from the MRC and SDE to the level of the Slovak average. Similarly, the other sub-objectives of the Action Plan D.2.1 are to increase the proportion of pupils from MRCs educated in ordinary primary school classes as well as the implementation of inclusive education programs in

kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools. In addition to the framework of the EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion by 2020, this procedure also included a further implementation of the Thematic Action Plan CoE for the inclusion of Roma and nomads of 2 March 2016.

125. Several activities of the Plenipotentiary for the RC were aimed at establishing the full accessibility of pre-primary education of children from MRC with the ambition to fulfill the EU *Europe 2020* policy goals as well as the *Agenda 2030* - to ensure by 2030 that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development and care and pre-school education so that they are prepared for primary education. In doing so, the objectives of the thematic CoE Plan in the protecting of children's rights were fulfilled, in the access to justice as well as in the involvement of the Roma ethnic minority in this process, for example, in the personnel strengthening of the representation of Roma ethnic minority members in the positions of teacher assistants. These actions, in cooperation with the competent authorities of the central state administration, the local state administration and the self-government, were reflected in concrete measures both in the field of legislation and in the field of specific public policy measures, including special government activities in the least developed districts governed by Act No. 336/2015 Coll. on the support of the least developed districts and on the amendment of certain acts (hereinafter referred to as "Act on the least-developed districts").
126. On the basis of NRIS, the SSI performed a total of 9 inspections in psychological counseling and prevention facilities in 2017. A special area of adjustment in the system of anti-discrimination provisions of the School Act as well as the Anti-Discrimination Act was the strengthening of the position of the SSI, which, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government, has exclusive competence to handle complaints and petitions whose content is non-discriminatory access to education. In accordance with Art. 3, 5, 6 and 12 of the FCNM, another amendment to the aforementioned Act No. 245/2008 Coll. by Act No. 216/2016 Coll. also with the emphasis on access to education in the language of the national minority was ensured by education in so-called small-scale schools, with the exception of the lowest number of primary school pupils only with grades of the first school or for primary schools with the language of instruction of a national minority. This process has further developed the rights of members of national minorities, also in view of the fact that as early as 1 September 2015, there was an opportunity for the founder of a school to determine a smaller number of pupils on the grounds of transport accessibility, especially in the cases of education in the language of the national minority, or in the case of the education of children from the SDE, if more than 80% of the pupils from the total number of school pupils were from a SDE.
127. On 1 April 2018, the Department of National and Inclusive Education was established at the MESRS SR. The area of responsibility of this department is primarily to ensure the performance of state administration at the level of the central state administration, to provide education and training in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, educational institutions, the education of national minorities of MRC and the education of the children of foreigners. Its responsibility also includes the approving of draft concepts, programs and the development of education and training in schools, conceptual projects and the experimental verifying of objectives, content, methods, organization and management of the performance of the educational process in schools and school facilities. This department submits the state educational programs for individual kinds and types of schools with the language of instruction of national minorities and the language of a national minority to the Minister, resolves the issue of human rights, especially the rights of children, MRC education

and the education of children-foreigners, resulting from human rights treaties as well as cooperation with SSI.

128. In order to fully understand the needs of the national education of children and pupils from the MRC environment, the Plenipotentiary for the RC has prepared and published a Language Map of the Roma Communities in Slovakia, which also deals with the issue of multiple national identity, in order to adequately reflect the state especially in the pre-primary education of children in kindergarten in the area of the creation of the optimal conditions for general training, eliminating the conditions for MRC pupil diagnosis processes.
129. These systemic measures are fundamentally aimed at creating the conditions for the full involvement of MRC children in pre-primary education as an essential condition for achieving school qualification. On 26 January 2015 and 29 June 2015, the MESRS SR announced a call on its website for submitting applications for a grant from the MESRS SR to extend the capacity of kindergartens in the form of building extensions, construction and the reconstruction of premises for the needs of kindergartens, and the construction of school catering facilities at these kindergartens for 2015. The aim of the support under this call was to expand the capacities of the kindergartens to gradually achieve 95% participation of pre-primary education in the kindergarten between the ages of 4 and 5 by 2020. For this purpose, the MESRS SR has allocated **EUR 14.5 million**. Out of the total of 687 evaluated applications from both calls, there were 185 successful applicants. Within the scope of the Plenipotentiary for the RC carried out in cooperation with the MoI SR - the European programmes section, which performs the role of the Intermediate Body of the HR OP in the ESIF instruments division on behalf of the MoI SR, a call was announced for the construction and reconstruction of kindergartens - 150 municipalities, which are involved in the NP under the name *Take-away package*.
130. The NP *Take-away package* was developed under the authority of the Plenipotentiary for the RC in the Roma integration support system, in the form of finished products for applicants, comprising a combination of NPs – *FSW, Community Centers, Land Settlement Support, and the Inclusion Project in Kindergartens* (hereinafter referred to as “PRIM”). The NP *Take-away package* originated as a form of assistance with a minimal administrative burden for 150 municipalities and cities with urban settlements of the Roma with an index in the least underdevelopment zone, while this principle together with the 3D principle became part of the HR OP. The allocated amount of the NP from the state budget and the ESIF is in the amount of EUR 21,265,318. In the framework of the above-mentioned project package, as well as in the framework of the demand-based calls outside of this package, fed from the priority axis of HR OP No. 5 called *MRC Integration*, the 3D Principle was specifically reflected in the following principles:
- to ensure that children from MRC have access to pre-school facilities to avoid increasing segregation,
 - to adopt measures to ensure inclusive education in the pre-school education process.
131. For municipalities outside of that package, which are not involved in the NP *Take-away package* with the presence of MRC urban centers, a call was announced to build and renovate kindergartens with a total allocation of EUR 58 million. As of 31 December 2017, there were 78 successful applicants. In the next process of procedures under Act No. 292/2014 Coll. on the contribution provided by the ESIF on the amendment of certain acts as amended, a total of 74 kindergartens will be supported, of which 40 are projects for the

reconstruction of kindergartens and 34 projects for the construction of kindergartens. Within the mentioned support, there will be 5,453 places created in the kindergartens, of which the capacity of the kindergarten created by the construction represents 2,518 places and the capacity created by the reconstruction represents 2,935 places. In 2018, 7 projects in the amount of EUR 2,790,000 were approved in the next 5th monitoring cycle aimed at expanding the capacities of kindergartens in municipalities with an MRC presence. A new call with a financial allocation of EUR 25 million is planned to be announced by the MoI SR in the second half of 2018.

132. The specifically monitored indicator for this project is the involvement of qualified Roma in the position of teacher's assistant, thus achieving a targeted integration of Roma into integration processes. Through the above-mentioned procedure, the special temporary balancing measure is also monitored on the legal plane in this sphere in accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act, as it is a measure to promote the interest of members of disadvantaged groups, in this case the employment of MRC members. Therefore, the NP *Take-away package* includes the creation of rules for the preferential employment of Roma job seekers. The NP *Take-away package* is set up in order to enable people in the work positions to cooperate with staff of the schools and school facilities such as pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention centers, with representatives of non-governmental organizations active in the field and other relevant partners. Co-ordination of the NP *Take-away package* is provided by a methodologist working with nine Regional Coordinators, placed at the field offices of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC.
133. The activities of all participating entities are continuously linked to the call of the MARD SR, with the IROP as the managing authority with an allocation of EUR 79,757,690, where second monitoring cycle ended on 31 March 2017 with the provision of a non-repayable financial contribution (hereinafter referred to as "NFC") to 152 projects, with 4,870 newly created positions. In 2017, there were 158 projects approved in total in the IROP call for a total of EUR 43 million, which should create 4,780 new jobs in kindergartens. In 2018, an update of the call was carried out, with an increase of the allocated amount from the original EUR 77,157,690 to EUR 81,008,467.
134. By the end of 2017, the capacity of kindergartens was expanded by 204 new classes (out of the 227 planned) and 19 classes were maintained in operation by reconstruction procedures, by solving emergency situations; from the planned 22, by the MESRS SR fund allocated in the amount of EUR 14.5 million.
135. Another intervention measure created in cooperation between the MoI SR and the Plenipotentiary for the RC ensuring the elimination of disadvantages in education for pupils living in urban settlements in MRC was the call of 14 December 2017 aimed at providing mentoring and tutoring for MRC pupils with an emphasis on successful graduation from primary school and a smooth transition to secondary school. This is an open call with an indicative amount of EUR 5 million allocation of ESIF funds.
136. The education measures under the authority of the Plenipotentiary for the RC are further complemented by the NP *Community Centers*, in part of the activities to create a study area for pupils in the afternoon hours. Its indicators include the number of educational activities, the number of leisure activities and the number of multicultural education activities. The number of involved providers in the NP is 49, the number of employees of the community center is 142, of which 41 are Roma. The amount allocated from ESIF funds is

EUR 23,460,000. As the number of children involved in the project through providers and individual community centers is specifically monitored, the number of newly created jobs in community centers occupied by members of MRC urban settlements is again one of the monitored data elements. The intervention direction in this area of the material costs of building, construction, upgrading, reconstruction of community centers in municipalities with the presence of MRC is simultaneously covered by a call with an amount allocated from ESIF and the state budget amounting to EUR 17,666,688.

137. Another combined measure in the field of support of pupils from an MRC is the instruments of Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on grants within the competence of the MLSAF SR. Under this generally binding regulation, grants are provided by the MLSAF SR to support education for the fulfillment of the educational obligations of children at risk of social exclusion and grants to support education on the dietary habits of such children. In 2017, a grant of EUR 10,250,759 was provided to the recipients from the state budget for both grants, giving support to a total of 2,136 children. The Plenipotentiary for the RC, within the framework of his position as the administrator of grants for social and cultural needs and the solution of extremely unfavorable situations of the Roma community under the Act on providing grants within the competence of the MoI SR, regularly provides, within the framework of budgetary possibilities, grants for the support of education and training and support of NRIS priority policies and objectives. Thanks to its legislative initiative, instruments have been introduced in recent years on the basis of which the grant applicant's financial contribution is not a statutory condition for some grant titles, including the NRIS objectives. Similarly, for some titles, the grant may be awarded to an applicant more than once in the budget year and, last but not least, for some grant titles, including NRIS, a faster and simplified procedure has been introduced in the process of their evaluation and allocation. The mentioned system of transfers of public resources in relation to the support of education in 2017 achieved a new institutional level in the strengthening of the civic element and rights of representation of the Roma minority through the adoption of the Fund Act. One of the grant titles is support for education on the rights of persons who are members of national minorities.
138. In 2017 there was an increase in the number of pedagogical staff in kindergartens. The share of qualified pedagogical assistants in kindergartens attended by MRC children out of the total number of pedagogical assistants in kindergartens is 57%. In 2017, activities involving students in the all-day education system continued, with 13,170 pupils being educated in the system. At the same time, NRIS, under the aforementioned Act on the Funding of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities, established an increase in the directness and effectiveness of financial support for education and training of pupils from an SDE in primary schools, as well as an increase in the amount of these funds. The planned value of EUR 7,341,350 was respected, and these funds were used, for example, for the salaries of teacher's assistants, construction, extensions, modernization and reconstruction of school buildings according to the number of pupils from an SDE, and the other titles already mentioned in the Funding Act for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities.
139. The NRIS has also set the task of implementing continuous education for teachers and pedagogical assistants using Romani language as a support language in teaching. In the year 2017, 190 educators were trained through this education aimed at using Romani language in the education process. From the point of view of the support of education in the Romani language, the Pedagogical and Organizational guidelines for the school year 2017/2018, published by the MESRS SR contained a guideline according to which while filling the places of pedagogical assistants, the directors in schools with a high number of children and pupils

from marginalized communities should also take into account the mastery of Romani language. These guidelines instruct school directors to inform secondary school pupils about the possibility of passing a school-leaving examination in Romani language and literature as an optional school-leaving subject, informing the legal representatives of pupils from Roma communities about the possibility of teaching the Romani language and literature and, in the event of interest of the legal representatives, to provide education in the Romani language. The Guidelines also instruct schools to use innovative educational standards of Romani language and literature for each level of education issued by the National Institute for Education in planning the teaching of Romani language and literature. In addition to maintaining the above-mentioned standard from the previous school year, the pedagogical and organizational guidelines for the school year 2018/2019 stipulate the tasks of fulfilling the NRIS, to support kindergartens in the implementation of programs aimed at improving cooperation with the legal representatives of Roma children and in the involvement of teacher assistants to actively support the participation of children aged between 4 and 6 years in pre-primary education. Other tasks include strict adherence to the procedures for admitting pupils to special primary schools, to promote the use of Romani language in pre-primary and primary education. In addition, through the Methodological and Pedagogical Center and the Roma Education Center, to provide professional and methodological assistance to schools and school facilities in the field of education and training to support the inclusion and desegregation of children and pupils from an SDE and children and pupils from an SDE from MRC.

140. For the National Program for Education Development, see point 112.

IV. Information on relevant developments according to the individual articles of the Convention

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.

141. The FCNM Advisory Committee, in point No. 14 of its opinion, recommended that the Slovak Republic carry out the regular collection of statistical data on population and subsequent data analysis in cooperation with representatives of national minorities. In order to

prepare the census of the inhabitants of houses and flats (hereinafter referred to as "PHC"), an expert working group was set up in 2021 by the Plenipotentiary for RC to prepare a population census methodology regarding their nationality or ethnicity. Members of this group include experts and representatives of national minorities. Their task is to prepare a population census methodology with regard to nationality and ethnicity, which shall then serve as the basis for further legislative measures concerning the organization and course of PHC 2021.

One of the objectives is to provide high-quality statistical data that corresponds to the actual composition of the population. The Advisory Committee's recommendation is therefore partly implemented in the context of the preparation of PHC 2021.

142. The collection of statistical data is also related to the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 26 to continue collecting sensitive data on the living conditions of persons belonging to national minorities. In this context, reference should be made to the Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination for the years 2016-2019, which formulates the identification of the requirements and obstacles for the collection of sensitive data as one of the tasks. The MoJ SR is currently preparing an analysis of requirements arising from international conventions on the collection of sensitive data and legal obstacles to its collection.
143. The right of citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority to use their language in official relations follows from Art. 34 paragraph 2 (b) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The conditions for the use of languages of national minorities in official relations are laid down in particular by Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the state language of the Slovak Republic as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Act on the State Language of the SR") and the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. The Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities as a Special Legal Act establishes a list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority shall have the right to communicate verbally and in writing to the public administration authorities and the competent public administration bodies are obliged to create the conditions for using the language of a national minority in these municipalities.
144. Under Section 2 paragraph 1 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, the condition of using the minority language in official relations is that citizens with permanent residence in the municipality should constitute, according to the results of two consecutive censuses, at least 15% of the population. This condition shall apply in conjunction with section 7c paragraph 1 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, according to which, two consecutive population censuses is understood as population censuses which results were declared after 1 July 2011. Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. is based on the results of the 1991 Population Census. Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. was issued pursuant to Section 2 paragraph 2 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities and established a list of municipalities in which at least 20% of the population consists of national minorities according to the last census. By Act No. 204/2011 Coll., amending the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, there was a change in the provision of Section 2 paragraph 1 in connection with Section 2 paragraph 2, so that citizens of the Slovak Republic have the right to use the language of a national minority in municipalities where citizens of national minorities make up at least 15% of the population according to two consecutive population censuses. However, this will only occur after the results of PHC 2021 have been announced.

145. The source material defined the support of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the creation and implementation of a policy on the rights of members of national minorities as one of the priorities and tasks for the future. Given the considerable fragmentation of legal regulations on the rights and status of national minorities, it will be necessary to prepare and adopt comprehensive and coherent legislation. The long-term trend of the expectations of national minorities has been leading to its adoption, which should include the issues of the status of national minorities as well as the mechanisms of their financial security. In this respect, Operational objective 1 of the Action Plan entitled *Ensuring a Comprehensive Approach to Legislation on the Rights and Status of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups* has been established. As part of this objective, the proposed measures are being continuously implemented to provide an analysis of the legislation on the rights and status of national minorities and ethnic groups as well as to ensure the preparation of a comprehensive and coherent legal framework for the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups if the need for such treatment results from the analysis. These measures also concern legislation on the use of languages of national minorities.
146. In connection with the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 14 to regularly obtain population statistics and engage representatives of national minorities in the process of analyzing the results, especially if these are used as a basis for the exercise of certain rights, it should be noted that the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM proactively participates in the preparation of PHC 2021. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM in the elaboration of the NAP PHC 2021 provided cooperation for the Statistical Office in the year 2016 and also in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, strategic objective No. 5 under the heading *To pay special attention to specific groups of citizens whose census taking requires a specific approach* was elaborated within PHC 2021. Residents whose census requires such a specific approach, among other population groups, are considered to be residents who are members of a nationality or ethnicity, with regard to the native language and for the needs of national legislation as such.
147. Within the PHC Strategic Objective No. 4 under the title *Effectively take into account the specificities arising from the character of the municipality in the preparation of PHC 2021*, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC participates in the following activity:

Proposed activity/ measure:	To provide background information on the occurrence and estimated MRC population size
Performance indicator:	the number, occurrence and size of the MRC settlements (the number of inhabitants, the number of dwellings)
Term of fulfilment:	2018
Responsible administrator:	Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC
Collaborating entities:	SO SR, ATMS, UCS NM, Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC
Sources of funding:	Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC

148. The PHC 2021 Strategic Objective, *Paying special attention to specific groups and groups of citizens whose census taking requires a specific approach*, in particular shall include:

- homeless people,
- marginalized communities,
- people with disabilities,
- seniors of older age categories,
- residents in terms of nationality or ethnicity with regard to the native language (for the needs of national legislation).

149. The criterion of belonging to a nationality or ethnicity to include the population in a group which census taking requires a specific approach has been selected in connection with the implementation of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities the dictation of which is directly linked to the results of the PHC. Deepening the knowledge about these groups of people will help to set up procedures to make it easier to perform a census and ensure that the prescribed quality data is obtained in the simplest way possible.

150. Within this objective, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM cooperates with the SO SR on the fulfillment of the following activity:

Proposed activity/ measure:	To prepare a census methodology regarding nationality or ethnicity and the native language
Performance indicators:	an expert working group, methodology
Term of fulfilment:	2018
Responsible administrators:	Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, SO SR
Collaborating entities:	Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, MESRS SR, MoI SR
Sources of funding:	Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, SO SR

151. In this regard, an expert group was set up in the first quarter of 2018, members of which include, in addition to the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, the Government Office, the MESRS and the MoI SR, also three experts on the given area for national minorities. In this context, members of the committee were invited to submit nominations of their experts. Subsequently, the expert group began to work on the preparation of the population census methodology in terms of their belonging to a nationality or ethnicity with regard to the native language. In accordance with the tasks arising from the preparation of the

PHC 2021 methodology, four working meetings were held, with members of the Committee being always informed on the progress and results.

152. At the working meetings, the international and national context of the protection of the rights of national minorities concerning the issue of data collection was presented. The main topics of the discussion included issues related to the main goals of PHC 2021 in relation to nationality and ethnicity data, problems in collecting data on nationality and the method of ensuring the reliability and usability of these data. Other sources of nationality data include: Register of natural persons, Information systems of the MESRS SR, possibilities of finding out multiple national or ethnic identities, needs of multilevel and intensive communication and an information campaign focused on target groups. The Expert Working Group approved the proposal of a structure for census methodology in terms of nationality or ethnicity with regard to the native language.
153. The members of the Expert Group agreed that the thematic commentary on PHC 2021 No. 4 called *Scope of application of the FCNM* be annexed to the Population Census Methodology from the point of view of their nationality or ethnicity with regard to the native language. Members of the Expert Group prepared two variants of the concept of ethnicity identifications in the census, including the drafting of questions, in the context of collecting multiple nationality and language data, as well as in the context of the traditional survey of national identity in the Slovak Republic. During the fourth working meeting, participants presented two variants of the concept of identifying nationality. At present, qualitative tools are being developed to find out the opinion on data collection on nationality and native language in PHC 2021 in the context of a possible migration to data collection on multiple national identities. This is mainly due to the need to deepen the knowledge of national minorities and, in general, on the diversity of society in this area, which should lead to reliable and comprehensive data on the demographic composition of the population in terms of their belonging to a nationality and the use of language. Such data will also become the basis for planning targeted policies and specific measures aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of members of national minorities, including their linguistic rights, which are based on the data found in the census. The need for new tools to collect this data also relates to new social trends, globalization, digitization and so on.
154. The census of inhabitants and homes in MRC settlements, in view of their social and economic background, in accordance with the tasks of the PHC 2021 Action Plan, will be based on an auxiliary, assisted approach. In the task system of the PHC 2021 Action Plan, the Plenipotentiary for the RC will provide the SO SR with background data on the occurrence and expected size of an MRC settlement (provided by data from the Atlas 2013).
155. The Plenipotentiary for the RC is a cooperating entity in the preparation of the new PHC 2021 law and is also a partner in formulating and implementing the communication strategy of the given census. The legal framework is based in particular on Regulation (EC) No. 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on the PHC and Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/543 of 22 March 2017 laying down rules for the application of Regulation No. 763/2008 as regards the technical specifications of the topics and of their breakdowns. The given Regulation contains technical specifications which must be complied with, without undue delay. However, the topic of nationality in the referred to EU legal act does not address the issue of nationality. However, under Art. 2 (a) of Regulation No. 763/2008, the EU establishes sufficient legal possibilities to take account of the element of nationality on the basis of a number of parameters (the constitutional principle of the

Slovak Republic excludes attributed ethnicity), starting with the direct claim of the national minority belonging, by claiming of the language used in official relations, the language used in the regional, local, community society, the language of education and the language used at home. The basic approach of neutrality is to maintain the framework of territorial units for the correct application of the requirement arising from the Regulation, the reference terms "regional" and "local".

156. Due to the fact that, on the basis of the relevant legislative and non-legislative legal acts of the EU, the monitoring and evaluation process of the NRIS is a legal condition for its implementation, including in relation to the use of European solidarity aid from the ESIF, the Plenipotentiary for the RC is the recipient and implementing authority of the NP called *Monitoring and Evaluation of Inclusive Policies and their impact on MRC*. As part of the monitoring and evaluation of this NP, the Plenipotentiary for the RC ensures the regular collection of administrative data from the ministries and other state and public administration bodies, which are processed in the annual monitoring reports on the fulfillment of the human rights protection and promotion strategy and are used to inform about the fulfillment of obligations on the EU level. In the context of the updating of the Atlas of Roma Communities for which the amount of EUR 132,000 is allocated, data on the infrastructure of municipalities and Roma settlements, the availability of social and health services, the political and civic participation of Roma, economic and cultural activities, school inclusion and infrastructure will be determined. The survey data will contribute to improving the setting of targeted social inclusion policies as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the objectives of the HR OP Strategy and Priority Axis No. 5 called *MRC Integration* and No. 6 called *Technical Equipment in Municipalities with MRC*.

Art. 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.

157. In line with FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 26 in the sphere of support of surveys and research of members of national minorities, including numerically smaller ones, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of NM is currently preparing PHC 2021 in cooperation with the SO SR. See more details in *Article 3*.

158. In connection with the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 20, with reference to the privileged deduction of intensified efforts to raise awareness of the anti-discrimination legislative framework, especially in the environment of members of the Roma ethnic minority, this has been already contained in the Action Plan D.2.6 under the title *Area of Non-Discrimination*. Within this objective, task 2.3 is also included, under the heading *To improve the level of awareness of the Roma about the prevention of discrimination and ways to protect against it*. The Plenipotentiary for the RC also carries out these procedures in individual cases of legal and legitimate intervention, as all submissions always include extensive legal arguments based on national law as well as international law. In addition, pursuant to Art. 7 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, the legally binding acts of the European Communities and the EU also take precedence over the laws of the Slovak Republic.

Under primary EU law, Art. 6 paragraph 3 of the EU Treaty, the primary law of the EU includes also the Convention on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, while under Art. 6 paragraph 1 the primary law of the EU includes also the Charter of fundamental rights of the EU. Thus, in the application practice of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, a national anti-discrimination legal framework which derives directly from the relevant provisions of the first and second title of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, as well as the international legal framework, are promoted.

159. The Action Plan D.2.6, area of non-discrimination, also includes measure 3.1. under the title *To improve the enforceability of anti-discrimination legislation and promote the application of the principle of non-discrimination in practice*. Under this measure, the creation of a platform for expert discussion of the broader legal public (judges, lawyers, academics, law students) and relevant institutions and bodies (SNCHR, Office of the Public Defender of Rights, Legal Aid Center) to implement anti-discrimination legislation was planned in 2018. As mentioned in the Issues requiring an immediate solution part, Action

Plan D.2.6 for the area of non-discrimination also includes a sub-measure in the interconnection of public policies, coordinating the linkages between the action plans for the protection and promotion of human rights and other action plans relating to equal treatment.

160. The framework of anti-discrimination legislation in the process of law enforcement was expanded by Act No. 160/2015 Coll. Civil Dispute Settlement (hereinafter referred to as “Civil Dispute Settlement Act”), which established a privileged legal framework for discriminatory disputes and increased legal protection for the applicant affected by the failure to observe the principle of equal treatment. In the field of law enforcement, the new Act No. 247/2017 Coll. on victims of crime, mainly in the category of a particularly vulnerable victim of a crime classified by gender, sexual orientation, nationality, racial or ethnic origin, religion belief made an equally important contribution. The above-mentioned application law establishes a specific rule of non-discrimination. The Act also introduced relevant amendments to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.
161. The implementation of the Action Plan in the area of the application of the rights of members of national minorities in education is listed in the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part. Operational objective 5 of the Action Plan, entitled *Improving Public Awareness of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups through the Media* fully corresponds to the basic objectives and measures of D.2.6 for the area of approach to the majority society - *Initiative of Roma Integration through Communication*. Operational objective 7 of the Action Plan entitled *Strengthening Comprehensive Research and Systematic Monitoring in the Area of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups* fully corresponds to the activities of the Plenipotentiary for the RC referred to in the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 20.
162. Better leadership and comprehensive strategic planning, as set out in the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 27 is enabled by the NP under the title *Monitoring and Evaluation of Inclusive Policies and their Impact on MRC*, with an allocation of EUR 3,106,720. The comprehensive strategic planning was also participated in by the Inter-ministerial Commission on Roma Community Affairs and the Commission for the Preparation of the NRIS Review and Updating, established by the measure of the Plenipotentiary for the RC No. 6/2014. As part of dynamization of co-operation, the Plenipotentiary for the RC concluded a Memorandum of understanding and cooperation in the field of increasing the employability and employment of MRC citizens with the Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family in 2017.
163. In 2016, the Plenipotentiary for the RC carried out the project activities entitled *Support for active participation and consultation processes in the area of the implementation and monitoring of Roma integration and Roma youth policies in Slovakia*. The project was funded within the framework of a call by the EC, Directorate-General for Justice (hereinafter referred to as “DG Justice”) designated for the National Roma Contact Points with a view to strengthening national consultation processes in the Member States through the creation of the Regional Roma Platforms (hereinafter referred to as “RRP”). Their aim was to identify the problems faced by representatives of the Roma population, as well as representatives of towns, municipalities, offices and NGOs. Within the RRP, the possibilities offered by the national, regional and local Roma integration policy were also presented, which will help to solve common problems in individual topics and the fulfillment of NRIS objectives. In 2017, the Plenipotentiary for the RC organized a total of 5 RRP meetings. All of these meetings were used to identify the current problems that members of the Roma ethnic minority living in

MRC urban settlements are experiencing, as well as to postulate measures to address them. The external evaluation of the strategy was first carried out in 2014 by the joint administration of the Slovak Governance Institute and Školy doktorán, n. o., on the basis of budget allocations of the Plenipotentiary for the RC. These results were also included in the NRIS monitoring report for 2012-2015.

164. For the sake of completeness, we state that the NRIS itself and its first action plans have already been assessed positively by the DG Justice of the EC and positive assessments are also in the periodic reports of the EC, for example in the document *The Review of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, at the halfway point on 30.8.2017. This report documents several significant achievements of the Slovak Republic, such as improvements in early childhood education and care, in the fight against the early termination of school attendance. All the priorities to be addressed by the Member States on the basis of that document are already contained in the NRIS Action Plans and the corresponding legislation has been adopted, including amendments to the Bankruptcy and Restructuring Act, the Executory Order and the already mentioned legal standards for recommendations under the *Issues requiring immediate solutions* part. In this document, the Slovak Republic is included among the countries with an integrated approach under the investment priority called *Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities*. The document also positively assesses the fact that the EC and the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council organized a high-level event in 2016 to strengthen the status of Roma youth, confirming the urgent need to strengthen the position of young Roma and their active involvement in the policy of their integration. The EU Council Conclusions of 8 December 2016, entitled *Accelerating the process of Roma integration*, were adopted during the Slovak Presidency. By 2020, an amount of EUR 392,633,541 is budgeted for all NRIS action plans. In August 2018, the Plenipotentiary for the RC spent EUR 5,347,454 in the national ESIF-funded projects in its own scope of authority (NP FSW and FW in municipalities with the presence of MRC), the NP called *Community centers in towns and municipalities with MRC - Phase I*, the NP called *Support for land consolidation in MRC* and the NP called *Monitoring and Evaluation of Policies for Social Inclusion of the Marginalized Roma Population*.
165. In the NP FSW and FW in municipalities with the presence of MRC, an amount of EUR 26,511,131 was allocated from ESIF sources. As of 1 April 2018, 142 municipalities are involved in the project, FSW is already being implemented in 133 municipalities, and 470 job positions available to members of the Roma minority have been created as part of the project implementation. In the project, 174,046 interventions were implemented for 84,232 clients, of which 41,606 interventions in the social security section, 30,663 interventions in the section of finances and management, 23,824 interventions in the section of employment and access to the labor market, 20,081 interventions in the section of health care, 16,905 interventions in the housing section, 14,288 interventions in the section of social and pathological phenomena, 8,313 interventions in education and cooperation in this field as well as 18,266 interventions in other areas.
166. In the NP entitled *Community centers in towns and municipalities with MRC - Phase I* with a total allocation of ESIF funds of EUR 18,688,726, 49 community centers were involved through social service providers as of 1 April 2018. There are 142 job positions being funded during the implementation of the project, of which 41 are directly registered to the Roma national minority, while the number of clients using the services of the community centers is 4,374 citizens of Roma nationality and members of MRC.

167. In the NP entitled *Land settlement support in MRC, which is also the responsibility of the Plenipotentiary for the RC*, focusing on support processes for the settlement of ownership rights under dwellings in MRK settlements, 143 municipalities are involved, while the process of concluding contracts with additional municipalities is ongoing. Through information, awareness and mediation service coordinators, basic information and advice is provided to the communities involved. The allocated amount of state budget and ESIF sources to support the process of settlement of property relations is EUR 2,372,335. The measurable outputs of the project include, for example, the number of municipalities where land plots under settlements were settled, and the number of persons from MRC whose standards of living hygiene in dwellings on already-settled land improved. The main activity of the NP is the support of programs aimed at achieving higher hygienic standards of marginalized Roma settlements, as well as the provision of technical assistance to municipalities with the presence of MRC aimed at settling property relations to land plots.
168. An important NP from the point of view of the Action Plan for D.2.3 for the area of Health is the NP entitled *Healthy communities 2A*, covered by the *Healthy Regions* organization, the state contributory organization of the MoH SR. After the financing of the above project in previous years from the budget of the MoI SR and the Plenipotentiary for the RC, the financial stabilization of the program aimed at supporting the improvement of MRC population health, in particular in the 150 municipalities identified in the underdevelopment index zone through the Healthy Communities Project for 2015-2022 was approved by the Slovak Republic Government Resolution No. 456/2017. The new NP called *Healthy Communities 2A* is funded by the HR OP, on the basis of a call by the MoI SR, in the allocated amount of ESIF funds and the state budget of EUR 15,360,000. The aim of the project is to improve the situation of MRC in the area of social determinants of health through the implementation and development of health mediation and education in MRC.
169. In 2018, based on the previous call of the MoI SR, the implementation phase of the NP PRIM started under the authority of the Plenipotentiary for the RC, focusing on the creation of an inclusive environment in kindergartens and the support of children from MRC and their parents. The NP aims to increase the number of children from MRC attending kindergartens through work with the family and thereby ensure the raising of the educational level of MRC members as one of the MRC social inclusion tools. To date, 113 municipalities have joined the NP and the project is currently being contracted. The indicative amount of ESIF resources is set at EUR 18,075,520 and EUR 3,189,797 from the state budget, i.e. a total of EUR 21,247,318. The range of eligible applicants consists of 150 municipalities included in the NP Take-away package. The primary activity of the NP entitled *Increasing the Participation of Children from MRC in Pre-primary Education* will be implemented by strengthening institutions, capacities of teachers' assistants in kindergartens, specialists in kindergartens, inclusive teams in kindergartens, distributing didactic and material packages, working with the family of children educated in kindergartens and education focusing on new innovative methods. At the same time, the NP covers kindergartens that are not involved in the NP *School open to all*. In connection to the individual NRIS action plans, the MoI SR has also announced further demand-driven calls:
- A call to support the comprehensive provision of local civil service in municipalities with MRC (for more details, see the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part).

- Calls focused on the construction and reconstruction of kindergartens with the presence of MRC residents (for more details, see the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part).
- A call with a focus on providing mentoring and tutoring for MRC pupils with an emphasis on successful graduation from a primary school and a smooth transition to a secondary school (for more details, see the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part).
- A call with a focus on the construction of new community centers, their reconstruction and rebuilding in municipalities with the presence of MRC, with an amount of allocation from ESIF and the state budget of EUR 16,764,705. As of January 2018, applications for a total amount of EUR 8,974,946 were contracted, while 36 applications were approved in January 2018. As of 31 August 2018, 93 contracts were concluded.

170. The call entitled *Support for access to drinking water in separated and segregated MRC by means of water mains, wells and surface water treatment* was allocated the amount of EUR 17,882,352 from the ESIF and the state budget. As of January 2018, the contracted applications amount to EUR 509,581. The monitored indicators of the call include the number of MRC households with improved access to drinking water, the number of MRC households with new access to drinking water, the number of new drilled wells providing access to drinking water, the number of new local water pipes/potable water distribution pipes, to ensure access to drinking water.

171. The call entitled *Building, or completing the system of sorted collection and removal of municipal waste, implementation of remediation works of illegal landfills, including the elimination of the adverse impacts of illegal landfills* has an allocated amount from the public funds of the ESIF and the state budget of EUR 14,708,565. As of January 2018, applications for a total amount of EUR 4,884,202 were contracted. As of 11 April 2018, 118 applications were approved. The monitored data includes not only the number of people living in MRC, whose housing conditions improved thanks to the construction of a waste recycling center or stand, or the number of residents living in MRC, for whom housing conditions were improved through the remediation of illegal landfills as well as the number of jobs created specifically for members of the Roma ethnic group minorities living in urban settlements of MRC, through the application of the social aspect in public procurement.

172. In the above calls, new evaluation rounds are continuously announced according to the evaluation process of the applications. In 2016, the MoI SR announced a call for the submission of an application for a non-repayable financial contribution for Slovak Investment Holding, a.s., in the priority axis of HR OP No. 6, in the total allocated amount of public funds from the ESIF and the state budget of EUR 51,218,253. The eligible activities of the call include the promotion of temporary housing programs in the context of social mobility and MRC population integration, support for microcredit programs aimed at supporting self-help construction of dwellings, support for the purchase of equipment, technologies and licenses needed to implement the approved business plan of the social enterprise with an emphasis on the use of microcredits, support of microfinance tools.

173. In 2018, within the new calls schedule, calls with a thematic focus on local public order services allocated in the amount of EUR 20 million, support for pre-housing programs in the allocated amount of public funds of EUR 45 million, completion of the basic technical infrastructure (roads) in the allocated amount of public funds of EUR 11 million, housing

assistance in the allocated amount of public funds of EUR 6 million are planned. The planned eligible applicants for these calls are municipalities and towns with the presence of Roma ethnic minority residents living in an MRC urban settlement, with dislocation in the district classified under the above-mentioned Act on the least-developed districts.

174. The Plenipotentiary for the RC on the basis of observer status in the Commission with the Monitoring Committee for the HR OP for priority axis No. 5 and 6, submits further relevant proposals for the effective use of ESIF funds to the MoI SR. The representative body of the non-governmental sector, local government and the scientific professional community is also represented in the Commission. Likewise, the Government Council is also represented in this Commission. From the point of view of contracted funds of the ESIF- HR OP within the competence of the MoI SR in the priority axis of the HR OP No. 5, the amount of EUR 69,399,000 is contracted, representing 49.93% of the total allocation. In the priority axis of HR OP No. 6, 165 projects in the amount of EUR 49,466,000 were approved, with a further 170 projects and applications in the assessment process.
175. The Plenipotentiary for the RC in support of the NRIS goals and the priority policies of the Government in the section of integration also uses grants provided under the Act on Providing Grants under the scope of the MoI SR. In the year 2017, EUR 517,200 was earmarked for 88 projects, of which EUR 48,000 was earmarked for project activities aimed at strengthening the status of Roma youth, for a pilot project entitled *Assistance in legalization/additional clearance of technically suitable residential buildings in MRC*, the amount of EUR 30,000 was provided and EUR 119,000 was provided for the support of building partnerships and co-operation to address social and cultural needs and tackling the extremely unfavorable situations of the Roma community. In the year 2016, 95 projects were supported in a total amount of EUR 625,934, of which EUR 42,801 for access to drinking water, EUR 38,199 for the purpose of temporary housing and EUR 113,820 for the purpose of supporting partnerships.
176. The legislative process on the SNCHR reform is currently under way. In order to prepare this reform, the MoJ SR set up a working group in 2016, which was composed of representatives from the state administration as well as from the non-governmental sector. The discussion and the subsequent analysis of the status of institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights have resulted in a number of options for legislative changes. In October 2018, the MoJ SR submitted a draft amendment to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 308/1993 Coll. on the establishment of the Slovak National Center for Human Rights as amended to the inter-ministerial commentary procedure, the legislative process on this draft is ongoing. The purpose of the proposed bill is to establish the compliance of the Slovak National Institution for Human Rights with the requirements of Resolution No. 48/134 of the United Nations General Assembly of 20 December 1993 on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the so-called Paris Principles).
177. A proposal for signature was also submitted to the legislative process, subject to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereinafter referred to as "OPCAT"). The proposal was approved by Government Resolution No. 414 of 12 September 2018. In the event of its signature and subsequent ratification, it will be necessary to reconsider the status of the Public defender of rights and the funding of the Office of the Public defender of rights.

178. In relation to institutional changes, since 1 September 2015, the MoJ SR has been responsible for creating and implementing state policy and coordinating the fulfillment of human rights tasks. The transfer of these powers extended the scope of activities of the MoJ SR, which already had patronage over the anti-discrimination legal framework.
179. As part of the human rights agenda, the MoJ SR also provides grants for projects aimed at promoting, supporting and protecting human rights and freedoms, and preventing all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other intolerance. In 2017, 236 grant applications were submitted and 53 projects were supported in a total amount of EUR 760,000. From these, 2 NGO projects aimed at working with MRC which involved the risk of multiple instances of discrimination were supported. Two other projects were aimed at raising public awareness of the issue of discrimination in relation to Roma communities that were available to the general public. Another 18 projects were focused on the issues of extremism, radicalization, intolerance and their overcoming, especially in relation to various national minorities, migrants and refugees. In 2018, under the grant scheme, priority was given to projects aimed at preventing youth radicalization, combating extremism, projects with a regional impact, and projects aimed at protecting and supporting victims of crime. A total of 42 projects were supported, totaling EUR 769,500, of which 18 projects were focused on the prevention of extremism, intolerance and discrimination against national minorities, refugees and migrants. These projects also included 2 projects aimed at raising public awareness of the issue of discrimination in relation to the Roma communities, which were continuously linked to the 2017 projects. For the 2019 grant scheme, priority was given to preventing the radicalization of youth and expressions of extremism, supporting and protecting victims of crime and vulnerable groups (on grounds of discrimination).
180. Other tasks arising from the department-specific strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights include the development of action plans for those vulnerable and marginalized groups and individuals for which legal frameworks, institutional frameworks, stand-alone strategies and application practice frameworks have not yet been provided. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, in cooperation with the Committee, participated in the drafting of the Action Plan, which was approved by Government Resolution No. 492 of 26 October 2016. See the *General Information* section for more information.
181. Together with the fulfillment of individual tasks, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC ensures the regular data collection on their performance. Within this framework, the MARD SR was entrusted with the task of land settlement in Roma settlements resulting from the Action Plan D.2.4 Housing. See the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part.
182. In the case of housing co-operation recommendations, especially in the case of Roma living in settlements, often without a legal claim, the MTC SR, in terms of its competencies, enters into this issue through housing policy measures. In the basic document, *Concept of State Housing Policy for 2020*, it also deals with the issue of the housing of disadvantaged groups in the housing market and its solution. The primary objective of the state is to provide suitable conditions for all citizens so that they can obtain adequate housing depending on their options. In this context, a system of supportive economic instruments for housing development, which will be differentiated according to the social situation of those interested in housing, has been created in the Slovak Republic. From the point of view of improving the housing conditions of MRC, this is concrete support for the procurement of rented dwellings intended for social housing by local authorities, which is financed through a combination of grants from the MTC SR and a preferential loan of the SFDH. The MTC SR provides grants

for the purchase of rented apartments and related technical equipment in accordance with the Act on Grants for Housing Development and Social Housing. Grants for the procurement of rental dwellings are mainly provided to municipalities and towns, while rental dwellings may have two standards -regular and basic - which is also called a lower standard. It should be noted that a lower standard does not mean a lower quality of housing, rather it is a definition of some elements in the basic regime so that this housing is significantly more accessible to the designated population groups compared to flats of the regular standard. Grants up to 85% of procurement costs are therefore provided for this type of construction. The grant can be combined with a long-term low-interest loan from the SFDH, which was established by the law of the National Council of SR in 1996 to help to resolve the inadequate housing situation. The SFDH provides long-term loans for housing at low interest rates for various purposes, among others: acquisition of an apartment (construction or purchase of an apartment - natural persons), purchase of a tenancy apartment (construction or purchase of a tenancy apartment - municipalities, legal entities), renovation of a residential building, modernization of a residential building, construction of social facilities, renewal of social services facilities. Overview of the support provided by the MTC SR in the years 2014-2017 for the procurement of apartments:

Year	Standard	The number of apartments	Total	Grant amount in EUR	Total in EUR
2014	regular standard	1,904	2,007	31,492,940.00	33,480,430.00
	lower standard	103		2,017,490.00	
2015	regular standard	1,844	1,900	30,110,570.00	31,182,190.00
	lower standard	56		1,071,620.00	
2016	regular standard	1,160	1,350	19,905,440.00	24,089,600.00
	lower standard	190		4,184,160.00	
2017	regular standard	1,408	1,524	23,493,210.00	25,958,590.00
	lower standard	116		2,465,380.00	

183. In the area of financial integration solution, an amendment to Act No. 7/2005 Coll. on Bankruptcy and Restructuring, amending the institute of debt forgiveness of natural persons, was adopted. This, among other things, regulates the untouchability of the borrower's housing value, creating a mechanism for debt forgiveness to secure basic living needs.

184. The MoJ SR has the role of supporting the sensitization and educational activities of judges and senior judicial officers in the field of non-discrimination of the Roma. Activities related to education are planned by the MoJ SR in cooperation with the Academy of Justice of the Slovak Republic in 2019-2020.

Art. 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.*

185. For information on promoting the maintenance and development of the identity and culture of national minorities, see the *General Information* section. Since 2012, the amount of funds allocated to the CNM grant program has been set by the State Budget Act as part of state budget expenditures for the implementation of Slovak Government programs and parts of Slovak Government programs, separately under its own code on minority cultural policy in sub-chapter 03 of the Government Office. In 2015 and 2016, EUR 3,879,250 was allocated to the CNM grant program, and in 2017 it was EUR 4.5 million, i.e. EUR 620,750 more. In accordance with the Fund Act, the amount of EUR 8 million is allocated to support the preservation and development of the identity and culture of national minorities, which is EUR 3.5 million more than in the previous year.
186. The FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 33 was also implemented by the adoption of the Fund Act. In 2018, public funds were earmarked to support the Roma national minority in the amount of EUR 1,720,320. See more information on the Fund in the *Introduction* part.
187. Thanks to the long-term strategy of cooperation, the Plenipotentiary for the RC along with museums focusing, for example, on Jewish culture, the Holocaust, as well as along with historical institutes and institutions including the Slovak National Archives, created an effective tool against right-wing extremist threats. The Museum of Romani Culture (hereinafter referred to as "MROK") is also a component of the SNM, as a state contributory organization. A contract between the MoC SR and the SNM for the year 2018 was concluded in the amount of EUR 10,575,563. Within the scope of this contract, the scientific role of SNM is dealt with under the title *Ethno-cultural development of Slovakia in the Central European context and the role of national and ethnic minorities in shaping the socio-cultural environment of Slovakia*. SNM implements educational programs directly linked to ISCED national education programs. These programs are provided for free, the entrance fee is symbolic and on one Saturday of the month it is free of charge. The Action Plan within the area of the approach towards the majority society D.2.7 entitled *Roma Integration Initiative through Communication*, includes a measure to prepare a methodological guideline for a correct and inclusive depiction of the multi-ethnic and multinational "nature" of Slovakia in textbooks and learning platforms. The very co-operation of the above-mentioned institution is in negotiations with the Minister of the Interior, with the aim of creating learning texts for the Roma Holocaust.

Art. 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.

188. One of the most important instruments of direct support for interethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between the majority, ethnic minorities and ethnic groups was, by the end of 2017, the CNM grant program. One of the sub-programs was to promote mutual understanding and rapprochement between national groups, i.e. between national majority and minorities, as well as between national minorities themselves. Multicultural and interethnic activities aiming at mutual recognition, the building and development of relationships and the preparation of joint events of several national minorities are encouraged.

189. These projects were aimed at identifying and recognizing common cultural, artistic and scientific values and traditions. In particular, support was given to the realization of national festivals and events with a presentation of a wide range of cultures of national minorities towards the majority, multicultural projects leading to the suppression of racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination. The projects were also focused on getting to know family, local and regional history, traditions, personalities and monuments in a nationally mixed environment. The aim was to support the implementation of professional multicultural and interethnic research, seminars and conferences, especially with a national or international dimension, in order to strengthen the education and training of the rights of members of national minorities.

190. The aim of the projects was also to support the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance towards minority languages and cultures in the education system as well as the use of mass media. In particular, the publication of periodicals, cultural annexes of periodicals with multicultural and interethnic themes, the publishing of multicultural and interethnic national book publications on the life and history of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic were supported. National cultural projects were carried out via the Internet, as well as the preparation and production of CDs and DVD media as well as audiovisual works.

191. The projects also supported exchange programs, stays, joint educational events, knowledge and arts competitions for children and youth from different national and language groups. The aim was to support inter-ethnic and intercultural dialogue between the national majority and national minorities, in particular through exchange programs or stays, joint educational events or competitions, especially children and young people belonging to different national minorities. Under the sub-program entitled *Inter-ethnic and Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding between the National Majority and National Minorities and*

Ethnic Groups, projects promoting tolerance towards minority languages were also supported every year. Out of the many projects supported, the following projects can be mentioned in this context: *Minority Cultural Summer*, *National Minority Festival*, and *International Ecumenical Concert 2017*. In this regard, it should be noted that in 2017 the amount earmarked for this sub-program increased by EUR 37,246. The table shows the earmarked funding for the interethnic and intercultural dialogue and the understanding between the national majority and national minorities and ethnic groups sub-program.

Year	The total amount of funds	Amount earmarked for the Interethnic and Intercultural Dialogue sub-program
2017	EUR 4,500,000	EUR 270,000
2016	EUR 3,879,250	EUR 232,754
2015	EUR 3,879,250	EUR 232,754

192. Both the Plenipotentiary for NM and the Committee have issued several statements in the past, expressing concerns about statements made by public officials to members of the Roma community which strengthen the negative stereotypes in society and have a harmful effect on public opinion. In this regard, the Committee endorsed a declaration in 2016 that strongly condemned the expressions of intolerance, xenophobia, racism, and expressions of defamation of race and nation on the ground of the NC SR, which offended the members of national minorities, especially the Jewish and Roma ethnic minority and the LGBT community. At the same time, it called for an intensification of the fight against any manifestations of anti-Semitism, racism, hatred, intolerance and xenophobia. The Plenipotentiary for NM regularly publishes statements on International Holocaust Remembrance Day and on racial violence and on the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, and takes part in the memorial celebrations devoted to these tragic events. Many activities aimed at increasing tolerance and preventing the manifestation of anti-Semitism and anti-Romani sentiment were supported by the CNM grant program.

193. Following the recommendation of the FCNM Advisory Committee No. 39, the above-mentioned comprehensive measures targeting the majority population includes Action Plan D.2.7. for the area of the approach to the majority society under the title *Roma Integration Initiative through Communication* as well as a strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights. From the point of view of Action Plan D.2.7, a mechanism has already been created to ensure the publicity of successful activities and projects, examples of good media practice have been presented, especially in public media, based on the correct depiction of Roma and Roma issues, or the involvement of Roma personalities in media outputs, covering both general and specialized topics. To this end, the already cited National Seminar was implemented in 2016, see the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part. The challenge for the Plenipotentiary for the RC for the next period under the mentioned Action Plan is to develop a new communication strategy and to create a new information portal for the general public with a content structure of information on the integration process and the progress of the strategy. Action Plan D 2.7. for the area of the access to the majority society, contains a total of 22 activities within the objectives and measures that are phased over 2017 to 2020.

194. In 2017, the Plenipotentiary for the RC cooperated with RTVS reporters and editors especially at an informal level. The team followed up on the previous activities of the Plenipotentiary for the RC in the provision of programs in the public interest broadcast by RTVS on the occasion of Roma Day and the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The Plenipotentiary for the RC has been positively informing about the main MRC integration issues as well as examples of good practice in the field of integration on the website of the MoI SR entitled *Good news from the regions*. The Plenipotentiary for the RC has long participated in the events called *Roma Spirit*. Announcers of the 10th year of Roma Spirit 2018 were the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (hereinafter referred to as "ACEC"), the RTVS and the Plenipotentiary for the RC. The event takes place under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Kiska. Positive examples will also be presented this year in the categories Celebrities, Culture, Municipality and City, Company and Employer, Non-governmental Organization, Media and in the special category Deed of the Year. This event is supported every year by the EC and the MoC SR. The program is broadcast annually by RTVS on the channel Dvojka.
195. In connection with the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 20 on raising awareness of antidiscrimination legislation and No. 43 on raising awareness of legal remedies in the case of hate crime and the proper investigation of these crimes, an amendment to the Criminal Code was adopted, effective from 1 January 2017, which brought about a number of changes. See point 81 for more detail. Together with the legislative changes, significant institutional changes have been made. The crimes of extremism are dealt with exclusively by the Specialized Criminal Court, and all such cases have been entrusted to the Special Prosecutor's Office. Within the framework of police, the crimes of extremism are investigated by NPTJ specialists within NAKA, which was created on 1 February 2017. MoJ SR has established a new Expert Department for Judicial Experts under the title *Social and Human Sciences*, which is divided into two branches – political extremism and religious extremism. Experts in this field should help to ensure effective and qualified recognition of the elements of extremism and hateful motives. In civilian law, a significant change was introduced by the adoption of the Civil Dispute Settlement Act, which singled out anti-discrimination disputes as a separate type of court proceeding.
196. In the area of awareness of legal remedies, also in cases of *hate crimes*, with effect from 1 January 2018, Act No. 274/2017 Coll. on Victims of Crime and on Amendments to Certain Acts (hereinafter referred to as "Victims Act") was adopted. The Victims Act provides for a comprehensive legal regulation of the rights of victims of crime, in particular the right to information and the scope of information provided in the first contact with the victim (e.g. criminal proceedings, possibilities of exercising the rights of victims, access to legal aid) while creating a victim support system. It also introduces the right to be provided professional assistance, including legal aid. Victims of hate crimes fall into the category of particularly vulnerable victims who are entitled to the provision of specialized professional assistance immediately and free of charge. Victims' assistance is provided by state authorities (in particular law enforcement bodies, courts) and non-governmental organizations.
197. With regard to the support of the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to preserve and develop their culture, language, traditions and cultural heritage, as well as to support the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue among all persons living on the territory of the Slovak Republic, irrespective of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, the Slovak Republic had a reworked CNM grant program until 2017, which has been transferred from the [Government Office](#) to the fund since 2018. The

aim of the Fund Act was to transform the current Government Office grant system and to establish an institution providing effective and systematic support for the cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities in the Slovak Republic, administratively independent of central state administration bodies, represented by experts from all national minorities. The law exhaustively determines the ratio of the amount of funds for individual expert councils expressed as a percentage. See more information on the Fund in the *Introduction* part.

198. However, the MoC SR continues to make significant contributions to the development and presentation of the culture of disadvantaged population groups in all fields of art and book culture through its organizations and through its own grant program.

199. The National Education Center (hereinafter referred to as “NEC”) supported the rights of members of national minorities in the Slovak Republic in 2017 through its methodological, advisory, organizational and publishing activities. The NEC initiated, directed, prepared or participated in a number of cultural activities aimed at presenting the culture of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic. Although the NEC did not directly implement activities aimed at protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, in carrying out various activities (such as seminars, workshops, trainings) with experts from regional and county NEC educational centers, in connection with the presentation of other content themes it also emphasized issues of the rights of members of national minorities and ethnic groups. Within the seminar entitled *Human Rights in Cultural and Educational Activities*, presentations on inclusive education of the Roma and on the implementation of successful Holocaust projects in the region were heard. These contributions supported the NEC's intention to emphasize the equal rights of all citizens of the Slovak Republic, regardless of nationality and racial status and to prevent racism, discrimination, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In the field of artistic interest, the NEC has created pre-requisites and opportunities to participate in all events and activities for amateur creators in all genres, regardless of nationality. Collectives and individuals belonging to a national minority have access to all contests of interest in artistic activity, sightings and exhibitions, creative workshops and all other events. The NEC also directed the implementers of regional and district competitions in this context. Within the competition movement, collectives and individuals belonging to a national minority were not only participants in national competitions and tours, but in many cases, they were awarded as well. Representatives of national minorities also worked on juries, program and organizational committees, and in NEC expert groups.

200. The Center for Folk Art Production (hereinafter referred to as "CFAP"), in the framework of improving the system of support for the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups, completed a series of 17 pieces of worksheets for children called *Huncút in the region* in 2017. This edition is focused on the region of the Danube area in which national minorities are overrepresented. At the same time, the CFAP publishes a magazine called *Crafts, art, design*, in which it publishes articles on the visibility of active craftsmen who are members of national minorities. Through their regional craft centers in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice, educational activities focused on national minorities were organized, specifically on Roma pupils at elementary schools, for which craft workshops were held – whip production, Easter egg decoration, crafts from cattails, textile workshop, loom weaving, woodcarving and glass painting. The creative workshops provided children, pupils, students and educators the opportunity to learn about the history of the craft, to learn about and find out how to work with natural materials and to try simple craft techniques. Through these activities, they were given the opportunity to develop manual dexterity and artistic creativity

within school subjects such as the arts, aesthetic education, multicultural education, technical education, history, national history and others. Excursions were organized for this target group in craft workshops and an exhibition in the CFAP Gallery in Košice entitled *From Hand to Hand*, which also included a professional lecture. The aforementioned activities were attended by 44 Roma children all together. In 2018, the CFAP prepared a special publication entitled *Rómski kováči* (Romani blacksmiths) from the renowned ethnologist Arne Mann in a Slovak-English version, within its edition *Tradícia dnes* (Tradition today) which should be a unique resource for obtaining information about this traditional craft of the Roma ethnicity.

201. The SNM, as the largest memorial and fund institution of the MoC SR, is also systematically involved in the museum documentation of the history and culture of national and ethnic minorities. Museums of national and ethnic minorities began to form within the structure of SNM after 1990. These present history, folk customs, and contemporary minority culture. A unique institution focused on the scientific, research, documentary and collecting activities of life and culture, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of nationalities living in the Slovak Republic was thus created. The museums present the history of nationalities, carry out special collection activities focused on this area and establish collaboration with the most important foreign institutions within their mission. They represent a network of institutions that present the history, culture and art of nationalities in Slovakia not only for members of the nationalities but for the majority and for foreign visitors to these museums. The SNM also includes the following museums of national and ethnic minorities as separate specialized organizational units.
202. The MJC focuses on the presentation of spiritual and material culture and documentation of the Holocaust in Slovakia. The activities of the MJC are focused on the development of spiritual and material Jewish culture and documentation of the Holocaust in Slovakia. The main activities of the MJC include collecting, documentary and subsequent presentation activities. Its aim is to prevent the destruction, forgetting or export of three-dimensional judaics, documents, pictures or memorial items and to present them to the general public through expositions and exhibits. Expositions and exhibits for the public bring to life the subjects of everyday life, documents and artefacts of fine arts. The MJC also organizes exhibitions in the synagogues in Žilina, Prešov and Nitra.
203. The Museum of Culture of the Carpathian Germans (hereinafter referred to as "MCCG") was founded on 1 January 1997 as a specialized museum of the SNM. Its predecessor was the Department of History and Culture of the Carpathian Germans, who carried out activities within the scope of the SNM Historical Museum from 1 August 1994. The MCCG focuses on the collection, protection and professional processing and presentation of documents of the material and spiritual culture of the Carpathian Germans. Its base is a library that collects Slovak and foreign periodical and non-periodical literature. In this respect, the MCCG may be considered the most complete institution in Slovakia. The MCCG has its exhibitions in Nitrianske Pravno and Handlová, in the House of the Carpathian Society, where there are still exhibitions focused on the history and culture of Hauerland.
204. The Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as "MHCS") focuses on the history and culture of Hungarians in Slovakia. The mission of MHCS is to acquire, protect, scientifically and professionally process and make available museum collections and history books, and develop the material and spiritual culture of the Hungarian ethnicity in Slovakia. The permanent exhibition of MHCS entitled *Traditions and Values - Hungarians in Slovakia* presents the material and spiritual monuments (historical,

ethnographic, literary-historical and artistic-historical traditions) of the Hungarian ethnicity in Slovakia. During the tour, the documentary film *Hungarians in Slovakia* and the film *Erkel and Bratislava* will be shown, which will introduce the visitor to the life of the famous composer Ferenc Erkel. The museum is based in Bratislava and has extensive exhibitions in Dolná Strehová and Sklabiná.

205. The Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava (hereinafter referred to as “MCCS”) is a specialized museum with nationwide competence and fulfills the function of a documentary scientific and scholarly museum work center focused on the history and culture of Croatian citizens from their arrival in Slovakia to the present. Its mission is to acquire, protect, scientifically and professionally process and make available museum documents of the history and culture of Croats living in Slovakia or other countries. The MCCS systematically searches for, acquires, preserves and professionally processes material and spiritual documents on the history, culture and traditions of the Croatian ethnicity in the territory of present-day Slovakia, and presents the results of its activities to the public through publications, educational activities, exhibitions and cultural events to present the rich cultural heritage of the Croatian minority in Slovakia. At present, the collections of the museum contain 2,291 pieces of collection items from archeology, history and ethnography, especially from the following locations: Jarovce, Čunovo, Devínska Nová Ves, Chorvátsky Grob, Mokrá Háj, Šenkvice, Dúbravka, Svätý Jur and Lamač.
206. The Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník (hereinafter referred to as “MUC”) is the oldest national institution and its mission is to document the basic stages of the cultural-historical, political and social development of the Ukrainians in Slovakia from the oldest time to the present. It was founded in 1956 in Prešov and has been based in Svidník since 1964. Its systematic collection, scientific research, publishing, methodical-professional and cultural-educational activity gradually developed there. MUC has three expositions: Main Cultural and Historical Exposition, Ethnographic Exposition in Nature – Open-air Museum and Art-Historical Exposition – Gallery of Dezider Milly.
207. The Museum of Rusyn Culture in Prešov (hereinafter referred to as “MRUC”) gathers, protects, professionally processes, makes available to the public and evaluates evidence of the material and spiritual existence and activities of the Rusyn population based on exploration and scientific research. It focuses on museum documentation of the development of science, culture, arts and technology in Slovakia, as well as facts about the Rusyn population living abroad (migration in the past and present), meaning that it is formed as one of the international consulting centers in the compact space populated by Rusyns. MRUC has developed a concept of editorial activity aimed at documenting the testimonies and memories of still living memorials from various areas of life of the Rusyn minority in Slovakia.
208. MROK is located on the grounds of the Slovak Village Museum in Jahodnícke háje. Since 2004, it has been a documentary and scientific-research museum that emphasizes the acquisition, methodical-professional and cultural-educational activity within the museum profile. It presents Roma culture and informs about its specific features.
209. The Museum of Culture of Czechs in Martin (hereinafter referred to as “MCC”) was opened to the public in November 1999. The permanent exhibition of the MCC is dedicated to two important personalities, the original owner of the museum building, PhDr. Anna Horáková-Gašparíková and the academician Jiří Horák. Visiting the MCC also provides an

opportunity to get information about the history of the relationship between the Czech and Slovak nations and their concrete cooperation.

210. An overview of the funding of SNM organizational units – specialized so-called national museums in the years 2015-2017 (these amounts represent allocated funds from the state budget – Chapter Culture as of 31 December 2017 in the given year for current and capital expenditures and for priority projects together).

Name of the Museum	2015	2016	2017
MCCG	104,420	113,720	126,920
MJC (including the Sered' Holocaust Museum)	510,209	1,835,623	3,244,822.55
MHCS	259,120	276,364	365,219
MUC	453,805	333,817	500,632.50
MCCS	62,448	73,694	70,895
MROK	33,754	49,547	53,096
MCC	34,010	42,597	44,524
MRUC	110,863	127,776	148,047
Total	1,568,629	2,853,138	4,554,156.05

Note: The MJC budget includes the budget of the Sered' Holocaust Museum in the amount of EUR 273,956 and the capital expenditures for the completion of the premises and the construction of expositions amounting to EUR 2,551,682.55. The MUC budget includes EUR 125,434.50 for the completion of the main open-air museum building.

211. The activities of these museums within the SNM are coordinated by the Commission for museum documentation of cultures of ethnic minorities. The museum has long been working on a project called *Museums and Ethnicity*, which has resulted in many important and successful science and research projects in recent years. The main priority of MHCS in 2017 was the acquisition of collection objects (furniture from various historical periods) for the Madách manor house in Dolná Strehová. The MHCS also received a valuable gift – a collection of works of art from the estate of Judit Szalatnai, the daughter of the prominent writer and cultural exponent of the Hungarian minority during the inter-war period in Czechoslovakia, Rezső Szalatnai. The MCCS acquired a book edition called *Gabriel Kolinovics senquicziensis - chronicon militaris ordinis equitum templariorum*. MUC purchased collector's pieces from ethnography and the art works of Š. Hapák. MRUC acquired mainly ethnographic collection items from the Rusyn municipalities of northeastern Slovakia. The MCCG extended the collection fund to include objects from the first half of the 20th century, documenting the culture of the everyday life of the German population from the vicinity of Kremnica and Bratislava. The MJC acquired 363 pieces of collection items. The greater part of the collection items acquired has been moved to the newly built Sered' Holocaust Museum.

212. All specialized SNM museums offer a broad range of activities to the public, along with exposition, exhibition and editorial activities. The activities have the character of educational programs and lectures for different age categories, cultural programs of different forms and content. Museums of national and ethnic minorities were also involved in the long-term project called *School in the Museum*. The museums offer most of the educational programs in the language of national minorities, especially the MHCS programs – discussions called the *Salon of the Museum*, memorial event at K. Mikszáth Memorial House in Sklabiná and lectures, lectorates and educational programs. At the same time, the MHCS organized lectures, lectorates and educational programs in the Madách manor house and educational programs for exhibitions in Bratislava. The MJC organized several cultural and educational events, such as the screening of the film *Gojdič láska nadovšetko*, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the first transport of young Jewish women and girls from Slovakia to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Sered' Holocaust Museum offered 11 educational programs for primary schools, secondary schools and universities focused on Holocaust issues in Slovakia as well as in Europe. Educational programs bring the lives of Jews on the territory of Slovakia closer and help with acquiring comprehensive knowledge of the Jewish community on our territory. Their main objective is to prevent all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance. Visits to the SNM, the MJC, the Holocaust Museum as well as other museums or memorial sites affected by Fascist reprisals against Jews, Roma and other peoples, ethnic groups, political and social groups have come under the recommendation of the MESRS SR. In 2017, 14,995 pupils and students from all regions of Slovakia participated in the educational programs.
213. In the period 2011-2014, the State Scientific Library in Prešov (hereinafter referred to as "SSL") implemented the NP entitled *Documentation and Information Center for Roma Culture* in order to build such a center (hereinafter referred to as "DICRC") as a new professional workplace in the Slovak Republic and the organizational unit of the library. The project was supported by the European Regional Development Fund resources under the Operational objective entitled *Informatization of society* under the auspices of the MoC SR. The project was materially (October 2014) and financially (June 2015) completed, and is currently in a sustainability period, during which the library will fulfill the activities planned for a five-year period. The mission of the department is to map, identify and document the live manifestations of Roma culture, i.e. the creation of new digital cultural objects in the fields of: literature and oral history, musical inheritance of the Roma and Roma arts and crafts. DICRC seeks to strengthen the identity of the Roma minority as well as change how people look at this minority, not only among members of the majority but also the Roma themselves, by presenting the Roma as people who have pursued their goals and achieved a prominent position. It is anticipated that, in the foreseeable future, SSL will join the other memorial and collection institutions and present its digital cultural objects on the Slovákiana portal. Part of the work of the center is also the operation of a Roma studies reading room, in which SSL builds collections from other areas related to the life of the Roma minority. Most of the material of the library was recorded during the pilot operation of DICRC, which is currently being processed.
214. The purpose of the exhibitions organized by the DICRC was to acquaint people with world famous figures from the Roma minority and to strengthen the pride of Roma identity in students as well as highlight the importance of education to fulfill their own life expectancies. On the premises of the Regional Museum in Prešov, DICRC prepared an exhibition of original paintings entitled *Unknown Colors of Personages*, which was also open to the general public. In cooperation with MROK in Martin, the exhibition was also made available during a

cultural event under the title *Let's get to know each other*, which took place at the Slovak Village Museum in Martin. The target group was Roma youth but also the general public. DICRC also took part in the exhibition entitled *Impressions of the Heart* on the palettes of Roma artists, which was carried out by the CA Rómsky dom (Roma house) in cooperation with other institutions. The opening of the exhibition took place on 30 September 2016 at Zichy Palace in Bratislava. DICRC annually prepares events for three important memorial days of members of the Roma minority:

- World Roma Day (April 8) – On the occasion of this day, an exhibition of paintings titled *Unknown colors of Personages* took place at the premises of the Regional Museum in Prešov. The DICRC realized a regular event in the premises of the Hanušovce nad Topľou Museum of History the purpose of which was to make the public aware of the important life events that took place at that time. The event took place near a labor camp that was set up for the Roma during World War II and focused on Roma youth in the city, but also on the professional and the general public. The event was attended by employees of community centers from Hanušovce nad Topľou and Čemerné and local youth.
- World Roma Day (5th November) – On this occasion, the DICRC prepared an event in which the public presented the collection of poems *Cold Touch of the Lost Morning* by Roman Gorol'.

215. Other cultural activities include talks and excursions within the framework of the traditional Slovak *Week of Slovak Libraries*, as well as an event called *Creation of a digital object*, which was attended by pupils of the second level of the Matica slovenská primary school in Prešov. DICRC staff informed pupils about the library's activities and services, but they also brought pupils closer to some areas of Roma culture that DICRC documented during their work. In April, in cooperation with OZ EduRoma, he prepared an event for pupils of primary school at Šarišské Michal'any and in November the event for children from MRK in the villages of Petrovany and Kojatice in Prešov district. Children attending community centers presented their activities and works of Roma culture and focused on the area of Romani language. DICRC, in cooperation with the CA In Minorita, prepared a discussion on the position of Roma women in Roma communities, including the opening of a panel exhibition called *Successful Roma Women*, which was held on the premises of SSL in Prešov. The Romani studies reading room provides space for the reference use and study of documents covering a wide range of Romani literature from the SSL library collection. In addition to these collections, interested parties also had access to new additions from this area, published in Slovakia, but also abroad, of various studies, surveys and publications. Services of the reading room include access to digital content.

216. SSL in Banská Bystrica implemented 3 cultural and educational activities. The first activity was the discussion entitled *General's Children* with Nelli Veselá, a Russian living in Slovakia, who survived the horrors of life in the concentration camp. The event was carried out in cooperation with the CA Rossiya on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the liberation of people from the concentration camps. The second activity entitled *The Story of Fedot Strelec* (Сказ про Федота Стрельца) – the performance of the *U Lukomorja* Student Theater (У Лукоморья) with a play under the guidance of prof. Larisa A. Sugay, DrSc. The event was organized in cooperation with the Department of Slavic Languages of the Faculty of Arts of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. The third activity was the musical-literary evening under the name *In the Sunlight of the native language* dedicated to Russian women's emigrant poetry and music realized in cooperation

with the CA Rossija. The program included writers and poets Nina Gade (Denmark), Oľga Svanberg (Finland) and musician Inga Strom (Denmark).

217. The first and unique specialized database in Slovakia under the name ROMANO has been at SSL in Košice since 1994, accessible online on the website. It collects information from all relevant departments, legislative regulations and guidelines, organizational, socio-political, and cultural activities of this community. The basis of the database consists mainly of periodicals, both newspapers and journals, as well as studies from the collections. Documents owned by the library are predominant. From the linguistic point of view, they process information sources, especially in Slovak, Romani, Czech, but also in English, French, Hungarian and German. The records have been part of the Slovak National Contemporary Article Bibliography since 2002. At present, the database contains over 6,500 records, with an annual increase of around 500 new records. The ROMANO database is used by various institutions and individuals.

218. The Museum of the Slovak National Uprising carried out an exhibition under the name *70th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp in Oświęcim* - a documentary exhibition prepared by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. The exhibition is a reminder of the crimes committed against innocent people at the time of warfare with the theme of forced departures and emigration in Slovakia in the 20th century. It has created not only a space for visitors to reflect on historical events, but also on the current problem of discrimination and racial intolerance in our society. The event included a discussion called *Exile, exodus*. It was thematically and methodically set up to help young people find out about the events of the 20th century in a wider European context and to help create a tolerant society without elements of nationalism and intolerance. Another event was a documentary exhibition entitled *Armenian genocide on world print sites*, marking the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide in the area of the Ottoman Empire. An exhibition called *Anne Frank – History and Today* was presented at a secondary school in Slovakia in cooperation with the Milan Šimečka Foundation in Bratislava.

219. The grant program The Culture of Disadvantaged Groups (hereinafter referred to as “KZS Grant Program”) is an effective and long-term financial instrument to support social inclusion, equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In the year 2017, the amount of EUR 980,000 was reallocated within the program in question, which represents an increase of 161.12% over the 2014-2020 period (in the years 2014-2016, EUR 375,300 was allocated each year under the KZS grant program). Overview of projects supported by the KZS grant program for MRC (children and youth) in 2012-2017 – the number of projects and the amount in euros.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
MRC	8/23,900	8/23,000	11/29,100	14/28,800	10/18,600	16/74,700

220. In the past, the following subjects have been supported in this area: CA Divé maky, Association for Culture, Education and Communication, CA Dielnička zlatej priadky, CA Oxymoron, Tvorivý dom na vidieku n. o., CA Romano Kham, CA Nádej deťom, Biela voda

n. o., CA Projekt Karavan, CA Art Aktivista, CA Annogallery, CA Romodrom Slovensko, Cultural Center of Bodva Valley and Rudohorie, Zemplín Educational Center, Gemer-Malohont Educational Center, Upper-Sarisian Educational Center, CA Ambrello, Oto Hudec (natural person), but also the Roma Media Center, Cultural association of seniors, CA Kežmarský hlas, CA cult E- Európska kultúra, Cultural Educational Citizens Associations of Láčko drom, CA Nová cesta, Leisure Center in Rakúsy, Foundation of the Good Romany Fairy Kesaj in Košice.

221. The events took place in the following types of activities: creative workshops, festivals, tours, markets, non-formal educational awareness activities, etc. The MoC SR has long collaborated with the Catholic Church in Lomnička – the CA Dom Nepoškvrneného Srdca Panny Márie (Dome of the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady) (project called *Cultural and Spiritual Activities for Romani Children and Youth in Lomnička*) and the CA Láčko Drom, Kokava nad Rimavicou (the project called *Roma string for wanderings*). These were pilot projects aimed at supporting the integration of children and youth from MRC into society through interactive artistic activities.

222. The Conference of Bishops of Slovakia, in cooperation with the Greek Catholic Roma Mission, actively engages in a number of activities that have a positive impact on the image of the Roma in Slovakia and influence the intercultural dialogue. They are active in the field of pastoral and publishing activities (such as the *Rómska Samária* magazine), aimed at highlighting the positive results and examples of good practice in the formation of the Roma minority through the religious path. The activities (e.g. session on the radio *Lumen Roma – Mission possible*) present the results of the pastoral work with the Roma and the Roma themselves, thus building a positive image of the Roma minority. In addition, the Council of the Bishops' Conference of Slovakia for Roma and Minorities, in cooperation with the Roma Pastoral Commission of the Košice Eparchy, organizes a traveling exhibition of works of Romany and Slovak children from Eastern Slovakia under the name *Nomadic gallery*.

Article 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognize 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 national minorities are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent the Parties from requiring 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 the 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.

223. Editorial activity, support for periodical and non-periodical press, audio and multimedia and electronic outputs was supported by the CNM grant program until 2017 under the sub-program 1.1, which was to support periodical printing, i.e. periodicals focused on the cultural life and education of members of national minorities, especially news and information periodicals, literary, children's and youth, social and educational periodicals and inserts of religious periodicals focused on the culture and language of national minorities, inserts of national periodicals focused on culture and the language of national minorities. The following were supported in particular: daily, weekly and bi-weekly, monthly and bi-monthly, quarterly and intermit periodicals.

224. The priority was to issue at least one periodical for each national minority. Periodic printing must be based on Section 2 paragraph 1 of Act No. 167/2008 Coll. on periodicals and news agencies and on amendments to certain acts (hereinafter referred to as "Press Act") at least twice per calendar year. According to the Press Act, periodical printing must be registered at the MoC SR. In the case of a new periodical, it was necessary to submit a copy of the application for registration of the periodicals on the list. When publishing inserts of religious and national periodicals, the applicant could apply for a grant only for the insert of a periodical focusing on the culture of national minorities.

225. From the CNM grant program, non-periodicals were also supported until 2017. The aim was to support the publication of books aimed at supporting the development of culture and the language of national minorities. Only works that were already in the manuscript, or already created were supported. In particular, the publication of the following were supported:

the original creation of national authors in the language of the national minority, as well as their translations into Slovak language, book publications for children and youth, translation literature from the Slovak language into the language of the national minority and from the language of the national minority into the Slovak language, municipalities and their cultural heritage, with an emphasis on their importance for the development of the culture and language of national minorities, artistic, scientific and socio-scientific literature, select reeditions of missing works on the book market, and select translations of important works of world literature into the language of the national minority.

226. The issue of support of the media in minority languages is currently being provided by the Fund. Within this support system, support for the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance of minority languages and cultures in the education system as well as in the mass media (support for the creation of multicultural and inter-ethnic national book publications, audiovisual works, periodicals, non-periodic press, implementation of national cultural projects via the Internet, preparation and creation of CD and DVD media).

227. The CNM donation program also supported electronic media. This included the promotion of national cultural projects implemented through electronic media and the Internet, the publication of cultural, news, scientific, educational and awareness-raising content, the dissemination and reception of information on national minorities and for national minorities in electronic form. The grant could also be used for the establishment and development of national radio and television broadcasting, Internet radio and television broadcasting. The table shows the number of supported projects under sub-program 1.1 for editorial activity, support for periodical and non-periodical press, audio media and multimedia and electronic outputs - in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

National minority	2015		2016		2017	
	Number of supported projects	Provided grant in EUR	Number of supported projects	Provided grant in EUR	Number of supported projects	Provided grant in EUR
Hungarian	120	804,724	130	795,172	122	679,400
Roma	14	126,000	12	114,500	13	164,500
Czech	4	18,122	3	15,340	2	20,340
Rusyn	19	114,132	17	118,300	13	132,900
Ukrainian	4	38,500	6	43,200	6	42,700
German	1	25,000	2	27,800	1	30,000
Polish	2	28,150	2	21,600	3	30,800
Moravian	1	3,489	1	1,500	2	6,500

Croatian	1	11,040	2	12,840	3	14,880
Russian	3	17,000	2	12,500	2	11,500
Bulgarian	3	13,743	2	11,000	2	8,850
Jewish	3	7,500	0	0	3	1,300
Serbian	3	6,400	4	10,300	1	5,225
TOTAL	178	1,213,800	183	1,184,052	173	1,148,895

228. The F6 artistic center is a civic association which, as an organizational component of the Greek Catholic Roma Mission, has several activities. Their aim is to promote the distribution of the good name of the Roma, to publicize the results of the formative work with the Roma and to inspire other Roma communities in an audiovisual and printed form. The F6 artistic center shoots RomaSlovak video clips about friendship and reconciliation. It published the bilingual Roma – Slovak book *Od srdca k srdcu (Heart to Heart)*, intended for the widest possible audience. The book contains songs, prayers, as well as a dictionary and accompanying CD.

Article 10

1. The Parties undertake to recognize 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 request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavor 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.

229. The FCNM Advisory Committee has taken into account the previous explanations of the MoC SR concerning the application of the State Language Act, and on their basis it has no objections to the State Language Act already in its fourth evaluation report but, on the contrary, positively evaluates the legislative regulation of the use of the state language and languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and does not formulate any new recommendations in relation to this regulation.
230. The Slovak Republic continues to apply a non-discriminatory approach to the linguistic rights of members of national minorities and care of the state language in the Slovak Republic does not in any way prevent the exercise of these rights. The current legislative framework on language rights of members of national minorities represents comprehensive legislation characterized by a reasonable balance between promoting the state language and the right to use minority languages as determined by the FCNM. The latest amendments, about which the FCNM Advisory Committee has been thoroughly informed in the Fourth Implementation Report, have also ensured the necessary consistency between the State Language Act and the Act on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities and the clear definition of their relationship. Both acts uniformly and in accordance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic reflect the legal status of the state language and the languages of national minorities and, in accordance with international principles, determine the rules of use of these languages in basic areas of public relations in the Slovak Republic. The current legal status thus enables a clear interpretation of the provisions of both acts and ensures their smooth functioning in accordance with the human rights principles enshrined in the international conventions to which the Slovak Republic is bound.
231. Section 5 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, according to which use of minority language in proceedings before courts and in other areas is governed by special laws. The provisions of Section 2 paragraph 1 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities does not apply to pre-primary education, primary schools, secondary schools and cultures in which the use of minority language is governed by special regulations. The provisions of Section 2 were extended by the amendment to include paragraph 3, according to which a citizen of the Slovak Republic who is a person belonging to a national minority, during communication with the personnel of healthcare facilities and social services facilities or facilities for the social protection of children and social welfare in the municipality pursuant to Section 2 paragraph 1, can use the language of the minority. A medical facility, a social service facility, or a child-care facility and a social guardianship facility under the previous sentence will allow him/her to use the language of the minority if the conditions of the facility so permit.
232. The use of the language of a national minority in a healthcare facility is open to all patients and clients through verbal communication, especially in the Hungarian, Romani and Rusyn languages, without distinction. It is sufficient for a healthcare facility if one of the medical personnel can speak the language of a national minority and, consequently, the communication in question does not require a qualified interpreter. In 2014, Decree of MoH SR, No. 56/2014 Coll., which lays down the details of instruction that precedes informed consent prior to sterilization of a person and patterns of informed consent prior to sterilization of the person in the state language and in the languages of national minorities. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM in this regard conducted a series of separate meetings with relevant ministries with the participation of the minorities concerned.

233. The preparatory process for the recognition of Russian and Serbian language as minority languages in the Slovak Republic under Part II of the Charter of Languages continued, with a proposal for the recognition of these languages as minorities being approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic by Resolution No. 618 of 18 November 2015. Information on this fact was notified to the Secretary General of CoE by letter of the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to CoE on 25 November 2015. The Statement of the Slovak Republic was registered by the Secretariat of the Secretary General of CoE on 27 November 2015. The CoE subsequently published information on its web site that the Slovak Republic had declared the recognition of Russian and Serbian as minority languages in the Slovak Republic under part II of the Charter of Languages.
234. As regards the finding of the FCNM Advisory Committee on this point, it should be noted that Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. as amended by Government Regulation No. 534/2011 Coll. of 19 December 2011 listing all municipalities where citizens belonging to a national minority constitute at least 20% of the population, is based on the results of the PHC 1991, not 2001, as stated in the Fourth Assessment Report on the Slovak Republic FCNM Advisory Committee. Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. was issued pursuant to Section 2 paragraph 2 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, which established a list of municipalities in which at least 20% of the population constituted the population of national minorities according to the latest census, and since the abovementioned text was adopted in 1999, the last PHC is from 1991.
235. In connection with the city districts of the capital city of Bratislava, Jarovce and Čunovo, in which there is a large number of citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to the Croatian national minority, it should be noted that the status of municipalities is regulated by the Act of the Slovak National Council No. 369/1990 Coll. on general establishment as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act on General Establishment"). In accordance with this law, the municipality and its district have its name. The name of the municipality and its district is given in the state language. The labelling of a municipality in another language is governed by a Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.
236. The special position of the capital city of the Slovak Republic of Bratislava as well as the structure and status of its bodies is regulated by Act No. 377/1990 Coll. of the Slovak National Council on the Capital of the Slovak Republic of Bratislava as amended. In accordance with this Act, a city district is a territorial self-governing and administrative part of Bratislava; it associates residents who have permanent residence on its territory. A city district performs self-government of Bratislava and transferred competence to the extent defined by the law and the statute of Bratislava; to this extent, it has the status of a municipality. Legal status, territorial organization and self-government authorities of cities with a population of more than 200,000 are governed by a special law. This applies only to the city of Košice, whose status is governed by Act 401/1990 Coll. of the Slovak National Council on the City of Košice as amended. According to it, the city districts of the city of Košice are legal persons that, under the conditions provided for by the law and the city's statutes, manage the entrusted and their own property and the entrusted and own financial income. City districts exercise self-government within the scope of this law and statutes; in the entrusted extent, city districts have the status of a municipality. As regards the city districts of Bratislava, Jarovce and Čunovo, under the PHC 1991 (based on Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll.) the Croatian nationality was not among the options of the nationality of the inhabitants mentioned and therefore it was not possible to determine the percentage of citizens belonging to the Croatian national minority.

237. In connection with the FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendation No. 53, the application of the language rights of the members of national minorities is monitored regularly, in accordance with the tasks set out in the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for the NM, through the Office of the Government, submits a Report on the Condition of Use of Languages of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic at two-year intervals within the meaning of Section 7a paragraph 2 of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities to the Government of the Slovak Republic. In 2016, it prepared a third report in co-operation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the NM, the Report on the state of use of the languages of national minorities in the territory of the Slovak Republic for the period 2015-2016 (hereinafter referred to as "Report on the Status of the Use of Languages of National Minorities").
238. The Report on the Status of Use of Languages of National Minorities summarized the national legislative framework for the use of the languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic, mapped the process and results of the implementation of the international legal framework for the protection of minority languages in the Slovak Republic, as well as the current developments in institutional security of the use of languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and the fulfillment of obligations and application of rights under the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.
239. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM carried out extensive field research on the use of languages of national minorities in preparation of the Report. Therefore, the report on the state of use of languages of national minorities provided, compared to the previous ones, more comprehensive data on the extent of the monitored subjects, the level of detail of the mapping of individual legally defined areas of use of national minority languages as well as the number of questions for individual types of respondents. Altogether, 763 respondents (638 municipalities, 6 self-governing regions, 85 state administration bodies, 28 District Directorates of the PF and 6 district directorates of the Fire and Rescue Corps) were contacted. Of these, 714 respondents sent the completed questionnaires, which represented a 94% return.
240. The Committee discussed the report on the state of use of languages of national minorities and took it in account on 16 November 2016 by Resolution No. 99. Subsequently, the Government Council took note of the presented report on the state of use of the languages of national minorities by Resolution No. 167 of 28 December 2016 and recommended to the Government of the Slovak Republic to approve this report. At its session on 11 January 2017, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved and published the Report on the state of use of the languages of national minorities on the website of the Plenipotentiary for NM (<http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/spravy-a-koncepcne-materialy/>). It was published in the Slovak and English languages and subsequently distributed to all relevant institutions and bodies.
241. Under the adopted resolution, specific weaknesses in the application practice at all levels were gathered on the basis of the information received from the local authorities and the local state administrations and bilateral discussions were held with the MoI SR, MTC SR, MoH SR, MARD SR, Financial Directorate of the Slovak Republic, The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing of the Slovak Republic and the Presidium of the PF of the Slovak Republic with a view to their elimination.

242. In May 2017, the Plenipotentiary for NM addressed letters to 578 municipalities and towns where deficiencies were observed in the application of the law and reported on specific deficiencies found and asked these municipalities for their correction or removal, and provided information on how to remedy these shortcomings, including the schedule of the process.
243. Pursuant to Government Resolution No. 15/2017, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary General of the Service Office of the Slovak Government elaborated a proposal for a methodological guidance on the Act on the use of languages of national minorities. On 14 June 2017, the proposal was included in the internal commentary procedure of the Government Office, where no comments were made. This proposal will be the subject of a meeting of the Expert Commission on the Application of the Act on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities and subsequently published by the Government Office.
244. The Plenipotentiary for NM, in accordance with Government Resolution No. 15/2017 in cooperation with the ATMS developed an analysis in order to identify the needs in the field of systematic education of the employees of the local state administration bodies, territorial self-governing bodies and workers of legal entities established by the territorial self-government in the field of rights and obligations arising from the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.
245. The application of language rights is also related to the initiative of the Plenipotentiary for NM to submit an amendment to the Government Act amending and supplementing the Act of the Slovak National Council on the Municipal Structure concerning the conditions for the incorporation of a municipality. On the basis of the proposal, it is now also necessary to take into account the national composition of the municipality that will be attached to the neighboring municipality. The effective regulation is called *The district office at the headquarters of the region in the process according to the first and third sentences takes into account the legitimate interests and needs of the population; a non-functioning municipality and, in particular, respecting the regional language or minority language, so that such an association does not hamper the promotion of this regional language or minority language.*
246. The Plenipotentiary for NM in accordance with the program statement in which the Government of the Slovak Republic committed itself to create conditions for reconciliation with the applicable Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities and on the basis of a report on the state of use of languages of national minorities, took steps to eliminate various shortcomings and activities aimed at establishing co-operation with several relevant sectors. At its own initiative, the Plenipotentiary for NM visited several towns and municipalities where members of national minorities live. The purpose of these visits was in particular to monitor the application of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in practice.
247. In relation to the fulfillment of the tasks in the area of the use of languages of national minorities, the Office of the Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, provides expert and methodological assistance to the public administration bodies as well as to the organizational units of the security and rescue corps in the implementation of this Act, and discusses administrative offenses in the sphere of the use of languages of national minorities, including the area of care for professional terminology in the languages of national minorities, the preparation of professional terminology dictionaries.

248. Preparations are under way in the Fourth Language Report for the years 2017 and 2018, where extensive field research is carried out with even more detailed data processing for the use of the languages of national minorities by state administration bodies.
249. In the context of the efforts aimed at improving the conditions for the implementation of language rights for members of national minorities, the Plenipotentiary for NM prepared an international workshop called *New Challenges for the Protection of Languages of National Minorities* dedicated to new challenges and trends in the application of the language rights of members of national minorities in individual European countries and Slovakia at his own initiative in October 2018. The aim of the event was to create a platform for discussion on the following topics:
- a return to the spirit of the FCNM and the Charter of Languages in search of new impulses aimed at improving the mechanisms for the application of the language rights of members of national minorities,
 - identifying the conditions and limits of the application of the language rights of members of national minorities in individual European countries and Slovakia,
 - the search for new tools for the application of the language rights of members of national minorities,
 - new challenges and trends in the light of dynamic societal changes coupled with the development of IT technology in the given field,
 - exchange of experience and examples of good practice in the field of European models for the application of the language rights of members of national minorities.
250. For the efforts of the Plenipotentiary for NM to support the language competencies of civil servants, see the *General Information* section.
251. According to the Methodological Guidelines on the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities developed by the Plenipotentiary for NM, under the subchapter *Creating Conditions for the Use of the Language of a National Minority*, the employment of professional staff who speak the language of a national minority is the only way of ensuring the use of the language of the national minority in communication with the competent public administration authority. If the public authority cannot, for objective reasons, employ professional staff who speak the language of the national minority, the public administration will ensure the possibility of using the language of the national minority in another way.
252. With reference to the information outlined in the previous recommendations, the Plenipotentiary for the RC, in particular in individual national projects, has alternatively set up the knowledge of Romani language or a membership in the Roma minority, directly in the form of a temporary compensatory measure, as one of the terms of job occupation. Since in these projects, at the local level, it mostly concerns staff of municipalities and towns in public service, just in the area of FSW performance and education it involves a minimum of 1,366 work positions of Roma-speaking employees (for example, the mentioned NP FSW with a total of 470 job positions, of which 154 Roma, in the NP entitled *Community Centers*, the number of jobs is 142, of which 41 are occupied by Roma). The same applies to the implementation of *Healthy Communities 2A and Healthy Communities 3A*. The same also applies to the implementation of the call entitled *Promoting Comprehensive Provision of Local Public Order Services in Municipalities with MRC*, which operate in 147 territorial self-governing units.

253. The Plenipotentiary for the RC, in the context of active support for the Romani language, provides translations of educational or promotional material, for example in cooperation with the Department of Crime Prevention of the Office of the Minister of the Interior, which was a translation of a European Crime Prevention Network leaflet addressed to respondents at risk of human trafficking. In the field of legislative activity, Act No. 400/2015 Coll. on the drafting of legislation relating to its regulatory competence on the Roma ethnic minority, it was incorporated into the strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights, in the Action Plan entitled *Streamlining the provision of technical and methodological assistance and ensuring translation of crucial Slovak legislation, official documents templates, ensuring a uniform professional terminology and the issuing of methodological guidelines for local government authorities, territorial self-governing bodies and legal entities established by local authorities to apply legislation related to the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups*. Similarly, on the basis of previous proposals to amend the Act on the PF, the possibility of using the Romani language will be amended in the future, not only in the processes of law enforcement, but also in the use of calls by the members of the PF, which is also stipulated in Section 7 paragraph 4 of the Act on the use of languages of national minorities.
254. Selected legislation, particularly concerning national minorities, has been translated into five languages and published for citizens on the SLOV-LEX portal so that members of national minorities can better understand them. The content of this legislation is constantly updated. The published legislative standards concern minority rights. The translation of selected laws into languages of national minorities will be beneficial not only for citizens of the Slovak Republic but also for foreigners using these languages. The published legal norms in the languages of national minorities are informative in relation to the equivalent in the national language and are not legally binding. The system thus created is structured, open to further development, and enables members of national minorities to have more consistent access to legislation in their native language. The new content module will include other important national regulations that will be gradually translated into the languages of national minorities.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognize 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 recognize 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 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.

255. With regard to the issue of bilingual documents, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM has provided and provides professional and methodological assistance to Slovak citizens belonging to national minorities as well as to public administration authorities. The Plenipotentiary for NM actively communicates with the relevant authorities on the new possibilities of the electronic publishing of bilingual registry statements in the language of national minorities and the adaptation of the individual items of the form in the minority language so that they meet the legal requirements as well as the spelling rules of that language.
256. As far as the traffic signs are concerned, at the initiative of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, Decree of the MoI SR No. 9/2009 Coll., implementing the Road Traffic Act and on the amendment of certain acts, incorporates legislation on the languages of national minorities. In particular, Section 8 paragraph 23 was amended: *"In the case of traffic signs and transport equipment, the inscriptions are used in the official language; they may be used in other languages in accordance with a special regulation and an international agreement to which the Slovak Republic is bound"*. It refers to the legislation of Section 2 paragraph 1, Section 4 paragraph 1, 2 and 6 of the Act on the use of languages of national minorities No. 204/2011 Coll. This legislation therefore concerns the designation of a municipality in the language of a minority on traffic signs indicating the beginning of the municipality and the end of the municipality, information concerning the threat to the life, health, safety or property of citizens of the Slovak Republic, to be provided alongside the state language in the minority language also. All inscriptions and announcements intended to inform the public on the streets and on the roads can also be indicated in the minority language. This change is effective from 1 February 2018.
257. The Plenipotentiary for the NM welcomed the initiative of the MTC SR and Slovak Railways, which started to fulfill one of the priorities of the 2016-2020 Program Statement entitled *Harmonization of the Railways Act with the Act on the Use of the Language of National Minorities in the Field of Names of Railway Stations and Stops on Nationally Mixed*

Territories. Railway stations began to be designated in the languages of national minorities in their respective municipalities early in 2017. This placement is gradually being implemented in accordance with the instruction issued by the Minister of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, issued on 20 December 2016 and imposing an obligation on the Director General of Slovak Railways to designate railway stations in the languages of national minorities with effect from 1 January 2017. The designation concerned covers 55 railway stations. This measure will be followed by further legislatives, or measures aimed at harmonizing the Act on the use of languages of national minorities with the Act on Railways as envisaged in the Program Statement of the Slovak Government. The Plenipotentiary for NM is negotiating with the General Director of Slovak Railways on this matter.

258. In the past, the Plenipotentiary for NM carried out a number of activities in connection with the effective provision of language rights for members of national minorities. In addition to the above, he also negotiated with a private carrier, RegioJet, a.s. In this context, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM provided technical and methodological assistance to the company, as well as a translation of the names of all railway stops on the Bratislava - Dunajská Streda - Komárno route, on the basis of which a bilingual announcement of stops on the route was provided.

259. The Plenipotentiary for NM also communicated with Arriva Nové Zámky, a.s. As a result, there is a further contribution to visual bilingualism, and thus to the promotion of the language rights of members of national minorities in Slovakia, namely the placement of bilingual names of bus stops in municipalities with a Hungarian national minority by the company. In order to improve the visual bilinguality, the Plenipotentiary for the NM also communicates with Slovenská Pošta a.s. and with business chains, with the first results of this effort being seen in practice.

260. In addition to the above activities, the Plenipotentiary for NM negotiates with the relevant authorities on visual bilingualism in the field of state standards on the ways and means of publicizing information on the threat to life, health, safety or property of Slovak citizens, whether on energy equipment, traffic signs, public spaces and so on. Preparations are also being made to make translations of relevant legal regulations available in five minority languages.

261. Language topics are a regular part of the Committee's agenda, see the *General Information* section for more details. National minorities have the opportunity to identify issues related to the application of language rights for members of national minorities within the framework of the twice-yearly prepared Evaluation Report on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, which is subsequently discussed and approved by the Committee and the Government Council, and all relevant national authorities. The Chairman of the Committee—The Plenipotentiary for NM regularly informs the Committee of its activities to remove specific shortcomings in the application of the language rights of members of national minorities at all levels.

262. Also in accordance with Art. 4 paragraph 2, the Plenipotentiary of the RC has published a language map of the Roma communities in Slovakia, with a view to an effective approach to education at primary and secondary schools. Altogether, 1,137 municipalities were mapped out. 67 new municipalities with MRC were identified during data collection which was not included in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013. Data collection was conducted in a questionnaire form to get data in three areas:

- the first area focused on indicating the presence and use of the native language in the MRC environment (Romani, Slovak, Hungarian or other languages). It is necessary to note that the primary communication language of the Roma communities in Slovakia is Slovak, with respect to their regional affiliation, then Hungarian and thirdly Romani,
- the second area was devoted to the use of everyday language in communication,
- the third area covered the language of instruction in primary schools for children coming from the MRC environment.

263. The language map of the Roma communities in Slovakia includes knowledge of the active use of Romani language in Slovakia, with the aim of using the acquired knowledge in the form of the development of Romani language in education and the use of language bilingualism at primary and secondary schools. The findings from the Roma Language Map represent significant progress in identifying the presence of Romani language at the municipal level. In the future, these findings will create a prerequisite for increasing the number of schools, including kindergartens and levels, in the introduction of Romani language into primary and secondary school curricula.

264. From the point of view of the exercise of voting rights, the MoI SR issued a sample of the labelling of a polling room in the Romani language, as well as information for voters.

Article 12

1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the field 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.

265. For information on the legislation governing the allocation of public resources, methodological guidelines, diagnostic examinations, including the creation of teacher and assistant positions with knowledge of the Romani language, see the *Issues requiring immediate solutions* part. In line with the background to RDNM Advisory Committee Recommendations No. 69 and 70 there was an increase in the norm for a primary school pupil of the national minority to EUR 65.50. In 2017, in accordance with the Action Plan D.2.1. in the area of education, a pilot project entitled *Kežmarok 2020, Creating a model of the process of diagnosis and re-diagnosis of children and pupils from the SDE, followed by providing pedagogical and psychological support* was tested. In the Kežmarok district, no pre-school child was enrolled in a special school. MESRS SR has been included in the NP under the title *Inclusive Education: We bring change for Roma children – INSCHOOL*, implemented by the CoE together with the EC. In addition to the standards of providing inclusive education support for pilot schools, support for teachers, raising awareness of the benefits of inclusive education, the NP includes an activity entitled *Support for the removal of specific barriers for vulnerable groups, including changes in legislation in the target countries*.

266. There are 8 schools with Romani language teaching in the Slovak Republic. At present, no founder has requested the MESRS SR to be included in the network of schools, as a school with a Romani language of instruction. In an effort to deal with the situation, including the Roma minority, the MESRS SR through Amendment No. 1, approved the FC for primary schools with the teaching of the language of the national minority with effect from 1 September 2017 beginning in the first grade; the following changes have been made to it:

- The FC for primary schools with the teaching of language of the national minority was, in the part - a year of primary education, and in the part - an educational area of language and communication and in the school subject - language of a national minority and literature, modified so that in the first grade the MESRS SR increased the number of hours from one to two a week, and in the second grade from two to three.

At the same time, point 11 was added as follows: In the case of the selection of the FC for primary schools with the teaching of language of the national minority valid from 1 September 2017, we recommend:

- to use optional (available) lessons to strengthen the language of national minority and literature,
- to use a pedagogical approach to content and language-integrated teaching within general education subjects to improve the language competence of pupils in the language of the national minority.

At the same time, it added the remark in the mentioned FC as follows: From 1 September 2017, schools can choose one of two framework curricula:

- FC for primary schools with the teaching of language of a national minority valid from 1 September. 2015
- FC for primary schools with the teaching of language of a national minority valid from 1 September. 2017 (Appendix to IPEP for Primary Education).

267. This step corresponds to the above-mentioned approved NP under the title *Development of the education children and pupils belonging to national minorities* and its implementation plan (the data are presented in the *Issues requiring immediate solution* part), including the task entitled *Strengthening the material and technical provision of schools, creation of textbooks and other educational resources in schools with the language of instruction of national minorities*. This task of NP requires the provision of didactic materials for schools with the language of instruction of national minorities, the teaching of the language of national minorities and the provision of author's textbooks for specific subjects of primary and secondary education in the language of national minorities. The Implementation Plan of the NP includes a measure entitled *Developing the education of children and pupils belonging to national minorities in their native language*, implemented through increasing the qualification of Roma language teaching and literature and, in particular, by creating and adapting existing framework curricula for the specifics of Romani language teaching.

Art 14

1. The Parties undertake to recognize 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.

268. See the *Issues requiring an immediate solution* part for more detail.

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.

269. For information on the current state regarding the participation of national minority members in dealing with matters relating to them, as well as information on the activities of the Plenipotentiary for the NM aimed at creating a space for participation, see the *General Information* section.
270. Within the broader context of political and civic rights, the participation of members of national minorities in the elections to the National Council of the SR, higher territorial units and local self-government bodies is also involved.
271. Elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic are held pursuant to Act No. 180/2014 Coll. on the conditions for the exercise of the right to vote and on the amendment of certain acts (hereinafter the "Voting Rights Act"). Under Section 21 paragraph 3 of this Act, the municipality delivers a notice no later than 25 days before the election day to each household stating the time of the elections, the electoral district, the polling station, a brief description of the ballot and the voter's obligation to prove their identity before voting. In the municipality, according to a special regulation, the information on the place and time of the elections is also provided in the language of the national minority.
272. The last elections to the National Council were held on 5 March 2016. There were several political parties, who had an explicit intention in their electoral program to devote themselves to the protection and rights of members of national minorities. The results of the elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the number of valid votes, as well as the allocation of mandates to political entities are shown in the table below.

Name of the political entity	Number of valid votes cast	Number of valid votes in %	Number of mandates received
Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance - Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség	2,426	0.09	0
MOST-HÍD	169,593	6.50	11
Party of the Hungarian community – Magyar Közösség Pártja	105,495	4.04	0

273. The election results show that the political party, the Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance - Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség and the Hungarian community party Magyar Közösség Pártja did not receive more than 5% of the total number of valid votes cast, and therefore the condition for political entry into parliament was not met. From these

political parties, only the MOST-HÍD party, which received 11 mandates, fulfilled the 5 percent condition for entry into parliament. According to the information published on the NC SR website in the VII electoral term, 12 members of national minorities who are Slovakian citizens, representing 8% of the total number of MPs in the Slovak Republic, are active on the NC SR as members. For comparison, the table below shows the number of elected MPs belonging to national minorities in the previous parliamentary term. The number of elected MPs belonging to national minorities:

National minority	Number of Members (VII parliamentary term)	Number of Members (VI parliamentary term)
Hungarian	10	9
Roma	1	1
Rusyn	1	2
Total	12	12

274. The Government of the Slovak Republic, composed of representatives of the parties Smer-SD, SNS, Most-Híd, in its program statement, has acceded to the European democratic traditions of freedom, human dignity and tolerance in the fight against fascism and right-wing extremism. On the basis of this democratic conviction, the Slovak Government has committed itself to strengthening the policy of understanding and reconciliation of citizens of all Slovak nationalities with a unique opportunity to start a new phase of support for national minorities.

275. Regarding the participation of members of national minorities in the administration of higher territorial units, it should be noted that according to the Voting Rights Act, the municipality delivers a notice no later than 25 days before the election day to each household stating the time of the elections, the electoral district, the polling station, a brief description of the ballot and the voter's obligation to prove his / her identity before voting. The information on the place and time of the elections is also provided in the language of the national minority in a municipality, according to a special regulation. The last elections to the bodies of the self-governing regions took place on 4 November 2017. The precise national composition of the candidates for the chairpersons of the self-governing regions and the deputies of the self-governing regional councils is not available.

276. In line with FCNM Advisory Committee Recommendations No. 80 and 81, the Plenipotentiary for NM within the implementation of Operational objective 1 of the Action Plan entitled *Ensuring a Comprehensive Approach to Legislation on the Rights and Status of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups*, implements measures aimed at ensuring an analysis of the legislation on the rights and status of national minorities and ethnic groups, i.e. the preparation of comprehensive and coherent legal regulation of the rights of members of national minorities and ethnic groups. The aim of these measures is to prepare a comprehensive and coherent legal regulation that would meet the expectations of national

minorities, which should include the rights and status of members of national minorities, the institutional safeguarding, development and promotion of the rights of members of national minorities and the implementation of systemic measures for the improvement of the status of national minorities as well as the financial security mechanisms of national organizations.

277. For the recommendation of the FCNM Advisory Committee No. 22, 27 and 55, we state that the origin of the NRIS was carried out and the strategy is implemented with the participation of non-governmental and professional members of the Roma minority.

278. Right after the municipal elections, the Plenipotentiary for the RC worked out a manual for municipal mayors elected in their first term. He specifically supported all legal emancipatory activities of Roma mayors and deputies in implementing NRIS goals at the local level. Since the Plenipotentiary for the RC is part of the central government, in accordance with the constitutional definition and generally binding legal regulations, he cannot interfere with the electoral contest of political parties and individuals. After the elections, however, he is always working with mayors of municipalities and mayors of the cities in which MRCs are headquartered, as well as with mayors and deputies who publicly identify their belonging to the Roma ethnic minority, or declare their origin from an MRC urban settlement. Special support of the Plenipotentiary for the RC within the framework of its business trips in this area, is provided during NRIS penetration and local strategies. The same fact of cooperation also affects relations with the self-governing bodies of higher territorial units. The materials to recommendation No. 33 also include the share of members of the Roma minority in the redistribution of trust funds to support the culture of the Roma minority in accordance with the provisions of the Fund Act.

279. In line with the CoE Action Plan for Roma Youth, based on 3 EU EC DG Justice grants, the Plenipotentiary for the RC implemented in 2016 and 2017 and is also implementing in the years 2018-2019, the RRP, the presentation of the update of the Action Plans, in the allocated amount of EUR 127,636, as well as support for youth participation in the total allocation of EUR 54,643. In the year 2017, 5 large RRP were held in Spišská Nová Ves, Prešov, Rimavská Sobota, Humenné and Košice, with over 400 participants, representatives of towns, municipalities, offices, NGOs, Roma leaders, young people and participants addressing Roma inclusion policies at the national, regional and local level. The conclusions from individual meetings were processed by experts who were involved in the project. Support for Romani youth was implemented through the program *Starter*, which is aimed at developing the personal skills and abilities of young Roma persons. Consultation activities were carried out in the form of a training module called *Workshops of the Future*, which took place in the towns and villages of Prešov, Košice and the Banská Bystrica Region and were attended by more than 350 participants from Roma youth groups. The selected participants participated in three RRP where they were able to interpret the opinions of other young people.

280. Within the Operational Program called *Competitiveness and Economic Growth*, 7,786 long-term sustainable jobs were created, proactive measures were also taken in the area of the employment of MRC members for cultural monuments, flood protection works, seasonal agricultural work, and so on. In addition to the measures already mentioned and the results in the NP in the *Issues requiring an immediate response* part and the recommendations of FCNM Advisory Committee No. 22, 27 and 55, the Action Plan also includes a measure to promote the placement of DAS (including those living in the MRK environment) on the labor market using the ALMM tools under the Employment Services Act.

281. In the framework of the statistical estimation, the DAS qualification elements are mentioned in the parameters of Section 8 paragraph 1 of the Act on Employment Services and with reference to territorial units under the Act on Support of the least developed districts, it appears to be a reasonable assumption that, in the year 2017, a total of 46,074 persons belonging to the Roma national minority living in the urban settlements of MRC were placed on the labor market, using all ALMM measures of NP tools and demand-driven calls. This estimate also includes the trend of the declining long-term unemployed and other proactive instruments in relation to the least developed districts, such as the introduction of a 2015 deduction allowance for employing people from the least developed districts. In order to strengthen these instruments, the MLSAF SR announced a call in 2017 entitled *Streamlining current and introducing new instruments to increase the activity of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion*, with a sum of EUR 15 million from the ESIF, of which EUR 11,355,000 are reserved for less developed regions.
282. According to data of the Institute of Financial Policy, the unemployment rate of Roma in municipalities with concentrated settlements was 20.72% in 2017, the unemployment rate of the Roma overall is 28.60%, of which in the municipalities with concentrated settlements, the share is up to 41.34%. The dynamics of the process of introducing the Roma ethnic minority to the labor market continues to be a challenge for all the strategies outlined. More NRIS action plans, for health, housing and financial inclusion of instruments, improve job placement and job maintenance. The outputs of the NP called *Healthy communities* are also set out in the action plans D.2.3. for health, promoting access to drinking water in the environment of separated and segregated MRC, measures to support the maintenance of the high level of vaccination of children in MRC, implementation of municipal waste management, increase of individual integration of MRC residents by introducing a system of affordable housing and accompanying social assistance, reducing the rate of non-payment, support of financial education in MRC, support for the protection of consumers from MRC, and making the debt elimination tools accessible will bring a supportive stabilizing effect, but will not replace ALMM tools.
283. From the point of view of dynamism, it is equally positive that within the framework of the NP, entitled *The Road to the Labor Market 2* - measure No. 1, the Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family announced a notice on the possibility of submitting applications for a financial contribution to support the creation of labor places for JA and DAS on 9 August 2018. The applicant is the Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, and the ESIF allocation is EUR 49,920,663. The main objective of the NP is to improve the position of the JA and DAS on the labor market and to increase their employability and employment by supporting job creation and to support the development of local and regional employment in the least developed districts with a high rate of registered unemployment. The timetable for the implementation of the project is set to May 2023.
284. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for the RC has prepared updated Action Plans of the Strategy for Roma Integration by 2020, see point No. 91.
285. In the area of financial integration solution, an amendment to Act No. 7/2005 Coll. on bankruptcy and restructuring was adopted, see point No. 183 and 184.

V. Additional recommendations

Establish an independent and specialized body to investigate all alleged cases of police abuse and misconduct and proactively inform the public about the available legal remedies in such cases;

287. Once a year, the Section of Control and Inspection Services of the MoI SR is processing the Report on Criminal Offenses of PF members, including information on investigating the submission of detained, in custody and accused persons on the injuries they were alleged to have received from PF members and their investigation by the inspection service. The Report is submitted to the Government of Slovak Republic as informative material. It should be noted that no notifications are recorded according to the notifier's membership in a minority group.
288. Investigators in all allegations of the excessive use of force, ill-treatment and abuse by law enforcement agencies shall act in accordance with international standards and shall be governed by the laws governing their powers. The Inspection Service investigates all suspicions, or notifications on excessive use of force, or ill-treatment or use of violence against persons in custody, detained and accused by members of the PF in terms of proper verifying and investigation under the Criminal Procedure Code. If a person is found guilty of an offense, the person is prosecuted.
289. Supervision of the observance of the lawfulness of the activities of PF investigators as well as PF investigators classified in the inspection service in criminal proceedings is carried out by the local prosecutor in accordance with Section 230 of Act No. 301/2005 Coll. of the Criminal Procedure Code, as amended, before the start of criminal prosecution and in the preparatory proceedings. According to the Prosecuting Act, the Prosecutor's Office is a separate hierarchically structured unified system of state bodies headed by the Prosecutor General, in which prosecutors operate in relations of subordination and supremacy. The Prosecutor's Office protects the rights and legitimate interests of individuals, legal persons and the state. The Public Prosecutor's Office is obliged to take measures in the public interest to prevent the violation of lawfulness, to detect and remove the violation of lawfulness, to restore the violated rights and to take responsibility for their violation.
290. In exercising its powers, the Public Prosecutor's Office is obliged to use legal means so as to ensure, without any influence, a consistent, effective and rapid protection of the rights and legitimate interests of natural persons, legal persons and the state.
291. Criminal proceedings in the Slovak Republic are regulated by Act No. 301/2005 Coll. of the Criminal Code. The purpose of criminal proceedings is to regulate the procedure of law enforcement and judicial authorities so that criminal offenses are properly elucidated and their perpetrators are fairly punished by the law, while respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural and legal persons. Criminal proceedings are based on the basic principles set out in Section 2 of the Criminal Procedure Code, in Art. 16, 17, 21, 47, 48 and 50 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, in Art. 5 and 6 of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Everyone has the right to have his/her case heard fairly, publicly and within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. This right covers both civil and criminal matters. The right to a fair trial gives special rights to persons accused of a criminal offense.

292. In criminal proceedings, the accused has the right to testify about all facts and evidence against him/her from the beginning of the proceedings, and also has the right to refuse to testify. He /she may state the circumstances, suggest, submit and obtain evidence for his/her defense, make suggestions and lodge applications and appeals. He/she has the right to choose a defense counsel and to also consult with him/her during acts performed by law enforcement or judicial authorities. However, the defense counsel cannot advise him/her on how to answer the question asked during interrogation. He/she may request that they be interrogated in the presence of their defense counsel and that the defense counsel take part in other preparatory actions. If the accused is detained, in custody or in a custodial sentence, he/she may speak with the defense counsel without the presence of a third person. The accused has the right to question the witnesses he or she has called or which were called with their consent before the court and to ask questions.
293. It is the duty of the law enforcement and judicial authorities to instruct the accused of his or her right of defense, to give him/her full opportunity to exercise it, namely by either the accused choosing defense counsel under Section 39 of the Criminal Procedure Code or with reference to the provision of Section 40 of the Criminal Procedure Code, by the accused being appointed defense counsel.
294. The draft amendment to the PF Act was unanimously approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic in September 2018 after negotiations with representatives of the public, police unions, Slovak Information Service and coalition partners. The draft amendment strengthens the independence of the inspection of the MoI SR and tightens the conditions for the appointment of the President of the PF and the Director of the Inspection Service. The Office of the Inspection Service will continue to be designated under the authority of the President of the PF, while the Director of the Office will no longer be responsible for its activities to the Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, but to the Government of the Slovak Republic. The scope of the inspection service office will in principle be the same as at present, i.e. detection and investigation of criminal offenses by members of the PF, and will be extended to the criminal activities of members of the Prison and Judicial Guards Corps.