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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

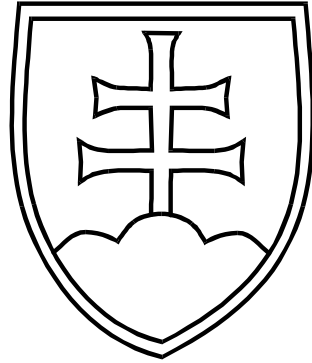


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Sixth Report submitted by The Slovak Republic

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
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**THE SIXTH REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

Bratislava 2023

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I. MEASURES TAKEN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE RESULTS OF THE FIFTH MONITORING CYCLE AND THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

A. PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE FIFTH MONITORING CYCLE

1. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Framework Convention”) is available to the public on the Slov-Lex legislation portal in Slovak¹, Hungarian, Romani, Rusyn, Ukrainian and German languages.² The Slovak version of the Framework Convention is also available on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM”) ³ and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MoC SR”).⁴

2. Reports on the implementation of the framework convention are published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MFEA SR”)⁵ in Slovak. The page also contains reports of the Advisory Committee on Slovakia, opinions of the Government of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “Slovak Government”) on these reports and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (hereinafter referred to as “CM of the Council of Europe”).

3. On May 24, 2023, the Slovak Government approved the *Report on the progress and results of the fifth monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic*.⁶ The Slovak Government instructed the relevant ministers, the Head of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as "Plenipotentiary for NM") and the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (hereinafter referred to as "Plenipotentiary for RC") to familiarize themselves with the results of the fifth round of monitoring the implementation of the Framework Convention on the Protection of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and with the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, assess the possibility of their implementation and inform about the measures taken as part of the preparation of the sixth implementation report. Prior to the session of the Slovak Government, the report was discussed by the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (hereinafter referred to as “CNMEG”), the expert body of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as "Government Council") for national minorities.

4. The results of the fifth monitoring cycle were also published in Slovak on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MESRS SR”).⁷ The resolution of the CM of the Council of Europe was translated into 4 minority languages (Hungarian, Romani, Ukrainian and German) and published on the

¹ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1998/160/> (in Slovak)

² <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy-v-jazyku-narodnostnych-mensin> (in minority languages)

³ <https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/ramcovy-dohovor-a-europska-charta/?csrt=17206844897107309282> (in Slovak)

⁴ <https://www.culture.gov.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/medzinarodna-spolupraca/rada-europy/> (in Slovak)

⁵ <https://mzv.sk/sk/web/sk/diplomacia/temy/ludske-prava/narodnostne-mensiny-a-ochrana-mensinovyh-jazykov> (in Slovak)

⁶ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28228/1> (in Slovak)

⁷ <https://www.minedu.sk/35141-sk/ramcovy-dohovor-na-ochranu-narodnostnych-mensin-piaty-posudok-o-slovenskej-republike/> (in Slovak)

website of the Plenipotentiary for NM.⁸ The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM will distribute information on language versions of the resolution to CNMEG members.

B. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES ON THE RESULTS OF THE FIFTH MONITORING CYCLE

Follow-up seminar on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Slovak Republic

5. The Slovak Republic organizes a follow-up event on the results of each monitoring cycle. The *Follow-up seminar on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Slovak Republic*⁹ (hereinafter referred to as the “Seminar”) was held in Bratislava on 28 June 2023 as a form of continuation of the dialogue with the Advisory Committee. The event was attended by experts¹⁰ from the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention, representatives of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention, representatives of state authorities, the Public Defender of Rights, representatives of national minorities and experts from the academic community. Representatives of the Vietnamese minority were present at the meeting for the first time in the position of a formally recognized national minority.

6. The discussion focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee as well as recommendations from the resolution of the CM of the Council of Europe and, in a broader sense, on ways to strengthen the protection of national minorities in the Slovak Republic. Thematically, the discussion was divided into three panels: minority culture, languages; education and effective involvement of national minorities in decision-making/public policies.

Common activities of the MESRS SR and the Council of Europe

7. MESRS SR participates in the field of inclusive education in joint projects of the EU and the Council of Europe.

8. In Slovakia, the Ministry of Education is a partner of the project *INSCHOOL: Inclusive schools for Roma children (2017 to 2027)*. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, the United Kingdom and the Slovak Republic participate in the project. The project focuses on supporting the social inclusion of Roma through the support of inclusive educational policies and practices in selected schools in Slovakia. In 2023, international study meetings of inclusive education experts and training courses were held in the field of educational policy making and the possibilities of supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

9. MESRS SR also participates in the project *ROMANI/PLURILINGUAL POLICY EXPERIMENTATION – Inclusion of Roma children in education – plurilingual approach (2022 – 2025)*. Slovenia, Greece and the Slovak Republic participate in the project. The aim of the pilot project is to create opportunities to raise the awareness of Roma and non-Roma pupils about the Roma language, culture and history and to create prerequisites for the teaching of the Roma language in primary schools on a more significant scale. The project's opening online conference took place in March 2022. In the 2022/2023 school year, several working meetings of the steering group in the Council of Europe were held and cooperation with representatives of schools in the Slovak Republic was coordinated.

⁸ <https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/ramcovy-dohovor-a-europska-charta/?csrt=17206844897107309282> (in Slovak)

⁹ <https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/tlacove-spravy/follow-up-seminar-o-mensinovych-pravach/?csrt=14454878882682763796> (in Slovak)

¹⁰ Note: In order to apply gender-inclusive language, wherever the masculine gender is used in the text of this report, the feminine gender is also meant.

C. PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION AND MEASURES TAKEN TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

10. CNMEG performs the function of a consultative body in matters of the participation of members of national minorities and ethnic groups in solving matters that concern them. CNMEG members represent national minorities and ethnic groups. Important activities of CNMEG include participation in the development of separate evaluation reports in the field of culture, education and the use of minority languages, which are submitted for approval to the Government Council.

11. CNMEG discusses information from the MFEA SR on the fulfilment of obligations arising from the Framework Convention. During the monitored period, CNMEG members were informed about the resolution of the CM of the Council of Europe on the Framework Convention in Slovakia and about the results of the fifth monitoring cycle (8 December 2022, 6 March 2023 and 20 September 2023). National minorities are also involved in the preparation of the sixth implementation report through their delegated representatives in CNMEG.

12. At its 50th session (20 September 2023), CNMEG approved a change in its statute, responding mainly to the recognition of the Vietnamese community living in the Slovak Republic as a national minority.¹¹ The change in the statute was also confirmed by the Government Council (September 28, 2023) by approving resolution no. 308. By changing the status, the Vietnamese national minority gained one mandate in the CNMEG minority chamber. In the context of the results of the population census in 2021, the number of representatives for the Rusyn minority changed from two to three representatives. There was also a change in the periodicity of the preparation of the CNMEG evaluation report from two years to three years.

13. The Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (hereinafter referred to as “RICPaP”) deals with the analysis of the impact of the counselling system transformation on a nationally mixed territory in cooperation with inclusion experts from national minorities.

D. ADDITIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

14. The Plenipotentiary for NM encourages the CNMEG members to inform about the results of monitoring and demand the exercise of their rights arising from the Framework Convention within their competencies. During the trips to regions and meetings, CNMEG informs about the obligations arising from the Framework Convention.

15. On 12 and 13 October 2023, the National Institute of Education and Youth (hereinafter referred to as “NIEY”) organized the conference “*Changes in teaching in national minority schools – national minority languages in education*” in cooperation with MESRS SR.¹² The conference aimed to acquaint the pedagogical and professional public with legislative and systemic changes in the education of national minorities and to discuss the issue of educational policies for national minorities in connection with the principles of inclusion. Representatives of all national minorities participated in the conference.

¹¹ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/28132/1> (in Slovak)

¹² <https://nivam.sk/pozvanka-na-konferenciu-zmeny-vo-vyucovani-v-narodnostnych-skolach-narodnostne-jazyky-vo-vzdelavani/> (in Slovak)

II. MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION AND THE FIFTH CYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION

Recommendation 1 – the institutional framework of the fight against discrimination: the Public Defender of Rights

To provide sufficient human and financial resources to the Public Defender of Rights to enable this institution to effectively pursue its function; to reinforce the Public Defender of Rights' independence in accordance with international standards; to pay increased attention and provide timely follow-up to Public Defender of Rights' decisions, reports and queries related to national minorities; and to extend its mandate to provide for legal standing in court proceedings and access to classified documents, and give the Public Defender access to accelerated proceedings before the Constitutional Court. The Public Defender's capacity to investigate cases of alleged police brutality should be strengthened.

16. The position of the Public Defender of Rights, including additional financial and human resources, was strengthened by the amendment to Act No. 564/2001 Coll. on the Public Defender of Rights of 15 March 2023.

17. Based on the amendment and subsequent ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Public Defender of Rights is authorized to make systematic visits to places where persons restricted on their liberty are or may be. In relation to other bodies performing the role of the national preventive mechanism (Commissioner for Children and Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities), it also fulfils a coordinating role. In connection with the amendment, an increase in the budget of approximately EUR 240,000 for 2023 and a recruitment of 6 more employees were approved.

18. In the legislative process, the Public Defender of Rights is also entitled to submit a petition for the amendment or repeal of the law to the competent authority. In the matter of compliance of legal regulations with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Constitution"), constitutional laws, or laws and international treaties, if the application of the given regulation may endanger human rights resulting from the international treaty, the Public Defender of Rights may file a motion to initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court. Public authorities are obliged to make available to the Public Defender of Rights all documents and files for inspection. If documents subject to a special regime are concerned, such as intelligence collected by the Slovak Information Service, access to them is limited and subject to special rules, e.g. need for security clearance.

Recommendation 2 – support of the culture of national minorities

To improve the efficiency of the mechanism for the support to national minority cultures, whilst taking into account the needs of numerically smaller national minorities and the diversity within national minorities, by simplifying grant application procedures, ensuring timely fund allocation and disbursement, and considering pluri-annual funding for regular minority projects.

Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities

19. The Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the "Fund") is one of the most important instruments for the implementation of the public

support policy in relation to the culture of national minorities in the Slovak Republic, and at the same time for the fulfilment of international obligations of the Slovak Republic in this field.

20. In the monitored period, the Fund published a schedule of calls for subsidy applications so that applicants could prepare in time. At the beginning of 2022, Calls for Subsidy Applications were announced, immediately after the approval of the Fund's Support Activity Structure for 2022 (11, 15 and 28 February 2022). The Fund published the first three calls for 2023 at the end of 2022 (2, 9 and 15 December 2022). The Fund announced also Call 4 (13 July 2023) due to the non-allocation of all financial resources within Calls 1 – 3.

21. In the *Fund's Support Activity Structure for 2023*, the Fund proposed several changes aimed at increasing the quality of projects, defining the supported activities more precisely, as well as at the smooth provision of subsidies. At the same time, the Fund took into account several requests from national minorities, including small minorities, which aimed at more accommodating approach to subsidy applicants/beneficiaries. In accordance with the *State Aid Scheme* provided in the Slovak Republic through the press fund, the operating costs necessary for the implementation of the project were included in eligible expenses for periodical printing.

22. In 2022, the Fund gradually began to manage the situation with the delay in the fulfilment of this mission caused, among others, by insufficient material and staff capacities of the Fund.

23. In this context, the Fund actively cooperated in the preparation of the amendment to Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the "Fund Act"). The amendment adopted in 2022 responds to the acute need to ensure sufficient financial capacities to cover staff and material capacities for the complete and systematic fulfilment of all missions of the Fund, thereby making its operation more efficient. The amendment to the Fund Act decreased the amount of the percentage that the Fund is obliged to use for support activities from 95% to 94% of its income, and increased the amount of the percentage that the Fund is authorized to use for its own operation from 5% to 6%. The amount of funds for the Fund's operation has thereby been increased by EUR 98,000, allowing to valorise the salaries of employees by 10% from July 2022, and ensure additional premises and material capacities of the Fund. For more information on the Fund Act, see part IV. (point 6) to the Report.

24. In 2023, the Fund has faced the consequences of inflation, which was also reflected in the area of project support, as the real volume or the range of activities within the supported projects at a nominal price decreased compared to the previous period. The increased contribution from 2022, which was expected to lead to the elimination of long-term underfinancing of the Fund, is therefore not sufficient to develop the Fund's capacities. The operation of the Fund was also negatively affected by several changes in related legislation.

25. In the context of the simplification of administrative procedures over the past years, there has been a significant reduction in the number of documents that the supported applicants are required to deliver to the Fund before signing the contract (from 7-8 documents to 2-3 documents, depending on the legal form of the applicant). The reduction of the administrative burden was made possible by the creation of public administration information systems (OverSi portal). If a relevant database is not created, or it is not possible to obtain a document from it for technical reasons, the Fund is entitled to request it directly from the applicants.

26. Following the recognition of the Vietnamese minority, the Fund currently cooperates in the preparation of the amendment of the Fund Act with the aim of legislatively adjusting the possibility of providing funds to support cultural and scientific activities also for the Vietnamese national minority.

27. Regarding the fulfilment of recommendation 2, the Plenipotentiary for NM discusses closely with representatives of national minorities, with the Ministry of Culture, but also with the Fund management. CNMEG regularly discusses the current state of financial support for national minority cultures and points out current challenges. In 2023, a working group was created to analyse challenges related to the provision of subsidies to promote the culture of national minorities and to streamline the implementation of the Fund Act. The Plenipotentiary for NM will continue to actively discuss the matter with the Act administrator, namely the MoC SR, as well as with CNMEG.

28. A special form of subsidy support in the area of the culture of the Roma community is provided by the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Slovak Government Office”), and the *Call for Subsidy Applications for the Support of Social and Cultural Needs and Solutions to Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Community for 2023* was announced on 7 July 2023.¹³ The Call administrator is the Plenipotentiary for RC. The available financial resources is EUR 650,000. Funds from the call can also be used to support artistic creation, cultural and sports activities. Municipalities, non-governmental organizations, registered social enterprises, church organizations and other eligible applicants can receive the subsidy.

29. In the area of national minority broadcasting, broadcasting time was divided between individual national minorities by Radio and Television of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as the “RTVS”) in the monitored period based on the results of the 2021 Population and Housing Census (hereinafter referred to as “2021 PHC”), according to the sum of the number of members of national minorities who stated their nationality on the first and second place. After recalculating the broadcasting time, RTVS doubled the broadcasting time for small national minorities so that the resulting time would enable the preparation of a sufficiently elaborated radio and television program.

Recommendation 3 – effective access to education

To promote inclusive and quality education of Roma children resolutely and without any further delay discontinuing school segregation and disproportionately high testing and diagnosing of special needs in Roma children to avoid their enrolment in low-standard programmes and “special schools”.

Strategy of Inclusive Education and Training

30. The MESRS SR has developed a Strategy of Inclusive Education and Training (hereinafter referred to as the “Inclusive Strategy”). Its output is action plans in three-year cycles. The first action plan consists of six areas: inclusive education and support measures; counselling system in education; desegregation in upbringing and education; debarrierization of the school environment; training and education of teaching and professional staff; destigmatization. The expected result of the implementation of the measures of the Inclusive Strategy is an inclusive education system that provides education to all children, pupils and students, with respect for individual characteristics and diverse educational needs; enabling

¹³ <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/dotacna-schema/vyzva-na-predkladanie-ziadosti-na-rok-2023/> (in Slovak)

maximum fulfilment of the potential and improvement of the current state in the field of education of all children, pupils and students without ethnic differences.

31. The MESRS SR deals with the issue of segregation in education and school desegregation within the framework of the *Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic*. More information on the plan can be found in point 52.

Amendment to the Education Act

32. On 9 May 2023, two new acts were adopted (Act No. 181/2023 Coll.¹⁴ and Act No. 182/2023 Coll.¹⁵) amending the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (hereinafter referred to as the “Education Act”)¹⁶.

33. Among other things, the adopted amendments introduced a legal right to a place in kindergarten for a child who has reached the age of three; a model of claimable support measures was developed, including their financing; the provision of support measures was linked with diagnostics in the transformed counselling and prevention system; the definition of segregation was introduced; the activity of a social worker in schools, who performs social diagnostics, counselling, consultations and other professional activities, was enacted. For more information on the Amendment, see part IV. (point 16) to the Report.

Methodological Document on School Desegregation

34. The MESRS SR published (2022) the Methodological Document on School Desegregation for founders and principals entitled *Together at one (school) desk*. The document represents the basic framework of measures and recommendations to be implemented in classes, schools, cities or regions. Currently, the Ministry of Education is preparing a second methodology on segregation. An expert working group has been created under the auspices of the Minister of Education on the given issue. Currently, the MESRS SR is preparing a proposal for a national project and a demand-oriented call aimed at creating the conditions for the launch of desegregation activities at the school level in selected locations in Slovakia. The national project will be implemented as part of the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*.

Innovative Education Programme

35. The Innovative Education Programme *Desegregation of the Educational System in the Conditions of Schools and School Facilities* is focused on the area of inclusive education aimed at desegregation in schools and school facilities. The Programme was approved on 30 May 2022. Currently, education is carried out in two educational groups. 48 teaching staff are involved in education.

Reform of the Counselling and Prevention System

36. The MESRS SR addresses the issue of high-level testing and diagnosis of special needs not only of Roma children as part of the Reform of the Counselling and Prevention System. The Ministry of Education is of the opinion that it is necessary to emphasize early diagnosis, intervention and counselling in the family and institutions in early childhood, because it leads to the elimination of cases of continuation in compulsory pre-primary education, prevention of failure in school education, forced exclusion to home education, as well as further social exclusion.

¹⁴ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2023/181/20230530.html> (in Slovak)

¹⁵ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2023/182/20230530.html> (in Slovak)

¹⁶ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2008/245/20230530.html> (in Slovak)

Modification and change of diagnostic procedures

37. RICPaP is currently revising and finalizing standards for the diagnosis of cognitive abilities, *Differential Diagnosis of Cognitive Abilities of Children from Socially Disadvantaged Environment*, and other professional and diagnostic procedures, methodical and methodological manuals focused on children and youth of Roma nationality. RICPaP also implements educational activities in the area of innovative psychodiagnostics and the implementation of a system of support measures.

38. The expected result of the above measures is a more objective psychodiagnosis; deviation from a one-time strict quantification of given intellectual performance in children from a socially disadvantaged environment (hereinafter referred to as “SDE”) / marginalized Roma communities (hereinafter referred to as “MRC”) under the standards for the majority population; emphasis on the qualitative analysis of the submitted intellectual performance; monitoring and control of the procedural aspect of the diagnosis of mental abilities and retraining and further education of experts (psychologists, special educators).

System of legally claimable support measures

39. In connection with the amendment to the Education Act, a system of legally claimable support measures will gradually be established (from 1 September 2023 to 1 September 2026). Entitlement to these measures is subject to gradual financial and personnel coverage and transfer to the state budget.

40. Support measures established in § 145a of the Education Act are intended to prevent segregation (and stigmatization). These are mainly the following measures: support for achieving school attendance entitlement; providing a course in the school's teaching language or learning the school's teaching language; providing tutoring; improving the conditions of education and training of pupils from SDE (including MRC); activities to support social inclusion; activities to support the prevention of dropping out of primary or secondary school; providing a teaching assistant in the classroom; ensuring self-service operations; ensuring the adjustment of school premises; removal of physical barriers in the premises of the school or school facility and organizational barriers in education and training; providing education and training based on modification of its goals, forms, methods and content and evaluation of results.

41. The implementation of the measure is mainly expected to change the attitudes of the majority towards MRC/SDE/children from generational poverty, including the pedagogical and professional public and the entire ecosystem of the school/school facility; active involvement of teaching and professional staff in the process of this change and active involvement of children's peers, pupils from MRC/SDE.

Action Plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2022-2024

42. In April 2021, the Slovak Government approved the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation by 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the “2030 Strategy”).¹⁷ The priority areas of the strategy include education; employment; housing; health; fighting anti-Roma racism and promoting participation. For more information on the 2030 Strategy, see part IV. (point 4) to the Report.

¹⁷ [Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation by 2030 | Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities \(gov.sk\)](#)

43. *Action plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2022-2024* (hereinafter referred to as “Action Plans”) were adopted by the Slovak Government in April 2022. Action plans define specific measures and activities in the priority areas of 2030 Strategy. In 2023, the *Monitoring Report on the Implementation of 2030 Strategy Action Plans for 2022* was published, including an external evaluation of the implementation of activities.¹⁸ In 2022, the methodological document *Evaluation and Monitoring of 2030 Strategy* was published.¹⁹ Together with the Action Plans, the *Methodological Document on the Calculation of Indicator Values* was also approved,²⁰ which is a manual for the calculation of the indicator values of the individual objectives of the 2030 Strategy. For more information on the Action Plans, see part IV. (point 5) to the Report.

44. The global objective of the 2030 Strategy under the *Education* priority area is to ensure equal access of Roma to quality education in mainstream education from birth to employment in the labour market by 2030, with emphasis on the application of desegregation and inclusive measures in the educational process at all levels of education. Activities have established measurable indicators, objectives, responsible and cooperating entities and funding sources.

45. The action plan in the *Education* priority area follows the global objective with six sub-objectives, namely:

- to improve the school results of children and pupils from MRC from early care to employment in the labour market;
- to increase the number and quality of pedagogical, professional and support staff in the education of children and pupils from MRC;
- to ensure sufficient capacities of kindergartens and primary schools with the presence of children and pupils from MRC;
- to systematically prevent, mitigate and eliminate segregation in the educational process at all levels of the educational system;
- to increase the inclusiveness of schools through systemic and methodical support for the individualization of the educational process;
- to develop the Roma national identity and support the exercise of the rights of Roma as a national minority, with special focus on language rights.

Recovery and Resilience Plan Technical Support

46. As part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic (Component 6: Availability, development and quality of inclusive education: Reform 1), Slovakia is committed to making pre-primary education available to all children in Slovakia whose parents request it. This commitment is linked to the amendment to the Education Act, introducing mandatory pre-primary education for children aged 5 and over. From 2025, the right to admission to pre-primary education in kindergarten will be effective gradually for children from 3 years of age. The objective of *Component 7: Education for the 21st century: Investment 2* is to expand the capacities of primary schools in districts without optimal access to education (two-shift operation of schools).

¹⁸ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie/?csrt=9913070590678906042> (in Slovak)

¹⁹ [Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation by 2030 | Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities \(gov.sk\)](https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/strategie/strategia-pre-rovnost-inkluziu-a-participaciu-romov-do-roku-2030/?csrt=16788443962639690320)

²⁰ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/strategie/strategia-pre-rovnost-inkluziu-a-participaciu-romov-do-roku-2030/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

47. From 24 February 2023, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (hereinafter referred to as the “Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC”) has been cooperating with the MESRS SR within the framework of the above components of the *Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic* as an intermediary/provider of technical support. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC mainly provides consultations and technical support to applicants for participation in calls; is responsible for the methodology and for assessing compliance with the *3D Principles*²¹ (principles of desegregation, destigmatization and deghettoization); participating in the implementation of projects and ensuring the coordination and cooperation in the regions within the scope of its territorial competence and others.

Analytical documents and studies of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC

48. In July 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC published the *Analysis of the Existence and Functioning of Double-Shift Operations and Capacities of Primary Schools in the 2021 School Year*.²² Double-shift operations are a long-term phenomenon in Slovak education – in this system, two shifts alternate in the classroom, with one having an educational process in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Several problems with this method of education and their impacts were identified in the analysis. The analysis was shared at several professional conferences²³ and with the MESRS SR.

49. In the second half of 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC published the *Analysis of Absences and Measures to Reduce Absences from Compulsory School Attendance*.²⁴ The analysis addressed the impact of frequent student absences on their academic results and further employment on the labour market. Its conclusions, together with a draft legislative amendment, were shared at a professional conference with the MESRS SR.

50. At the beginning of 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC published a study by an external entity – *Thematic Survey Aimed at Identifying Successful Tools of Inclusive Education at Various Levels of Education*.²⁵ The study presented the results of qualitative research aimed at identifying successful inclusive education tools implemented in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Slovakia.

51. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC works closely with the European Commission on the development of an *Analysis of the Possibilities of Transporting Pupils by Bus in the Slovak Environment, Focusing on Localities with the Presence of Marginalized Roma Communities*. The output of this initiative will be a basis that can be used in the development of policies, strategies and plans for the elimination of segregated education in the Slovak Republic with specific data from the Slovak environment.

Working Group on Desegregation

52. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RM actively participates within the *expert working group on desegregation* under the supervision of the MESRS SR, with the participation of

²¹https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1757/metodicky_vyklad_pre_efektivne_uplatnovanie_principov_v_desegregacie-degetoizacie_a_destigmatizacie_vo_vyzvach_progr.pdf?csrt=4024249506122242269 (in Slovak)

²²https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1135/analyza_existencie_a_fungovania_dvozmennych_prevadzok_a_kapacit_zs_v_sk.pdf?csrt=4024249506122242269 (in Slovak)

²³ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/konferencia-2023-na-ludoch-zalezi/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

²⁴ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/dokumenty/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

²⁵<https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/zber-a-analyza-dat/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

representatives of the Ministry and its organizations and representatives of the academic and non-governmental sectors. The goal is to coordinate the development of policies, strategies and plans aimed at preventing school segregation and actively desegregating schools.

Whole-of-Government Platform for Early Care

53. One of the main activities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC include the *support of quality early care* available for children in Slovakia. In November 2022, the Office organized an international professional conference²⁶, the outputs of which included the exchange of good practice and the creation of the basis of a platform for coordinating cooperation in this area. The Office continued this activity in 2023. Pursuant to the 2023 Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Office was assigned the administration role for the creation of the *Whole-of-Government Platform for Early Care* with a special focus on marginalized communities. The activity is aimed at developing a platform for individual early care providers and mutual coordination of activities.

Grant Scheme to Support Early Care and Early Intervention

54. On 17 July 2023, the MESRS SR announced the *Grant Scheme to Support Early Care and Early Intervention for Children Aged 0-6, in particular from Marginalized Roma Communities and Generational Poverty*²⁷ (hereinafter referred to as the “Grant Scheme”) based on the implementation of the Slovakia's *Recovery and Resilience Plan*.

55. The Grant Scheme is mainly aimed at supporting early care services and activities in MRC and in the environment of multi-generational poverty by engaging early care assistants to work with families, help develop children's cognitive and motor skills and prepare them to enter formal pre-primary education. The call emphasizes the involvement of people directly from the communities, who know the language and local conditions. For the years 2023-2026, EUR 6,263,520 is allocated to the Grant Scheme. As part of the Grant Scheme, a call is also announced for non-governmental organizations entitled *Support for the provision of early care and early intervention to children aged 0 to 6 from the environment of MRC and generational poverty*.

INSCHOOL initiative

56. See point 8 for more information on the initiative.

A cycle of television programs for Roma children

57. At the end of 2022, RTVS broadcast a cycle of television programs for Roma children with difficult access to education during the quarantine due to a lack of IT equipment. The programs were broadcast until the end of June 2022.

Observance of the principle of equal treatment

58. In its *Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2022*²⁸, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as the “National Centre”) identified several specific violation of human rights in Slovakia in the context of the right to education of Roma children. The National Centre focused on the issue of Roma children education in the special education system, efforts to prepare and enact a legal definition of segregation, access to inclusive education, implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination

²⁶ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/archiv-tlacovych-sprav/usvrk-organizoval-konferenciu-o-systematickom-pristupe-k-ranej-starostlivosti-pre-deti-na-slovensku/?csrt=2427392914380078556> (in Slovak)

²⁷ <https://www.minedu.sk/grantova-schema-na-podporu-ranej-starostlivosti-a-intervencie/> (in Slovak)

²⁸ <https://www.snsip.sk/wp-content/uploads/HR-Report-2022.pdf>

of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter referred to as “CERD”) and specific segregation practices in schools.

59. In 2022, based on warnings from the State School Inspectorate regarding segregation practices against Roma children, the National Centre carried out several independent investigations and monitoring of the situation at selected primary schools.²⁹ At the same time, the National Centre actively contributes to the elimination of segregation practices by issuing recommendations and consulting with the affected schools. Regarding the inclusive education of Roma children, the National Centre recommends to the Government, among other things: (a) to adopt a legal definition of segregation as a form of discrimination through an amendment to the anti-discrimination act; (b) to fulfil the desegregation objectives of the reform of Component 6 of the *Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic*; (c) to impose an obligation on municipalities to take into account the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of its territory or part of it when determining the school district; and (d) to impose an obligation to ensure the integrated education of pupils with disabilities.³⁰

60. As part of advocacy activities towards international human rights bodies, the National Centre reported in July 2022 on the right of Roma pupils to education in its submission in response to the *13th Periodic Report of Slovakia to the CERD*.³¹ In its report, it provided information on the issue of segregation of Roma children in education, including in schools attended exclusively by Roma children, in special schools or in separate classes.

61. The National Centre also addressed the right of Roma children with disabilities to inclusive education. It identified as the main obstacle in this area that the maintenance of a parallel education system in special schools for children with disabilities (Roma and non-Roma) is often justified in favour of children with disabilities and is not considered as their segregation. In its report, the National Centre also addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and distance education on the education of Roma students.³²

62. In June 2023, the National Centre submitted the *Alternative Report on the Implementation of the European Social Charter*. In the context of the right of Roma children and pupils to education, it reported on the continued segregation of Roma children and youth in education, the segregation of children with disabilities, the lack of education materials in the language of national minorities, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and distance education on Roma children, and the bullying of children and youth in schools.³³

Recommendation 4 – effective participation in socio-economic life: access to health care

To investigate cases of forced sterilisation of Roma women and compensate without further delay women who have undergone forced sterilisation.

Apology from the Slovak Government for sterilisation of women in violation of the law

63. On 24 November 2021, the Slovak Government officially apologized to the victims of sterilisation by approving the government document: *Apology from the Slovak Government for sterilisation of women in violation of the law*. The Slovak Government apologized for cases of sterilisations and violations of human rights (especially) of Roma women in the years 1966-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/CERD_submission_SNCHR_final.pdf

³² <https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/HR-Report-2022.pdf>

³³ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/European-Social-Charter-Submission_SNCHR-1.pdf

1989 and 1990-2004, and identified the practices at that time as inadmissible and a violation of human rights.

64. In the document, the Slovak Government: *“regrets the situation in which women found themselves in connection with sterilisations in violation of the law. The Government finds the practices of the previous regime in the years 1966-1989 related to the reproductive behaviour of women from socially disadvantaged backgrounds inadmissible. The Government condemns sterilisations as a means of regulating the birth rate of socially weaker strata, carried out mainly among Roma women. We consider regulating the number of children to be an interference with personal integrity and perceive it as an interference with human rights.” ... “Similar manipulative procedures are inadmissible and violate human rights and freedoms and democratic principles, to which the Slovak Republic is committed. It is regrettable that sterilisation practices in violation of the law also occurred in the years 1990-2004, when again, especially in relation to Roma women, illegal interventions often occurred.” ... “The Government condemns violation of human rights of affected women and apologizes for sterilisations in violation of the law”.*³⁴

Working group of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic

65. The Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MoJ SR”) together with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “MoH SR”) established a working group beyond the scope of individual compensations in accordance with the judgments of the ECtHR in order to examine the circumstances under which sterilisations could be carried out in the affected periods, as well as the possibility of financial compensation to the affected women. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC also participated in the activities of the working group. In April 2022, the working group was expanded to include representatives of other ministries, as well as members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “NC SR”). The working group presented a legislative proposal that would allow determining the range of victims, proof of entitlement and the amount of compensation.

Legislative proposal of the Act on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilized in Violation of the Law

66. In March 2023, the MoJ SR submitted the legislative proposal of the Act on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilized in Violation of the Law to the interdepartmental comment procedure. The legislative proposal included a one-time compensation in the amount of EUR 5,000 to “to a natural person who underwent sterilization in the period from 01.07.1966 to 31.12.2004 in a medical facility in the territory of the Slovak Republic in violation of the law”.

Bill on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilized in Violation of the Law

67. In April 2023, the member of the NC SR (Peter Pollák) presented a bill on financial compensation to women sterilized in violation of the law for the deliberations of the NC SR. The bill included an adjustment to the amount of one-time compensation (EUR 5,000); range of eligible persons; definition of sterilisation in violation of the law; burden of proof; ministry responsible for deciding on the award of compensation (MoH SR); deadlines for submitting an application for compensation and institutions responsible for providing assistance to persons when submitting applications for one-time financial compensation (MoH SR, the Plenipotentiary for RC, Legal Assistance Centre and labour offices). However, due to the end of the NC SR meeting, the bill was discussed only in the 1st reading.

³⁴ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/26642/1> (in Slovak)

68. The MoJ SR submitted to the Legislative Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic a new material entitled "Draft of the legislative intent of the Act on mitigating the consequences caused by sterilization victims in the years 1966 to 2004", which, however, did not go any further in the legislative process.³⁵

Monitoring, reporting and advocacy activities of the National Centre

69. In 2022 and 2023, the National Centre made significant efforts in the area of monitoring, reporting and advocacy activities with the aim of strengthening access to justice and remedies for Roma women who were victims of forced sterilisation. The National Centre reported on the issue of forced sterilisations of Roma women as part of its alternative reports on Slovakia addressed to the UN committees – the CERD in July 2022,³⁶ the UN Committee against Torture in March 2023,³⁷ the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in April 2023³⁸ and the UN Human Rights Committee in August 2023³⁹. The National Centre also participated in online negotiations with the relevant UN committees when reviewing the reports of the Slovak Republic and provided them with additional information.

70. The National Centre provided recommendations on bills on one-time financial compensation to victims. Welcoming the legislative initiatives in question, the National Centre addressed several important comments and recommendations in relation to the proposed compensation mechanism.⁴⁰ The National Centre also sent a letter⁴¹ to the NC SR members before the second reading of the bill.⁴²

Recommendation 5 – effective participation in socio-economic life: access to housing

To implement coherent and sustainable housing policy measures for persons belonging to the Roma national minority in line with the goals of the national housing policy and relevant governmental strategies aimed at inter alia eliminating spatial segregation of Roma communities. The authorities should evaluate these policies and strategies in order to assess their impact on the housing conditions of Roma, in consultation with those concerned.

71. Although the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the "MoT SR") is the central authority responsible for the development and implementation of housing policy under the Competence Act, the 2030 Strategy, setting whole-of-government tasks in the area of housing, is a fundamental document for improving the housing situation of Roma. The *Action Plan for the Housing Area* adopted for the 2030 Strategy contains more than 50 measures, of which only 3 fall under the responsibility of the MoT SR.

72. The MoT SR is involved in the Recommendation 5 mainly through housing policy measures. In the Slovak Republic, the citizens bear the primary responsibility for providing their own housing. The goals and priorities of the national housing policy are defined in the framework document *Housing Policy of the Slovak Republic by 2030*.

³⁵ <https://hsr.rokovania.sk/365922023-/?csrt=14288586132782201838> (in Slovak)

³⁶ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/CERD_submission_SNCHR_final.pdf

³⁷ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/CAT_submission_SNCHR.pdf

³⁸ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/CEDAW_submission_SNCHR.pdf

³⁹ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/CCPR_submission_SNCHR.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2023/64/pripomienky/zobraz> (in Slovak)

⁴¹ https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/list_poslancom.pdf (in Slovak)

⁴² <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/zakon&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&CPT=1593> (in Slovak)

73. In accordance with objectives of the national housing policy, a system of supportive economic instruments for housing development, differentiated according to the social situation of those interested in housing, has been created in Slovakia. The support system consists of a combination of subsidies under Act No. 443/2010 Coll. on Subsidies for Housing Development and a preferential loan from the State Housing Development Fund. In 2022, the MoT SR provided subsidies for the procurement of rental apartments intended for social housing in 37 municipalities in the total amount of EUR 15,365,720, supporting the procurement of 673 apartments. At the same time, the MoT SR provided subsidies for the procurement of technical equipment in 35 municipalities in the total amount of EUR 1,309,540 for 649 apartments. In 2023, the MoT SR registered an application from 38 municipalities for support for 716 apartments in the total amount of EUR 18,868,030. The application evaluation process is currently ongoing.

Action Plan in the Housing priority area

74. The global goal of 2030 Strategy in the *Housing* priority area is the Elimination of inequalities between members of the MRC and the majority population of Slovakia in housing and the fight against Roma discrimination in access to housing, including the elimination of residential segregation.

75. The action plan in the *Housing* priority area follows the global goal of 2030 Strategy, with six sub-goals: to reduce the number of illegal dwellings in MRC; to improve access and use of basic technical infrastructure and civic amenities in MRC; to increase the quality of housing in MRC; to increase the housing security of Roma; to reduce residential segregation of Roma; to reduce discrimination against Roma in housing. For more information on the Action Plans, see point 43 and part IV. (point 5) to the Report.

Amendment to the Act on Land Arrangements

76. In 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC participated in the preparation of acts amending Act No. 330/1991 Coll. on land arrangements, land ownership arrangements, land offices, land fund and land communities.⁴³ The amendments were adopted with the aim of increasing the economy and efficiency of proceedings on simple land arrangements; to equalize municipalities that are not required to have a spatial plan/do not have it updated with municipalities that are required to have a spatial plan and to simplify the administrative apparatus for municipalities with the aim of settling land and the course of simple land arrangements.

National Project Support for Land Settlement in Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities

77. In the monitored period, the implementation of the National Project Support for Support for Land Settlement in Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities⁴⁴ (hereinafter referred to as “NP LS”) continued (October 2016 – August 2023). The project was implemented by the Slovak Government Office – the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC within the Human Resources Operational Program.⁴⁵ The primary goal of the project was to settle land in dwellings and thus achieve better living conditions for MRC. Another goal was for MRC to obtain a legal title to the land under the dwelling, or for the municipality to be able

⁴³ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1991/330/20230201> (in Slovak)

⁴⁴ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

⁴⁵ <https://www.crp.gov.sk/podpora-vysporiadania-pravných-vztahov-k-pozemkom-v-obciach-s-prítomnosťou-marginalizovaných-romských-komunit/> (in Slovak)

to implement measures in the settlement that would contribute to the improvement of hygiene standards of MRC.

78. NP SLS was carried out as a pilot project in 148 municipalities selected using an agreed methodology⁴⁶ from the municipalities listed in the *Atlas of Roma Communities 2013*.⁴⁷ As of July 2023, there was a partial settlement/transfer of land in 20 municipalities. At the same time, up to 801 dwellings were registered in the process of land settlement and another 87 with the completed land settlement process, i.e. for which a purchase or rental agreement was concluded. Other land settlement processes are ongoing as it is a long-term and difficult process.

National Project Assistance to Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities in Land Settlement under Dwellings

79. Pursuant to the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC continues the specified activities related to the land settlement through the National Project Assistance Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities in Land Settlement under Dwellings (hereinafter referred to as “NP A-LS”).⁴⁸ The National Project is planned for the period from September 2023 to August 2026. Compared to the previous project, NP A-LS⁴⁹ focuses on strengthening the internal personnel project capacities and the capacities of district offices with the aim of speeding up and streamlining the process of simple land arrangements.

Programme Slovakia 2021-2027

80. Under the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*, a specific goal is set within the Policy Objective 4 – *A more social Europe: Promoting the socio-economic inclusion of marginalized communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups, including persons with special needs, through integrated actions including housing and social services*. It defines key activities related to housing policy – self-help construction of dwellings and other improved forms of housing, civil and technical infrastructure in municipalities with MRC, access to drinking water and support for the construction of a sewage network, etc. See points 87 to 89 for more information on the Programme.

Thematic Survey – Comprehensive Evaluation of Housing Support Programmes in the MRC Environment

81. The aim of the comprehensive external evaluation of housing support programs in the MRC environment, including the evaluation of support from structural funds, is to collect available quantitative indicators of supported projects for the period 2007-2021 and then to prepare a qualitative analysis of projects implemented in the programme period 2014-2020 (with an overlap to 2021). The survey will help to establish national housing policies, and its conclusions are expected to be published in the fall of 2023.

Manual for municipalities

82. The MoT SR, in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC and other partners, developed a manual for municipalities *Recommendations for municipalities in the*

⁴⁶ <https://www.minv.sk/?programove-dokumenty-1> (in Slovak)

⁴⁷ https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/atlas_rom-kom.pdf (in Slovak)

⁴⁸ <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-asistencia-obciam-s-pritomnostou-marginalizovanych-romskych-komunit-pri-usporiadani-pravnych-vztahov-k-pozemkom/> (in Slovak)

⁴⁹ Ibid. (in Slovak)

*selection of tenants and the allocation of rental apartments intended for social housing.*⁵⁰ The aim of the publication is to offer municipalities guidance on how to approach the development of local housing policy and how to specify appropriate criteria and procedures for the allocation of rental apartments intended for social housing.

III. ADDITIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION PER INDIVIDUAL ARTICLES

ARTICLE 3

2021 Population and Housing Census

83. In the 2021 PHC, the possibility to select another nationality was introduced for the first time. After the announcement of the 2021 PHC results, the Plenipotentiary for NM noted positive impact of this change for all national minorities in Slovakia. In June 2022, based on the proposal of the Plenipotentiary for NM, the Government approved the Proposal for the 2021 Population and Housing Census Results Interpretation Regarding the Nationality and Another Nationality. The Government approved the 2021 Population and Housing Census Results Interpretation Regarding the Nationality and Another Nationality as the sum of both nationality categories, being equivalent.

84. In accordance with the resolution on the document of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM, the head of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic prepared and submitted to the Slovak Government a new implementing regulation for Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Act on Minority Languages”). In January 2023, the Slovak Government adopted a new Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 35/2023 Coll., issuing a list of municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 15% of the population (hereinafter referred to as “Regulation No. 35/2023 Coll.”). Regulation No. 35/2023 Coll. reflects on the 2021 PHC results, the interpretation of two questions on nationality and the amendment to the Act on Minority Languages, according to which parts of municipalities must be marked with traffic signs also in the languages of national minorities. The result is an increase in the number of minority municipalities by a total of 125 new municipalities (of which two national minorities reached at least 15% of the population in 4 municipalities). In 28 municipalities that are already in the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 15% of the population, 1 more national minority was added.

Results of the 2021 Population and Housing Census from the point of view of municipalities where citizens belonging to a national minority make up at least 15%

Table no. 1: An overview of added municipalities under the 2021 PHC where citizens belonging to a national minority make up at least 15%

REGION	MUNICIPALITIES per national minority			
	Hungarian	Roma	Rusyn	German
Trnava	2	1	0	0
Nitra	2	0	0	0

⁵⁰ <https://www.mindop.sk/ministerstvo-1/vystavba-5/bytova-politika/aktuality/vzory-ziadosti-1512> (in Slovak)
<https://www.mindop.sk/ministerstvo-1/vystavba-5/bytova-politika/legislativa/metodicke-umernenia/prirucka-pre-samospravy-odporucania-pre-samospravu-pri-vybere-najomcov-a-pridelovani-najomnych-bytov-urcenych-na-socialne-byvanie> (in Slovak)

Banská Bystrica	1	16	0	0
Košice	0	15	0	0
Prešov	0	31	87	1
Žilina	0	1	0	0

Source: The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM

Table no. 2: The total number of municipalities where citizens belonging to a national minority make up at least 15%

REGION	MUNICIPALITIES per national minority				
	Hungarian	Roma	Rusyn	Ukrainian	German
Bratislava	15	0	0	0	0
Trnava	89	1	0	0	0
Nitra	154	0	0	0	0
Banská Bystrica	148	21	0	0	1
Košice	111	37	3	0	0
Prešov	0	61	152	18	1
Žilina	0	1	0	0	0

Source: The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM

EU SILC MRC 2020

85. The EU SILC_MRC sample survey is carried out in cooperation between the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC and the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “SO SR”). The EU_SILC_MRC_2020 survey was carried out at the end of 2020. An analytical report from the survey was published in 2022.⁵¹ More than 1,000 households in 70 municipalities were included in the basic representative sample. In cooperation with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, this sample was increased by an additional 250 Roma integrated households, thus ensuring the representativeness of the survey for the Roma population in Slovakia in general.

Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic – “Only together can we face the challenges of the 21st century”

86. Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic – “Only together can we face the challenges of the 21st century”⁵² consists of several sections related to MRC support. See part IV. (point 15) to the Report for more information.

Programme Slovakia 2021-2027

87. In July 2022, the *Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic for the years 2021-2027*⁵³ was approved, establishing the principles for drawing EU funds in the following programme period. Following the Partnership Agreement, the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*⁵⁴ was approved on 22 November 2022, containing specific measures and activities aimed directly at supporting the MRC inclusion.

88. Under the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*, EUR 907 million was allocated from the total allocation for the Slovak Republic (almost EUR 13 billion) to address the most serious challenges of MRC across several areas:

⁵¹ https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/eu-silc_mrkc/?csrt=16788443962639690320 (in Slovak)

⁵² https://www.vlada.gov.sk/share/uvsr/vlada/pvvsr_odpocet.pdf?csrt=2958044886289861047 (in Slovak)

⁵³ <https://eurofondy.gov.sk/fondy-eu/partnerska-dohoda-sr-na-roky-2021-2027/> (in Slovak)

⁵⁴ https://www.eurofondy.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/221115_PSK_Final.pdf (in Slovak)

- EUR 75 mil. for the construction of drinking water supply infrastructure, waste water removal and removal of waste landfills, in particular;
- EUR 30.5 mil. for the construction and modernization of roads and pavements in MRC settlements;
- EUR 801.5 mil. for activities improving the quality and accessibility of education, employment and employability of vulnerable groups, social infrastructure, housing standards, healthcare or strengthening Roma and pro-Roma civil society and participation in public policies at the local and national level, in particular.

89. Since November 2022, the Slovak Government has been the central state administration body for coordinating the implementation of the MRC inclusion⁵⁵. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC, as a designated independent organizational unit of the Slovak Government, will act as an intermediate body (IB) for the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027* and be responsible for the implementation of the relevant sections of the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027* dedicated to Roma communities (a total of approx. EUR 399 million). The remaining part of the allocation is under the responsibility of other central state administration bodies, in particular the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “MoLSAF SR”), the MESRS SR and MoH SR. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC also fulfils the tasks of the NRCP (National Roma Contact Point).

Action plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2022-2024

90. Action plans of the 2030 Strategy also relate to the implementation of Article 3 of the Framework Convention. See point 43 and part IV. (point 5) to the Report for more information.

ARTICLE 4

91. The Institute for Healthcare Analyses (MoH SR) actively cooperates with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC within the *Action Plan for the Health priority area* in the 2030 Strategy. The aim of the cooperation is to develop a methodology for measuring health disparities between marginalized communities and the general population. See points 231 and 232 for more information.

Recommendation 6 – legal framework of the fight against discrimination

To prioritise attention to minority rights as an integral part of human rights and to ensure effective, coherent, and sustainable interinstitutional co-ordination and approach on all issues pertaining to minority rights, in close consultation with national minority representatives.

92. The Slovak Republic has a national law on equal treatment and prohibition of discrimination regulated in several legal regulations of various legal force. Act No. 365/2004 on equal treatment in certain areas and on protection against discrimination (hereinafter referred to as the “Anti-Discrimination Act”) constitute a more detailed law on equality and the prohibition of discrimination.

Basic goals and measures in the area of equality

93. The *National Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities in the Slovak Republic for the years 2021-2027* (hereinafter referred to as the “Equality

⁵⁵ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/334/20221101> (in Slovak)

Strategy”) and its implementation document *Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities for the years 2021-2027* (hereinafter referred to as “Equality AP”) is the strategic framework document for the implementation of the policy of equality between women and men in the Slovak Republic.

94. The aim of the Equality Strategy is to achieve a just society where material equality is achieved, without all forms of discrimination, violence and any harmful practices. The tasks of the Equality AP relate to the Equality Strategy operational objectives. The Equality AP defines tasks and actors responsible for their fulfilment in the following strategic areas:

- Dignity and bodily integrity;
- Reconciliation of family and work life;
- Education, science and research;
- Equal opportunities and access to the labour market, economic dependence and poverty of women;
- Political and economic participation in decision-making;
- Ensuring a participatory mechanism for the promotion of equality between women and men and institutional provision of equality between women and men;
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups and multiple discrimination against women and minor children/girls;
- International development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

95. The *National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for the years 2022-2027* (hereinafter referred to as the “NAP”) is a binding strategic document of the Slovak Government, which defines the direction of public policies at the level of priorities with the aim of achieving a visible change in the area of prevention and elimination of violence against women. The NAP is already the fourth strategic framework document in this area and represents the implementation document of specific tasks in four priority areas:

- Protection of women experiencing violence and their children;
- Prevention of violence against women;
- Integrated policies and data collection;
- Effective penalties for violence against women.

96. The *National Action Plan for Women's Employment for the years 2022-2030* (hereinafter referred to as the “Employment NAP”) is the first action plan of the Slovak Republic in the field of women's employment. The measures proposed there are aimed at mitigating inequalities between women and men, strengthening the economic independence and economic status of women, mitigating income differences between women and men so that the Slovak Republic gets as close as possible to the EU average, and also at creating societal conditions for improving the reconciliation of family and work life. The Employment NAP also responds to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, as well as to the situation caused by the war in Ukraine and the influx of refugees, especially women and children, in the Slovak Republic.

Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the years 2021-2025

97. Based on the Plenipotentiary for NM proposal, the SR government updated the *Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the years 2021-2025* (hereinafter referred to as the “2021-2025 Action Plan”). The document builds on tasks from the previous action plan, reflects current tasks in this area, as well as proposed tasks that are under the responsibility of the relevant ministries. The Action

Plan was prepared in a participatory manner in cooperation with CNMEG. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM is the main administrator of the Action Plan and, together with the administrators of individual activities and measures, proposes the procedure for their implementation. The implementation of the 2021-2025 Action Plan is managed by the Coordinating Council composed of representatives of the state administration and the SNCHR.

98. As part of the fulfilment of the Operational Objective 1: *Comprehensive legislative and institutional protection of the rights and status of national minorities*, the Plenipotentiary for NM established working groups with which it cooperated for a long time in the development of legislative documents, which must be developed pursuant to the *Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2022* under the *Manifesto of the Slovak Government for the years 2021-2024*. The development of the document therefore took place with the participation of representatives of the relevant ministries, national minorities and the professional public.

99. The implementation of the Operational Objective 4: *Improving the conditions for the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice* is closely related to the activity of the advisory group of the Plenipotentiary for NM for ensuring the alignment of practice with the applicable act on the use of languages of national minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “language advisory group”). The language advisory group consists of five independent subgroups: for Hungarian, Romani, Rusyn, Ukrainian and German languages. The Plenipotentiary for NM renewed the mandate of the language advisory group in the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2024. For more information on the 2021-2025 Action Plan, see part IV. (point 3) to the Report.

Recommendation 7 – legal framework of the fight against discrimination

To increase efforts to raise awareness of the anti-discrimination legislative framework amongst members of national minorities and groups most subject to discriminatory attitudes and intensify efforts to effectively protect them from discrimination in all spheres of life. In this respect, authorities should further improve the free legal aid system for the most vulnerable.

100. In the monitored period, there were no legislative amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act or specific modification of temporary equalizing measures (hereinafter referred to as “TEM”). As part of the cooperation between the MoJ SR and the Plenipotentiary for NM, the Anti-Discriminatory Act was translated and published in the Hungarian and Romani languages.⁵⁶

Slovak National Centre for Human Rights

101. Free legal aid in anti-discrimination cases continues to be available through the National Centre, which has the competence of an entity for equal treatment as well as a national institution for human rights. In March 2023, the amendment to Act No. 308/1993 Coll. on the establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights was approved, explicitly determining that the National Centre prepares and publishes independent reports and recommendations on issues related to discrimination. The role of the National Centre is also strengthened by increasing its annual budget and increasing the number of employees (since 2018, the budget has been increased from approx. EUR 565,000 to EUR 870,000 in 2022 and the number of employees from 16 to 25). The National Centre also implements educational activities focusing on discrimination.

⁵⁶ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy-v-jazyku-narodnostnych-mensin> (in minority languages)

102. In the monitored period, the National Centre received complaints objecting to the violation of the rights of national minorities (1) and nationality-based discrimination (16). The National Centre also issued an expert opinion on the segregation of Roma pupils in the field of education. As part of its activities, it also carried out regular independent monitoring of Roma segregation in selected primary schools. In the monitored period, the National Centre issued an expert statement on the indirect discrimination of Roma children based on the act⁵⁷ and implemented numerous educational activities focused on the topic of non-discrimination and human rights for various target groups.

103. At the initiative of the Plenipotentiary for NM, the *Concept of the Activity of the Legal Aid Centre for the years 2022-2024* was expanded and approved by the Slovak Government in September 2022 to include the need to provide information on free legal aid for representatives of national minorities in their language, or the need to provide translations of the documents of the Legal Aid Centre (hereinafter referred to as the “Centre”) into the languages of national minorities and to increase the language competence of the Centre's employees. To ensure these goals, the Centre was provided with full cooperation by the Plenipotentiary for NM.

104. The Plenipotentiary for NM has long been trying to promote bilingualism in areas where communication in the minority language is particularly necessary and does not expose vulnerable groups to additional barriers. Regulation No. 35/2023 Coll. territorially expanded the use of minority languages or fundamentally strengthened it for the Rusyn and Roma national minorities. For more information on the Slovak Government Regulation, see point 84.

105. During the refugee crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, the Plenipotentiary for NM also worked closely with the relevant authorities and provided translations to prevent crime and endangerment of refugees. The Plenipotentiary for NM also worked closely with the Department of Crime Prevention of the MoI SR.

Case-law of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic

106. We consider the judgement of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, file number 5Cdo/102/2020, in the case of segregation of Roma children in the Podsadek Primary School in Stará Ľubovňa to be an important development in national case-law. In 2015, the Counselling Centre for Civil and Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as “Counselling Centre”) filed a lawsuit regarding the segregation of Roma children in the Podsadek Primary School in Stará Ľubovňa. In the court proceedings, it objected that the municipality and responsible state authorities violate the principle of equal treatment, domestic and international legislation on protection against discrimination by failing to take sufficient measures to protect against discrimination and measures to eliminate the segregation of Roma children. The Counselling Centre objected that the expansion of the school's capacity is unsystematic and only maintains the segregation of Roma children in schools, which for a long time are attended only by socially disadvantaged children from the adjacent Roma community and equal access to education for these children is not ensured.

107. In the decision of 15 December 2022, file number 5Cdo/102/2020, the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic determined that the Slovak Republic violated the principle of equal treatment by failing to take sufficient preventive measures to protect against discrimination and measures to eliminate discrimination against Roma children in Podsadek Primary School in Stará Ľubovňa based on their ethnic origin. In the decision, the Court stated that the construction of a new building in the Podsadek campus increased the capacity of the primary

⁵⁷ [OV-Nepriama-diskriminacia-romskych-deti-v-socialnej-oblasti.pdf](#) (snslp.sk) (in Slovak)

school (in order to improve the accessibility of the school closest to the children's place of residence), but at the same time, Roma children were in fact separated from children of the majority community. The Court stated that this conclusion is not affected by the lack of an intention to purposefully discriminate against Roma children or by the existence of a legitimate goal to ensure access to education for children closest to their place of residence. According to the Court, the construction of a new building is an unreasonable and inappropriate means of achieving the goal of school closeness, as it disadvantages the persons concerned by *de facto* segregating them.

108. Furthermore, the Court stated in the decision that the state, in cooperation with the municipality, must take effective measures (through legislative initiatives, the creation of stimulating conditions, as well as the creation of school districts) in order to prevent segregation, not just passively sit back and refer to the vague, often wrong the interpreted diction of the act. The Court identified the best interest of the child as a determining factor in each procedure and emphasized that it is in the interest of the entire society that also children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds become full-fledged members of society, to which desegregation efforts in school education contribute significantly.

Subsidy scheme of the MoJ SR for the promotion, support and protection of human rights and freedoms and for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance

109. Within the framework of the *subsidy scheme for the promotion, support and protection of human rights and freedoms and for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance*, the MoJ SR continued to support projects focused on increasing tolerance, preventing extremism, and supporting human rights education or research related to equality and discrimination. Each year, approximately EUR 770,000 is allocated from the state budget for the subsidy scheme.

110. In 2022, projects focused, for example, on research into the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the quarantine of Roma settlements; prevention of hate speech in the school environment; support for the education of educators in the area of cultural diversity; increasing the literacy of Roma women from generational poverty and preventing xenophobia, racism and hatred. In 2023, projects aimed at presenting positive examples and role models of persons belonging to the Roma minority were supported (e.g. Roma Spirit 2023); prevention of extremist expressions; human rights education and information about the programme in Pobedim, for the development of tools to fight prejudice and discrimination.

Subsidy scheme of the MoLSAF SR to support equality between women and men and equal opportunities

111. Subsidy to support equality between women and men and equal opportunities can be provided for activities or activities aimed at promoting equality between women and men and equal opportunities and supporting the application of the principle of equal treatment

National Project NP PRIM II – Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children in Roma Marginalized Communities

112. In accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Act, during the implementation of the *National Project NP PRIM II – Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children in Roma*

Marginalized Communities, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC applied preferential employment of Roma women and men in the TEM regime. See points 206 to 207 for more information on the Project.

Activities of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights in the area of temporary equalizing measures

113. The National Centre implements activities resulting from the project Temporary Equalizing Measures to Increase the Employment and Education of Roma (September 2021 – April 2024) implemented in cooperation with the Labour Agency of the Banská Bystrica self-governing region and the Norwegian non-governmental organization Stiftelsen Mangfold i Arbeidslivet. The project is supported from Norwegian grants and co-financed from the Slovak state budget.⁵⁸ In 2022, as part of the project, the National Centre prepared a study on the practical use of TEM in Slovakia and abroad⁵⁹ and a handbook for employers.⁶⁰ The National Centre carried out several communication activities related to the project, including a seminar and a study visit to Oslo for employers in the context of MRC employment.

ARTICLE 5

114. The MoC SR provides a contribution from the state budget to the Fund for the Support of the Culture of National Minorities in accordance with the Fund Act. See points 19 to 26 and part IV. (points 6 and 13) to the Report for more information on the Fund.

115. Pursuant to Act No. 182/2022 Coll. on Financial Support for the Hungarian Social and Cultural Union in Slovakia – Csemadok, the MoC SR provides a state contribution from its budget section to the Hungarian Social and Cultural Union in Slovakia – Csemadok. For more information on Csemadok, see part IV. (point 7) to the Report.

116. Another tool for the implementation of cultural policy in the area of preserving the basic elements of the identity of members of national minorities are the organizations under the founding authority of the MoC SR, the specialized organizational units of the Slovak National Museum (hereinafter referred to as “SNM”). See part IV. (point 12) to the Report for more information on the specific activity of SNM.

117. By the Resolution of the Slovak Government from April 2021 on the 2030 Strategy, the Ministry of Culture was obliged for the first time in the history of planning inclusive policies to develop the *Vision for the development of Roma culture, language and identity support* and the Action Plan for the years 2022-2024. The document is directly related to the goals of the 2030 Strategy. The document was adopted in a participatory manner, in consultation with members of the Fund's expert councils and representatives of the Roma minority in CNMEG.

118. By the implementation of the Vision of Roma Culture, Language and Identity Support, the Slovak Government has committed itself to:

- expand and stabilize the public media with the aim of wider news and journalistic activity aimed both at the Roma and the majority population and to create space for the use of the Roma language in broadcasts;
- increase the quality and targeting of national minority broadcasting in public media;
- support high-quality film and documentary production about the history, life and culture of the Roma;

⁵⁸ [Ongoing projects – SNCHR](#) (in Slovak)

⁵⁹ [DVO-studia_web-1.pdf](#) (snslp.sk) (in Slovak)

⁶⁰ [DVO-metodika_web.pdf](#) (snslp.sk) (in Slovak)

- support the quality of non-profit and private media and independent content creators with an emphasis on ensuring objectivity and plurality of opinions;
- support the regular publication of Roma periodicals aimed at adult and child readers and improve the quality of the content, focus contributions on a specific target group and obtain feedback from them in order to improve the quality of periodicals.

119. For more information on the documents, see part IV. (point 11) to the Report.

120. The latest amendment to the Act on Minority Languages, which entered into force on 1 January 2022, explicitly enshrined the possibility of using informational traffic signs with the names of marked destinations to guide road users also in the languages of national minorities. At the same time, the amendment amended the act so that in addition to the beginning and end of the municipality, also parts of the municipality are indicated in the language of the minority.

121. The Slovak Government adopted new Regulation No. 35/2023 Coll., expanding the possibility of using the languages of national minorities. See point 84 for more information on the regulation.

ARTICLE 6

Recommendation 8 – fight against hate crime and hate speech

To resolutely address and systematically, promptly and publicly condemn all instances of incitement to public violence and hatred, hate crimes, and anti-minority rhetoric in the public and political discourse, as well as in the media; to ensure that any misconduct by the police, as well as cases of hate crimes affecting persons belonging to national minorities, are prevented, effectively and independently investigated, sanctioned and remedied. Hate crime data and statistical information on reported cases of use of police force and on possible investigations into suspicions of excessive use of force towards persons belonging to national minorities should be systematically gathered.

122. The commission of a hate crime against a group of people or individuals for real or presumed affiliation with any race, nation, nationality, or ethnic group or their real or presumed origin, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs or religious faith is included among criminal acts of extremism pursuant to § 140a) of the Criminal Code.

123. In the counter-extremism section, law enforcement bodies place emphasis on investigating the presence of indicators of bias that may indicate that the crime was motivated by hate. For this purpose, in 2018, a guide was published for members of the Police Force containing basic information and procedures for assessing hate crimes according to § 140(e) of the Criminal Code.

Educational activities of police officers

124. In 2022-2023, Members of the Police Force (hereinafter referred to as “police officers”) of the National Crime Agency of the Presidium of the Police Force (hereinafter referred to as “PPF”) completed several educational activities within the framework of the EU Council and the European Commission, as well as other professional trainings focused on strengthening awareness of detecting early signs of the radicalisation process; the possibilities of international cooperation in the exchange of information in the counter-radicalisation, -extremism and -terrorism section and the methods and forms of suppressing these processes within the scope of the activities of law enforcement bodies.

125. The acquired knowledge and skills are regularly transferred by the police officers of the PPF National Crime Agency as part of training and lecture activities to entities participating in the fight against radicalisation and extremism, as well as to relevant non-governmental organizations.

126. The riot police officers of the PPF continue to participate in the training programme *Training against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement* (TAHCLE) and regularly attend working meetings of the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance.

Remedy for misconduct by police officers

127. In relation to suspicions of misconduct or failure of a police officer in the performance of duties in relation to national minorities, each case is investigated, and if excessive, disproportionate use of force by police officers is identified in individual cases, measures are taken against specific police officers, including possible criminal penalties.

Police activities in the field of prevention

128. As part of prevention, executive police officers are regularly retrained in the relevant legal regulations, including provisions on the use of coercive means. This retraining also includes compliance with the *Code of Ethics for Members of the Police Force* and the *European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. Police officers regularly establish and strengthen contacts with marginalized communities in the Slovak Republic, while increasing awareness and education in the area of eliminating mutual prejudices, as well as the fight against hatred and removing obstacles to reporting illegal activity in the area of extremism in these communities.

129. In the area of public relations and prevention, police officers in the prevention section (preventionists) perform tasks together with the spokespersons of the Police Force and also with the administrators of the Police Force's social networks, who continuously provide all necessary information to the general public. The goal of the preventive activities of the Police Force is to provide information contributing to the reduction of manifestations of violence and other socio-pathological phenomena in society.

130. Since 2017, the nationwide preventive project *Children's Police Academy* has been implemented, adequately explaining the terms: prejudice, discrimination, racism, extremism and highlighting tolerance, respect, esteem, friendship, friendliness, understanding and sympathy and the Stop violence! topic to pupils in the 4th-7th grades of primary schools. In selected kindergartens, they implement preventive activities using the KOZMO methodology aimed at preventing violence in peer groups.

131. In order to improve the coexistence of the minority and the majority as well as cooperation with the minority, meetings with representatives of Roma communities are held at regional levels with the participation of preventionists and Roma specialists, police officers from the riot police.

Crime statistics

132. As part of criminal proceedings under the Criminal Code, the Police Force also records information about criminal activity in the criminal record-statistical system, namely the relevant facts listed in a special part of the Criminal Code related to the issue in question, in particular criminal offences according to §§ 421 to 425 of the Criminal Code.⁶¹

⁶¹ <https://www.minv.sk/?statistika-kriminality-v-slovenskej-republike-xml> (in Slovak)

Activities of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights

133. In 2022, the National Centre published the *Report on the Monitoring of Hate Speech and Extremist Crimes 2022*⁶², based on the task resulting from the *Concept of Combating the Radicalisation and Extremism by 2024*. The aim of the report was to analyse the state of human rights implementation in the context of hate speech and extremist crimes/crimes committed with a special motive according to § 140(e) of the Criminal Code.

134. In 2022, the National Centre published the publication *Portrayal of discrimination in the media: Media monitoring for 2021*.⁶³ The aim of the media monitoring was to map and analyse how the issue of discrimination is presented in the media discourse in Slovakia.

135. In 2023, the National Centre published the results of the media monitoring with a focus on the portrayal of hateful ideologies – *Portrayal of hateful ideologies in the media: Media monitoring for 2022*.⁶⁴ The aim of the study was to map and analyse how the Slovak media discourse deals with the issue of hateful ideologies and whether the media pay sufficient attention to the contextual framing of these ideologies. The monitoring also compared the frequency of mentions of right-wing extremist ideology and the frequency of mentions of the principles of a democratic establishment (including human rights and the protection of minority rights).

Recommendation 9 – depicting the Roma

To systematically and carefully review terminology used to refer to Roma or to places inhabited by them in policy documents, legislation and public discourse to ensure that it does not contribute to further stigmatization of persons belonging to the Roma minority, and to consistently and publicly condemn and sanction intentional use of derogatory terminology in the public media and in the political discourse.

Amendment to the Criminal Code

136. In 2022, the MoJ SR submitted to the interdepartmental comment procedure an amendment to the Criminal Code, which, among other things, in the case of a special motive as a special qualifying feature in the case of hate crimes, expands these features to include real or presumed citizenship, language, lack of religion and disability. The proposal was approved at the meeting of the Slovak Government in March 2023 and submitted to the NC SR meeting.

Working definition of antigypsyism – resolution of the NC SR No. 1635

137. On 27 September 2022, the NC SR adopted the working definition of antigypsyism⁶⁵ developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and adopted by its member states (including the Slovak Republic) on 8 October 2020.

138. According to the definition, antigypsyism is a manifestation of individual expressions and acts as well as institutional policies and practices of marginalization, exclusion, physical violence, devaluation of Roma cultures and lifestyles, and hate speech directed at Roma as

⁶² [Monitoring-nenavistne-prejavu-2022.pdf \(snslp.sk\)](#) (in Slovak)

⁶³ [Monitoring-disk_web.pdf \(snslp.sk\)](#) (in Slovak)

⁶⁴ [monitoring-ideologii.pdf \(snslp.sk\)](#) (in Slovak)

⁶⁵ <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=schodze/uznesenie&MasterID=13716> (in Slovak)

well as other individuals and groups perceived, stigmatized, or persecuted during the Nazi era, and still today, as “Gypsies”.

139. The NC SR took note of the working definition of the IHRA⁶⁶ in the above resolution and agreed with it. The NC SR also recommended the Slovak Government to analyse the legal order of the Slovak Republic and, if necessary, prepare legislative proposals for relevant legislation so that the above definition is respected in the activities and decision-making of Slovak public authorities; actively contribute to ensuring the safety of its Roma citizens through thorough and structured consultation and dialogue with civil society organizations and relevant public institutions combating all forms of discrimination; participate in the NC SR efforts in cultivating debate in the public space, condemning anti-Roma and hateful statements and speeches under all circumstances and providing rational counter-arguments.

Concept of Combating the Radicalisation and Extremism by 2024

140. The IHRA's working definition of antigypsyism was included in the comprehensive expert definition of antigypsyism⁶⁷, which is part of Annex No. 3 to the Concept of Combating the Radicalisation and Extremism by 2024 (hereinafter referred to as the “Concept”) adopted by the Slovak Government in January 2021.

141. Building on the previous 2015-2019 Concept, the Concept was created under the auspices of the MoI SR. The document forms a basic document defining the priorities of the Slovak Republic in the area of preventing and combating radicalisation, extremism and related anti-social activities that threaten the foundations of a democratic legal state.

142. The Action Plan⁶⁸ (Annex No. 2 to the Concept) contains a list of measures that need to be taken in the area concerned, such as conducting systematic Internet monitoring with the aim of early detection of manifestations and activities indicative of extremist and security risks in the Slovak Republic; analysis of legislation in the area of extremism in the Slovak legal order and others.

Action Plan for the priority area Combating Antigypsyism and Supporting Participation in the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma by 2030

143. The systematization of the use of appropriate terminology is linked to several objectives, measures and activities of the *Action Plan for the priority area Combating Antigypsyism and Supporting Participation in the 2030 Strategy*. The entities responsible for the implementation of specific activities include the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC, the MoJ SR and the SNCHR. The main topics of the Action Plan include: reducing prejudices and stereotypes about Roma; strengthening human rights and tolerance education; strengthening the participation of Roma at all levels; raising awareness of successful cases in the fight against antigypsyism and anti-Roma discrimination; publication of a regular column on the fight against antigypsyism and anti-Roma discrimination in Slovakia.⁶⁹

Table No. 3: The number of legally concluded anti-discrimination disputes

	2019	2020	2021	2022
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⁶⁶ <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antigypsyism-anti-roma-discrimination>

⁶⁷ <https://www.minv.sk/?zakladne-dokumenty-3&subor=395763> (in Slovak)

⁶⁸ <https://www.minv.sk/?zakladne-dokumenty-3&subor=395762> (in Slovak)

⁶⁹ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/antidiskriminacna-rubrika/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)
<https://www.facebook.com/splnomocnecRK>

Nationality or ethnic group affiliation	0	1	3	1
Colour	1	0	0	0

Source: MoJ SR

Table No. 4: Statistics of legally concluded proceedings for hate crimes (according to the number of identified accused)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
§ 140(e) CC	39	23	5	15	19
§ 421 CC	0	0	0	1	1
§ 422 CC	24	27	11	19	16
§ 422a CC	0	1	0	5	0
§ 422b CC	10	16	26	21	13
§ 422c CC	12	10	18	14	10
§ 422d CC	0	2	2	3	3
§ 423 CC	2	10	4	6	7
§ 424 CC	2	5	4	3	3
§ 424a CC	0	1	0	0	2

Source: MoJ SR

Thematic Survey – Stereotypes and Attitudes towards Roma in Local Politics

144. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC, within the scope of its mandate, systematically and thoroughly examines the terminology used to designate Roma in the prepared legislative intentions as well as other documents submitted for the comment procedure to ensure that the terminology used does not contribute to the further stigmatization of persons belonging to the Roma minority. In 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC published the results of the study carried out by an external entity – *Thematic Survey – Stereotypes and Attitudes towards Roma in Local Politics*.⁷⁰ The study focused on identifying and comparing different forms of stereotypical judgements about Roma at the level of measures in local politics in selected municipalities with Roma communities.

145. The Plenipotentiary for NM consistently observes and encourages observance of the principles resulting from Recommendation 9 and strictly uses the terminology pursuant to the recommendation in all its documents and reports and prefers it in its communication as well.

Promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue

146. Financial support for activities aimed at ensuring intercultural dialogue and understanding, as well as preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education and training on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is provided by the Fund for the Support of the Culture of National Minorities in accordance with applicable legislation. See points 19 to 26 and part IV. (points 6 and 13) for more information on the Fund.

⁷⁰ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-monitorovanie-a-hodnotenie-inkluzivnych-politik-a-ich-dopad-na-marginalizovane-romske-komunity-2016-2022/zber-a-analyza-dat/?csr=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

147. The support of intercultural dialogue, the spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding is also implemented through a diverse range of activities of the SNM national minority museums. See part IV. (point 12) to the Report for more information on the specific activity of SNM.

148. Within its scope, the current legislation in the field of media services (effective from 1 August 2022) supports mutual respect and understanding between persons living in the territory of the Slovak Republic. Any content service provided by a broadcaster or on-demand audiovisual media service provider must respect human dignity, in particular must not promote violence and openly or covertly incite violence or hatred, disparage or defame on the basis of gender, race, colour, language, belief and religion, political or other opinion, property, disability, age, sexual orientation, national or social origin, genetic characteristics, citizenship, nationality or ethnic group affiliation. For more information on the Media Service Act, see points 157 to 160 and part IV. (point 8) to the Report.

ARTICLE 7

149. The form of exercising the right of association and assembly is regulated in Act No. 84/1990 Coll. on the right to assemble, or in Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on the association of citizens. Freedom of expression and other freedoms as basic human rights and freedoms are regulated in more detail in several Slovak legal regulations.

150. As part of the measures taken, in 2022 the PPF control department ensured the translation of instructions for detained persons according to §§ 17 and 19 of Act No. 171/1993 Coll. on the Police Force in English, French, Macedonian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.

ARTICLE 8

151. Slovak legislation does not regulate the use of liturgical languages. The use of the mother tongue during religious services is legally guaranteed and fully implemented in practice.

152. The MoC SR is responsible for and processor of statistical surveys on churches and religious societies. According to this annual statistical survey, there was a total of 1,259,382 church services performed in 2022. A total of 1,011,378 of these were held in the state language, 128,128 in Hungarian, 102,082 in Church Slavonic, 2,979 in Roma, 510 in Hebrew, 238 in German, 260 in Croatian and 148 in Polish. According to 2021 PHC, believers of national minorities make up 12% of all believers of registered churches and religious societies. The mutual correlation of these data is available on the SO SR website, in particular how many believers of a particular church identified themselves as a national minority.

ARTICLE 9

153. The rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups are constitutionally and legislatively guaranteed and applied in practice in Slovakia pursuant to Article 9 of the Framework Convention (*freedom of expression, including freedom of opinion and freedom to receive and communicate information and ideas in a minority language and access to the media*).

Amendment to the Act on RTVS

154. The amendment to the Act on RTVS, which entered into force on 1 August 2022, specified the obligation of the public broadcaster to broadcast content and regionally balanced programs in the minority language for national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic according to the latest results of PHC in the Slovak Republic. The

amendment specifically establishes that RTVS is obliged to broadcast television programs for national minorities and ethnic groups in a time range of at least 240 hours in the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 December 2022, at least 360 hours in 2023, and from January 1, 2024 at least 500 hours per year. Television broadcasting for national minorities is carried out cross-sectionally on RTVS through the broadcast channels Dvojka, Trojka and the news channel RTVS 24. The impact of this measure cannot be evaluated yet. For more information on the RTVS Act, see part IV. (point 9) to the Report.

155. In 2022, RTVS significantly expanded the scope of television broadcasting for national minorities. This was due to the repetition of national minority magazines on Trojka, news broadcasting in Hungarian and Ukrainian on RTVS 24, as well as the inclusion of new cycles to support the education of primary school pupils in the language of national minorities. RTVS prepared broadcasting in 11 languages of national minorities. In 2022, broadcasting for national minorities accounted for a total of more than 294 hours of broadcasting, representing an increase of approximately 63 hours compared to 2021. The broadcast for the Hungarian (almost 134 hours) and the Roma minority (more than 57 hours) was the most extensive in total. The most significant year-on-year increase was the scope of broadcasting in the Ukrainian language (from 8 hours to almost 32 hours).

156. In 2022, within the framework of national minority RTVS radio broadcasting, Hungarian broadcasting achieved the largest share, accounting for almost 85% of the broadcast time. The share of Roma broadcasting has repeatedly increased with 213 hours (compared to 173 hours in the previous year). The scope of broadcasting for the Czech, German, Polish, Croatian, Serbian and Bulgarian national minorities has doubled. The number of hours broadcast for national minorities in RTVS radio broadcasting reached almost 5,200 hours.

Act on Media Services

157. In order to introduce a new comprehensive legal regulation in the field of audiovisual media services, Act No. 264/2022 on Media Services (hereinafter referred to as the “Media Services Act”) was adopted and entered into force on 1 August 2022. According to the Media Services Act, the authorization to broadcast a program service arises, which can be granted by the Council for Media Services (hereinafter referred to as “CMS”) to a natural person or legal entity in compliance with the legal requirements. In the broadcast authorization request, the applicant provides information about the proposed language or languages of the broadcast, meaning the broadcast does not necessarily have to be in the state language, but also in the language of the national minority. In the case of a local broadcast authorization request or the so-called of community broadcasting, the applicant is also obliged to specify the broadcasting programs. For more information on the Media Services Act, see part IV. (point 8) to the Report.

158. In the context of the adoption of the Media Services Act, an amendment to Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the state language of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “State Language Act”) was adopted. According to the State Language Act, broadcasting of radio and television program services on the territory of the Slovak Republic takes place in the state language, with the exception of the broadcasting of foreign language television and radio programs; RTVS radio programs in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups and live events with simultaneous interpretation into the state language as part of a foreign language session; broadcasting of television and radio language courses and programs with a related focus; musical works with original texts; audiovisual works or sound recordings of artistic performances disseminated by broadcasting in the original language adaptation meeting the requirement of basic intelligibility from the point of view of the state language; audiovisual works whose dubbing in a language meeting the requirement of basic

comprehensibility from the point of view of the state language was produced before January 1, 2008 and which were broadcast on the territory of the Slovak Republic before January 1, 2008; original language expressions of individual persons in a language meeting the requirement of basic intelligibility from the point of view of the state language included in news, journalistic and entertainment television programs or radio programs. Restrictions according to the State Language Act do not apply to a radio program service broadcaster with authorization to broadcast in the language of national minorities or in an official EU language that is not the state language of the Slovak Republic. At the same time, notices intended to inform the public through local radio or other technical devices may also be published in another language after they have been published in the state language.

159. The adoption of the Media Services Act had a negative impact on the area of the of minority languages in relation to private television broadcasters, to whom CMS granted a license to broadcast exclusively in one or more EU languages that are not the state language of the Slovak Republic, according to the legislation effective until 31 July 2022. Following the amendment to the State Language Act, these television broadcasters are also obliged to provide a Slovak language version of their broadcasts, which they do primarily with subtitles in the state language.

160. The Media Services Act makes it difficult to obtain licenses or change them in the case of frequencies used by broadcasters by law. Obtaining a new frequency in the licensing procedure is only possible after repeated rejection of the frequency by commercial broadcasters. The Act also does not address the procedure of the licensing authority (CMS) in the event that RTVS wants to change licenses on existing frequencies – the legal regulation is general, but it also affects the planning, management and changes of frequencies used to broadcast programs in the languages of national minorities. The impact of the above measure cannot be evaluated yet.

Act on Publications

161. Effective from 1 August 2022, issuance of publications is governed by Act No. 265/2022 Coll. on Publishers of Publications and on the Register in the Field of Media and Audiovisual Media (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 265/2022 Coll.”). Effective from 1 August 2022, the provision of the State Language Act on using only the state language in periodicals, agency news or non-periodical publications, unless a special regulation stipulates otherwise, was deleted. For more information on the Act No. 265/2022 Coll., see part IV. (point 10) to the Report.

162. The publication of periodicals and non-periodicals, as well as electronic media, is financially supported by the fund, and is not only conditioned by the system of financial support, but also depends on the interest and needs of the given national minority.

ARTICLE 10

Recommendation 10 – use of minority languages

To take all necessary measures to ensure the practical and technical implementation of minority language legislation, in particular when it comes to the issuance of birth, marriage and death certificates, and intensify training efforts to ensure that municipal employees are able to use minority languages and that this use is, as far as possible, actively encouraged in official communication with persons belonging to national minorities.

Bilingual registry forms

163. Citizens belonging to a national minority have the right to a registry document being issued in accordance with the Act on Minority Languages. In cooperation with the Plenipotentiary for NM, the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as “MoI SR”) prepared and distributed bilingual registry documents to the affected municipalities. Preprinted registry documents/forms (*birth certificate, marriage certificate, death certificate*) meet the attributes of a bilingual registry form.

164. In April 2023, changes were also implemented in the electronic system for registry offices, which means comprehensive issuance of registry documents in the required form. The relevant registry offices issue registry documents in the Slovak language as well as in the language of a national minority.

165. The actual practice of issuing documents showed that the registry offices had to be constantly informed about the possibility of using the database in a minority language.

Strengthening the application practice of the Act on Minority Languages

166. In December 2022, the Slovak Government adopted the *Report on the Use of National Minority Languages in the Territory of the Slovak Republic for the period 2021-2022*. In the resolution on the document, the Slovak Government imposed an obligation on the Head of the Slovak Government Office and the Plenipotentiary for NM to prepare a proposal for a financial support mechanism to compensate for expenses arising from the application practice of the Act on Minority Languages and to update and issue methodological guidelines of the Slovak Government Office to the Act on Minority Languages. Competent ministries were assigned the task of increasing the level of competent education of civil servants in municipalities defined in a special regulation in the area of mastering the language of national minorities and, within the scope of their competence, to ensure its availability in public administration bodies; take measures to eliminate the deficiencies identified in the report and continuously evaluate their implementation. The tasks must be completed by the end of 2023, currently being gradually implemented. In the context of the above resolution, the methodological guideline for the application of the Act on Minority Languages was updated and published on the website of the Plenipotentiary for NM in five minority languages.

Provision and availability of information in national minority languages

167. Beyond the provisions of Article 10 (3) of the Framework Convention, the MoI SR works intensively on providing and making information available to victims of crimes in the languages of national minorities. Currently, information on victims' rights in the form of a website and information leaflets is available in Hungarian.

168. The National Centre has the status of an independent legal entity *sui generis* and not of an administrative body. However, despite the above, the National Centre as a national anti-discrimination body provides free legal assistance in the field of non-discrimination in Slovak, English, Ukrainian and Russian within its personnel capabilities. In 2023, the National Centre provided and keeps providing legal assistance to (9) clients in the Ukrainian language.

169. In response to the war on the territory of Ukraine and the influx of emigrants to Slovakia, the National Centre prepared information leaflets on free legal assistance in the area of discrimination, as well as general guidelines regarding temporary protection and asylum. Leaflets were prepared and distributed in Slovak, English, Ukrainian and Russian.

ARTICLE 11

Use of name and surname

170. Citizens belonging to a national minority use their name and surname in official communication in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on name and surname (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 300/1993 Coll.”).

171. Pursuant to Act No. 300/1993 Coll., parents can choose a foreign language name for the child; request the relevant registry office to change the name from the Slovak equivalent to a foreign language and request the change of the surname in accordance with the spelling of the national minority.

172. Act No. 154/1994 Coll. on Registry Offices allows the female surname of a person of non-Slovak nationality to be entered in the register without the Slovak suffix form.

173. Since September 2022, the possibility has been introduced for mothers of a non-Slovak nationality to enter the surname of their newborn daughter in the birth book without the Slovak suffix form directly from the hospital, and therefore without an additional visit to the registry office. The above change was made at the initiative of Plenipotentiary for NM and in connection with the implementation of the 2021-2025 Action Plan, as well as the electronic reporting of the birth of a child. For more information on the 2021-2025 Action Plan, see points 97 to 99 and part IV. (point 3) to the Report.

Information on traffic signs

174. The technical regulation of the Ministry of Transport *Common principles for the use of traffic signs and traffic facilities* is effective from 20 January 2023, specifying the principles of using national minority languages on traffic signs.

Designation of railway stations and stops

175. Railways of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “Slovak Railways”) continued to ensure the designation of railway stations and stops where regular passenger transport is carried out in the language of national minorities in municipalities according to § 2 (1) of the Act on Minority Languages. This placement is carried out in accordance with the Instruction of the Minister of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic No. 60/2016 and the amended provision on the duties of the railway infrastructure manager in § 34 of Act No. 513/2009 Coll. on tracks.

176. Currently, there are 133 railway stations and stops on the Slovak Railways network equipped with bilingual signs, of which 124 have names in Hungarian and 9 in Rusyn. In the monitored period, designations in the national minority language were added at 5 railway stops and at 2 railway stations.

Slovak Railways information regarding threats to life, health, safety or property of Slovak citizens and other train information

177. The Slovak Railways have also been ensuring the presentation of information concerning the threat to life and health, safety or property of Slovak citizens in places accessible to the public also in the minority language, in addition to the state language. Selected announcements and information have been continuously replaced by uniform pictograms.

178. Regarding communication at railway stations, contact centres, on trains and on information lines in national minority languages, the conditions for such communication can be created within relevant competencies (e.g. announcement of stations and stops in Hungarian on trains of the Železničná spoločnosť Slovensko, a. s. on the track Bratislava – Komárno).

ARTICLE 12

Recommendation 11 – intercultural education

To develop intercultural education programmes in all schools taking into account respective cultural sensitivities, accommodating multiple perspectives in history teaching and promoting critical thinking, with a view to increasing knowledge among all pupils and students about the contribution of national minorities to society and to reducing the prevalence of negative stereotypes. Textbooks and teaching materials should be updated and distributed in a timely manner, and teacher training provided to fulfil the demand. The contents of the curricula related to intercultural education should be designed in co-operation with representatives of national minorities.

179. The MESRS SR has been supporting the education of national minorities (from pre-primary to upper secondary education) for a long time and systematically and participates in the creation of high-quality prerequisites for exercising the rights of children to be educated in their mother tongue.

National Education Programmes

180. In the monitored period, the MESRS SR approved several amendments to the National Education Programmes (hereinafter referred to as “NEPs”), specifically for primary schools with the language of instruction of the national minority; primary schools teaching the language of the national minority; for grammar schools with the language of instruction of the national minority.

181. Following the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, the Minister of Education approved in March 2023 the *NEP for Primary Education*, according to which education and training can be carried out from the first grade of primary schools from the 2024/2025 school year. The new NEP contains, within the Language and Communication educational area, educational standards for several teaching subjects, the language of the national minority and literature. Part of the NEP also deals with the peculiarities of education and training of students in national schools and national classes for the prepared pedagogical documents for primary schools.⁷¹

182. In the monitored period, the MESRS SR also approved the education standards for the NEP for Primary Education – 1st grade of primary school; for lower secondary education – 2nd grade of primary school for teaching Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian and Polish language and literature. The above documents were prepared on the basis of the Slovak commitments to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.⁷²

The project Innovative Teacher Training to Increase Intercultural Competences in the Education of Roma pupils or We can achieve more with Roma II

183. The project builds on the successful project *We can achieve more with Roma I*. It aims to develop teaching materials, publications and methodologies for the Roma language, culture and history; support intercultural and inclusive education in schools with pupils from Roma communities and to increase the professional competence of teaching and professional staff and school management. The project is implemented by NIEY, an organisation directly managed by the MESRS SR. As part of the project, various target groups were trained (school management; teachers of kindergarten, primary and secondary schools; academics) and a

⁷¹ <https://www.minedu.sk/statny-vzdelavaci-program-pre-zakladne-vzdelavanie-2023/> (in Slovak)

⁷² <https://www.minedu.sk/vzdelavacie-standardy-pre-vyucovanie-bulharskeho-ceskeho-chorvatskeho-a-polskeho-jazyka-a-literatury/> (in Slovak)

limited edition of 11 teaching materials was prepared. As part of the project *We can achieve more with Roma II*, another 12 types of teaching materials are being prepared.

Professional development of teaching and professional staff

184. The MESRS SR continued to provide professional development for teaching and professional staff who educate children and pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, as well as children and pupils from SDE and MRC. Education was focused on the following topics: inclusive education; intercultural and interethnic dialogue; supporting the use of the Roma language and culture in the teaching process; methodology of teaching the Slovak language and literature in schools with the Hungarian language of instruction and curriculum reform. Two innovative education programs and education material sets were created. Additional education material sets are ready for approval.

Vision for the Development of Roma culture, Language and Identity Support

185. The MESRS SR is responsible for Measure 1.2 of the *Vision for the Development of Roma Culture, Language and Identity Support* and the Action Plan for 2022-2024 – *Support of scientific and research workplaces dealing with the Roma history, culture and life style and their mutual cooperation*. During the implementation of this measure, a working group composed of scientific and academic institutions was established. The working group identified partial goals and tasks and initiated a joint research of scientific and academic institutions dealing with the issue in question. For more information on the Vision, see points 117 to 119 and part IV. (point 11) to the Report.

Development of online forms of education and training

186. Videos portraying literary works and theatre plays also contribute to the development of online forms of education and training in schools and school facilities with the Hungarian language of instruction. The 45-minute videos performed by the Jókai Theater in Komárno are intended for teaching the Hungarian language and literature in schools with the Hungarian language of instruction in the distance learning format.⁷³

187. The initiative *INSCHOOL: Inclusive Schools for Roma Children* is implemented. See point 8 for more information.

Subsidy calls of the MESRS SR for primary and secondary schools

188. In the monitored period, the MESRS SR allocated funds for development projects and subsidies through several calls for primary and secondary schools and from the funds of the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Facility.

- The call for applications for the provision of funds *Support for regional and multicultural education of pupils belonging to national minorities* has been announced since 2016. The aim of the call in the 2022/2023 school year was to support the development of multicultural and regional education in national minority schools and classes.⁷⁴
- *Summer Schools* could be organized during the entire summer holiday 2022 by all primary schools, special primary schools, special educational facilities, combined schools. The main aim of the Summer Schools 2022 was to support schools in organizing

⁷³ <https://viki.iedu.sk/landing> (in Slovak)

⁷⁴ <https://www.minedu.sk/vyhodnotenie-vyzvy-podpora-regionalnej-a-multikulturalnej-vychovy-ziakov-patriacich-k-narodnostnym-mensinam-2022/> (in Slovak)

their activities to eliminate gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities of pupils, including pupils from SDE and to integrate pupils from Ukraine.⁷⁵

- The call for subsidy applications *Modern school – Innovative Approaches to Spatial Solutions and Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools – Subsidy*. The aim of the call is to develop innovative approaches to teaching and implement them in practice, and to support the transition from classic “frontal teaching” to innovative teaching methods that support active student involvement in education, teamwork, group problem solving or discussion.⁷⁶
- The aim of the *Smarter Together* development project is to support schools, including schools with the national minority language of instruction, that create conditions for improving knowledge and skills through high-quality and accessible tutoring for pupils at risk of school failure.
- The main aim of the *Smarter Together 3* project was to catch up or improve the knowledge and skills of primary school pupils outside of class. The *More Successful Together 2* project was designed for secondary schools. These calls were announced by the MESRS SR as part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic in the total amount of EUR 6,475,600.⁷⁷

189. The Ministry of Education was the administrator and co-organizer of the annual competitions for national minority schools and/or pupils from the Hungarian, Roma, Rusyn, Ukrainian, Russian and German national minorities.

Universities

190. Regarding the education content, universities are autonomous and the MESRS SR does not have the competence to intervene in it. Public universities are provided with subsidies from the state budget for the purpose of conducting study programs. Currently, universities have dozens of accredited study programs in which some or all of the subjects are taught in the minority language.

Teaching aids and educational publications

191. In order to open the market for textbooks which have long been demanded by schools, teachers and experts, the MESRS SR approved Directive No. 33/2020 on teaching aids, which also concerns teaching aids issued for the needs of education in national minority languages. Following the amendment to the Education Act, the MESRS SR approved the new Directive No. 1/2022 on educational publications for the purposes of assessing the translation of an educational publication into the national minority language. In 2022, the MESRS SR invested EUR 11.5 million from the state budget and EUR 7.6 million from the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan budget in textbooks, workbooks and teaching texts.

Recommendation 12 – effective access to education

To take measures in order to further increase preschool attendance of Roma children and possibly extend the duration of compulsory preschool education, and further reduce their school absenteeism and early drop-out between primary and secondary education; to conduct an in-depth study on both internal and external causes of these phenomena, closely involving children, parents

⁷⁵ <https://www.minedu.sk/vyzva-letna-skola-2022-vyhodnotenie/> (in Slovak)

⁷⁶ <https://www.minedu.sk/vyhodnotenie-modernejsia-skola/> (in Slovak)

⁷⁷ <https://www.minedu.sk/31906-sk/vyzva-spolu-mudrejsi-2-vyhodnotenie/> (in Slovak)
<https://www.minedu.sk/spolu-mudrejsi-3/> (in Slovak)

and teaching assistants, as well as all competent authorities at state and municipal levels with a view to adjusting educational policies and measures

192. The MESRS SR implements Reform 1 of the *Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic: Ensuring the conditions for the implementation of compulsory pre-primary education for children from the age of 5 and the introduction of a legal right to a place in a kindergarten or at other providers of pre-primary education from the age of 3*. For statistical information on education in national minority languages, see part IV. (point 14) to the Report.

193. The reform consists of changes to the relevant legislative provisions, which will specify normative financing of kindergartens and enable equal access to compulsory pre-primary education for children aged 5 years. The reform also includes investment in kindergarten capacities. Through the call, the founders of kindergartens will be given the opportunity to draw funds to fill in the missing capacities so that every child from the age of 3 will be able to participate in pre-primary education in kindergarten until the start of compulsory school attendance.

194. During the implementation of the reform, the MESRS SR introduced compulsory pre-school education for children from 5 years of age, valid from September 1, 2021. The right of a child to be admitted to pre-school education in kindergarten was introduced to kindergarten from the age of 4 (from September 1, 2024) and subsequently from 3 years (from September 1, 2025). The amendment to the Education Act and related acts resulted in the following fundamental changes:

- a new principle of education and training was introduced: the right to admission to pre-primary education in kindergarten from the school year following the school year in which the child turns 3 years old;
- the education and training allowance for children who are members of a household receiving assistance in material need was increased from 15% to 30%, and the purpose of its use was expanded to include the possibility of purchasing work and hygiene equipment; spare clothes;
- the transparency of the financing of kindergartens was increased;
- a sufficient number of places in kindergartens will be ensured for children from 4 years of age from 1 September 2024 and gradually from 3 years of age from 1 September 2025.

195. The MESRS SR also published several subsidy calls, grant schemes and national projects to support the objectives of the reform:

- call for applications *Increasing the capacities of kindergartens*;
- calls for applications *Presence of a health worker in kindergarten, primary and secondary school*;
- calls for applications *Preschoolers II*;
- National Project *Support of helping professions 3*;⁷⁸
- *Grant Scheme to Support Early Care and Early Intervention for Children Aged 0-6 from Marginalized Roma Communities and Generational Poverty*.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ <https://nivam.sk/vyzva-np-podpora-pomahajucich-profesii-3/> (in Slovak)

⁷⁹ <https://www.minedu.sk/grantova-schema-na-podporu-ranej-starostlivosti-a-intervencie/> (in Slovak)

196. The MESRS SR published an application aid for schools *How to be more successful at school*⁸⁰ aimed at supporting pupils in compulsory school attendance to prevent grade repetition.

197. In cooperation with the regional school authorities, the MESRS SR managed to support the establishment and equipment of 82 new classes, in which only compulsory pre-primary education is provided.

Legal basis – legislative framework of national minority education

198. The legal basis for the development of national minority education in the Slovak Republic is the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, and the details are established mainly by the Education Act, Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 596/2003 Coll.”), Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on the Financing of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities and other acts and regulations of lesser legal force.

199. For more information on the Amendment to Education Act, see points 32 to 33 and part IV. (point 16) to the Report.

200. Amendment to Act No. 596/2003 Coll. established regional school authorities as local state administration bodies in education from 1 January 2022. The performance of local state administration in education has thus returned from the competence of the MoI SR to the competence of the MESRS SR. In addition to the competence in the field of establishment and cancellation of schools and school facilities, the regional school authorities took over all the previous tasks arising from the performance of local state administration in education. This amendment creates the conditions for the establishment of national minority schools and facilities in cases where the municipalities do not or cannot create the conditions for this.

201. The MESRS SR approved Directive No. 33/2020 on teaching aids. See point 191 for more information on the directive.

202. According to the MESRS SR Decree No. 202/2022 Coll. of 3 June 2022, establishing the criteria for determining the maximum number of students in the first year of secondary schools (hereinafter referred to as the “Decree”), the criteria for determining the maximum number of students in the first year also includes *“ensuring education and training in secondary schools in national minority languages, including secondary schools with students permanently resided in the territory of a different self-governing region than the one where the respective secondary school is located”*. According to the Decree, other criteria for grammar schools, secondary vocational schools, secondary sports schools, art schools and conservatories also include *“ensuring education and training of students in national minority languages”*.

Institutional support

203. Within the organizational structure of the MESRS SR, the Department of National Minority Education Development was established under the National Minority and Inclusive Education Section. The section is directly engaged in national minority and inclusive education with a specific emphasis on the needs of national minorities. The upcoming curriculum reform in primary schools is supported by the Department of Curriculum and Education Innovations. Support for curricular reform in the regions is provided by entities selected on the basis of a call.

⁸⁰ <https://www.minedu.sk/aplikacna-pomocka-ako-byt-v-skole-uspesnejsi/> (in Slovak)

204. On 1 July 2022, the NIEY was established by merging five directly managed organizations of the Ministry of Education – the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre, the State Pedagogical Institute, the National Institute of Certified Measurements in Education, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute and the Slovak Pedagogical Library. The NIEY has 8 regional offices (in each regional seat) and also one office in Komárno, which is cross-sectionally focused on supporting national minority education in the regions. On 1 July 2022, the Regional Youth Work Coordinator position was created to support work with Hungarian-speaking youth.

System of legally claimable support measures

205. See points 39 to 41 for more information on the system.

National Project Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities

206. The National Project *Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities II* (hereinafter referred to as “PRIM II”) was implemented by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC in the period from November 2020 to October 2023. The aim of the project was to get as many children as possible from Roma communities into kindergartens and to introduce support measures in kindergartens to ensure rapid integration of children from Roma communities into mixed collectives of kindergartens. Approximately 11,000 children in 133 kindergartens were involved in the project.

207. PRIM II introduced direct provision of material support; better attendance of children from MRC; increased parents' trust in the environment and function of kindergartens; creation of space and capacity for systematic work with children on an individual basis; stimulation programs aimed at increasing children's potential; intensive work with families through the position of parental assistants; employment of people from MRC and support of teachers and educators at schools; strengthened parenting skills of people from MRC; as well as acceptance of the need for a stimulating environment for the development of preschoolers. The outputs from the PRIM II project were communicated to the MESRS SR, which followed them up in the next project *Support of helping professions*.

Thematic Survey – The Readiness of Kindergarten Capacities in Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities For the Implementation of Compulsory Pre-Primary Education

208. At the beginning of 2023, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC published the results of the thematic survey carried out by an external entity – *The Readiness of Kindergarten Capacities in Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities For the Implementation of Compulsory Pre-Primary Education*.⁸¹ The monograph in question presents the results of research carried out in 2022, aimed at assessing the readiness of kindergarten capacities for the implementation of compulsory pre-primary education in all municipalities listed in the *Atlas of Roma Communities 2019*. The document also addresses the analysis of population development and its assumptions for future development in municipalities with MRC, resulting in the population forecast for children aged 3-6 years until 2030.

Analysis of Absenteeism and Measures to Reduce Absenteeism in Compulsory School Attendance

⁸¹https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1276/tz_predprimarne_vzdelavanie.pdf?csrc=10406988958389808507 (in Slovak)

209. Minister's decision no. 2023/13765:1-A1810 with effect from September 1, 2023, decision no. 2022/19036:1-A1810 of August 15, 2022, as amended by decision no. 2023/6343:1-A1810 of April 4, 2023. Revocation of the decision means, among other things, that the excuse for the absence of a child or pupil can only be to the extent regulated by law, while from September 1, 2023, the law will be amended by an amendment to Act no. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (School Act) and on the amendment of certain laws as amended so that the absence of a child or pupil is excused according to the valid wording of § 144 par. 10 of the School Act. This was changed by Act No. 182/2023 Coll. until the entry into force of this amendment, when the absence was excused by a legal representative. See point 49 for more information on the analysis.

Early care

210. See points 53 to 55 for more information on the early care.

Amendment to the Education Act

211. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC provided active cooperation in the preparation of documents for the Amendment to the Education Act. For more information on the Amendment, see points 32 to 33 and part IV. (point 16) to the Report.

ARTICLE 13

No new facts.

ARTICLE 14

Recommendation 13 – minority language teaching and education

To extend the offer of education in minority languages, in particular in Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages in areas inhabited by these minorities, ensuring local continuity from pre-school to secondary education; and examine, in co-operation with representatives of the Roma minority, ways of raising the interest in and, subsequently, extending the offer of Romani teaching in mainstream pre-school, primary and secondary education.

212. Following the Strategic Tasks from the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, the NEP for Primary Education was prepared. See point 181 for more information on the NEP.

213. A methodological framework for the analysis of social science textbooks (*history, geography, civics, ethics*) containing information on the Roma minority was also developed. A proposal for an educational program for obtaining a lower secondary education was also developed, i.e. j. requirements for the knowledge and skills of applicants for the educational program, which will be verified by a written test and a commission examination in the form of output educational standards of the teaching subjects Hungarian language and literature and Slovak language and Slovak literature according to ŠVP (2015), forms (oral and written) of the performance of the commission examination, written test criteria for which the test results can be considered successful.

214. During the period 2021-2022, the State Institute of Vocational Education prepared and submitted for approval to the MESRS SR the updated NEPs for vocational education and training for all groups of education sectors. The updated framework curriculum for individual levels of education for schools with the language of instruction of national minorities is also included in the submitted NEPs.⁸²

⁸² <https://www.minedu.sk/dodatky-k-svp-pre-zs-s-vyucovacim-jazykom-narodnostnej-mensiny-a-zs-s-vyucovanim-jazyka-narodnostnej-mensiny/> (in Slovak)

215. In the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 school years, financial resources were also allocated as part of the call for the project *Support for Teaching the Mother Tongue of the National Minority* intended for primary and secondary schools with national minority classes. Priority areas of support included preparatory activities for teaching the national minority language or activities within the framework of teaching the national minority language (*Croatian, Polish, Rusyn, Roma, Ukrainian, German or Bulgarian*). In the 2022/2023 school year, the MESRS SR supported 8 projects in the total amount of EUR 12,000 to promote the teaching of the Roma and Rusyn languages.⁸³ No applications were submitted in 2021 to support activities aimed at teaching other languages listed in the call.⁸⁴

216. To support the education of teachers in the field of intercultural education with a focus on the Roma language and culture, the MESRS SR implements the project *Innovative Education for Teaching Staff of Primary Schools to Increase their Intercultural Competences in the Educational Process of Roma Pupils*. See point 183 for more information on the project.

217. Education programs for teaching and professional staff were implemented to support the use of the Roma language in the teaching process. The innovative education program *The Use of Roma culture in School Practice* was developed. *The Roma Language and Culture* qualification training for teaching and professional staff is being prepared to obtain the qualification prerequisites for teaching the Roma language. The number of teaching staff with the competence to use the Roma language increased by 40. 12 graduates completed the innovative education program *Roma Language and Realities*, and 6 teaching staff successfully completed the language exam on the Roma language in Prague.

218. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the MESRS SR monitors the implementation of the Roma language and realities in schools and school facilities to map the real situation. The obtained results showed that schools and school facilities use Roma realities and language in the educational process. Basic Roma language skills of teaching and professional staff is considered a professional competence with added value in school practice.⁸⁵

219. MESRS SR cooperates with the Council of Europe on the project *ROMANI/PLURILINGUAL POLICY EXPERIMENTATION – Inclusion of Roma children in education – plurilingual approach*. See point 9 for more information on the project.

220. As part of the *Programme Slovakia 2021-2027*, the MESRS SR is currently preparing a proposal for a national project and a demand-oriented call, which will respond to challenges in the field of segregation in education. The aim is to create the conditions for the launch of desegregation activities at the school level in selected locations in Slovakia.

221. One of the objectives of the national project *Equal Opportunities in Education and Training (ROPIV) (2023-2026)* is to develop the Roma national identity by creating conditions for education in the mother tongue and the development of scientific and research capacities.

222. In the first hours after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the MESRS SR issued basic recommendations for teachers and students on how to handle the situation. In connection with the arrival of a large number of children from Ukraine (there are almost 10,000 students from Ukraine in the Slovak education system), several measures were taken that primarily

⁸³ <https://www.minedu.sk/vyhodnotenie-vyzvy-podpora-vyucby-materinskeho-jazyka-narodnostnej-mensiny-2022/> (in Slovak)

⁸⁴ <https://www.minedu.sk/vyhodnotenie-vyzvy-podpora-vyucby-materinskeho-jazyka-narodnostnej-mensiny-2021/> (in Slovak)

⁸⁵ <https://nivam.sk/krajske-pracovisko-narodneho-institutu-vzdelavania-a-mladeze-v-presove-zorganizovalo-odborny-seminar-so-zamerom-prezentovat-vysledky-monitoringu-romskeho-jazyka-a-realii-v-skolach-a-skolskych-zariaden/> (in Slovak)

concern foreigners – Ukrainians and not the national minority in Slovakia. However, some publications also help the development of Ukrainian national education. These are, for example, methodological guidelines, a glossary, a webinar and a contact book. A website⁸⁶ was created through which the Ministry of Education communicates its guidelines, measures taken and supporting materials. The *Action Plan* is being prepared in connection with the increase in the number of Ukrainian children and pupils in Slovakia.

ARTICLE 15

Recommendation 14 – effective participation in public affairs: consultation mechanism

To increase the level of efficiency of the consultation mechanism with the elected representatives of national minorities. Any legislative process that could have an impact on the situation and rights of national minorities should give these representatives a possibility to have substantial influence with the aim of achieving effective participation and a shared ownership of decisions taken. Co-ordination between all national institutions, representatives of national minorities and other stakeholders during such consultations should be increased. The implementation of the respective legislation should be monitored and evaluated in close consultation with the persons belonging to national minorities concerned.

Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

223. Consultation with representatives of national minorities continued to take place regularly at the CNMEG, which in accordance with Art. 2 of its statute fulfills the function of a consultative body in matters of the participation of members of national minorities and ethnic groups in the resolution of matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups in accordance with Art. 34 par. 2 letters c) Constitution of the SR. On some topics of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities, the Plenipotentiary for NM also consulted other representatives of national minorities at the level of higher territorial units, cities and municipalities. See points 10 to 12 for more information on the CNMEG.

224. According to the Manifesto of the Slovak Government for 2020-2024 and the Legislative Plan of the Government for this period, the Plenipotentiary for NM was responsible for the preparation of the bill on the status of national minorities. In the process of the bill preparation, the Plenipotentiary for NM ensured the participation of representatives of national minorities, or their nominees and experts.

Council of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations

225. The Council of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations⁸⁷ (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) is an advisory body of the Plenipotentiary for RC to ensure the tasks related to the implementation of the 2030 Strategy and to ensure the implementation of the obligations of the Slovak Republic arising from the relevant international treaties regulating fundamental rights and freedoms, issued recommendations under these treaties, as well as EU legislative and non-legislative legal acts in the area of Roma integration. The goal of the Council is to support a participatory approach to integration through the meaningful involvement of non-governmental and non-profit organizations in the creation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of measures aimed at Roma.

⁸⁶ <https://ukrajina.minedu.sk/> (in Slovak and Ukrainian)

⁸⁷ <https://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/poradne-organy/?csrt=16788443962639690320> (in Slovak)

Action Plan for the priority area Combating Antigypsyism and Supporting Participation in the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma by 2030

226. One of the objectives of the Action Plan of the priority area *Combating Antigypsyism and Promoting Participation in the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma by 2030 for the years 2022-2024* is to strengthen the participation of Roma at all levels, specifically in advisory and consultation bodies established by state administration authorities and ensure participation in working groups monitoring the fulfilment of national strategies and action plans. For more information on the Action Plans, see point 43 and part IV. (point 5) to the Report.

SNM Council for National Minority Museums

227. National minority museums, which are organizationally integrated into the SNM, play an important role in the field of minority culture. In June 2023, the SNM Council for National Minority Museums was established as a participative and consultative body in the field of professional activity of the above institutions. The Council consists of representatives/experts of national minorities, representatives of SNM and the Plenipotentiary for NM. See part IV. (point 12) to the Report for more information on the specific activity of SNM.

Involvement of the public in the development of legal regulations

228. The basics of the mechanism for public involvement were not changed in the monitored period.

Recommendation 15 – effective participation in socio-economic life: access to health care

To ensure in practice the full implementation of the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities as regards communication with the staff in healthcare facilities, law enforcement agencies and social service facilities, as well as emergency services, and ensure that any decision regarding restructuring hospitals has no disproportionate negative impact on the access of rights to healthcare services for persons belonging to national minorities.

229. According to § 8(4) of the Act on the State Language, the agenda of healthcare facilities and social service facilities is kept in the state language. Communication between the staff of these facilities and patients or clients usually takes place in the state language; if it is a patient or client whose mother tongue is different from the state language, communication can be conducted in a language in which the patient or client can be understood. Staff is not required to speak a foreign language or a language of a national minority. Patients or clients belonging to a national minority may use their mother tongue in communication with the staff in these facilities in municipalities where the language of the national minority is used in official communication according to a special regulation.

230. A specific area of use of regional or minority languages is emergency calls to summon the emergency services of the integrated rescue system at the number 112. Pursuant to Act No. 129/2002 Coll. on the integrated rescue system, the coordination centre (CC) established by the district office in the regional headquarters ensures the reception of emergency calls at the number 112. If the relevant CC is unable to handle a call to the emergency number 112 due to the lack of knowledge of a foreign language by the operators present on the shift, it will ensure that the call is handled by a conference call with the operator of the CC that announced the presence of an operator who speaks the required foreign language in the report on taking over the shift service. The system for handling calls to the emergency number 112 in a minority language works effectively and contributes to the protection of the life and health of citizens who find themselves in an emergency situation. Specifically, the Operating

Centre of the Emergency Health Service of the Slovak Republic has operators of the shadow call line 155 who have a certified examination in communication in a specific foreign language.

231. From the factual point of view, the MoH SR participates in the preparation of the *Action Plan for the Health Priority Area* under the 2030 Strategy, within which an interdepartmental working group operates to support the implementation and evaluation of the Action Plan with the participation of administrators of individual activities. One of the administrators of the Action Plan activities is the contribution organization Healthy Regions of the MoH SR. The Healthy Regions organization implements the *Healthy Communities 2B and 3B* national projects, which ensure the permanent presence of Health Support Assistants (hereinafter referred to as “HSAs”) in selected hospital catchment areas and also in more than 300 locations with the presence of MRC. The National Project includes the HSA implementation program in the hospital environment. HSAs operate in the participating facilities with a task, among other things, to overcome language barriers between clients and hospital staff – communication mediation. Knowledge of the target group language (Roma, Hungarian, Slovak) is a qualifying requirement for the job position.

232. In June 2023, the Institute for Healthcare Analyses, in cooperation with the contribution organization Healthy Regions of the MoH SR, organized meetings in selected hospitals attended by hospital representatives, HSAs from municipalities and from the hospital environment. The purpose was to explain changes in hospitals related to the upcoming optimization of the hospital network to vulnerable groups, including MRC, through the helping professions. On the one hand, HSAs conveyed the concerns of their clients (travel times to hospitals, quality of medical procedures, etc.), and on the other hand, they will convey the obtained information to future mothers. The Ministry of Health considers it important to properly guide future mothers, plan the birth, prepare for arrival at the maternity hospital, and especially visits to the antenatal clinic.

233. In the monitored period, the amendment to Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on health care and on services related to the provision of health care was adopted. Effective from 1 August 2022, this Act refers to the Act on Minority Languages in the provision concerning instruction and informed consent. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM participated in the legislative process with a proposal to explicitly enshrine the obligation to provide instruction and informed consent by the health care provider in accordance with the Act on Minority Languages in the language of the national minority also in the relevant legal regulation.

Effective participation in socio-economic life: approach to economic life

234. Support for crisis intervention social services is implemented through national projects of the Implementation Agency of the MoLSAF SR. As part of the selection procedures for national projects, favourable criteria are applied to applicants – knowledge of a specific community and target group, experience of working with the target group and knowledge of the target group language.

235. Due to the ongoing critical situation in Ukraine and the related migration, a set of legislative measures⁸⁸ and activities were adopted in order to take relevant measures in the social field, such as:

- the one-time provision of a subsidy to support humanitarian aid was adjusted;

⁸⁸ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/199/20220607> (in Slovak)
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/326/20221007> (in Slovak)
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/131/20230501> (in Slovak)
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/109/20220611> (in Slovak)

- the capacities in the care homes for children up to 3 years of age increased by 10%;
- the target group of social services was adjusted to include applicants for asylum and the provision of additional or temporary protection;
- the conditions for providing selected types and forms of social services were adjusted;
- the provision of temporary accommodation was also made possible for persons arriving from Ukraine;
- the conditions for the proceedings on the dependency of natural persons arriving from Ukraine on the social service and the method of proving the amount of their income for the purpose of payment for the social service have been simplified;
- deadlines in administrative proceedings in the field of social services were adjusted;
- the qualification and other prerequisites for performing the work of a caregiver were adjusted;
- the entitlement to the provision of child care services in a children's group has been simplified;
- the creation and development of the child care service in the children's group and more.

236. Refugees from Ukraine who have applied for or been granted temporary protection can be provided with assistance in material need under the same conditions as citizens of the Slovak Republic. Provision of assistance in material need – provision of basic living conditions from 1 May to 15 September 2022 was taken over by international non-governmental organizations cooperating with the Ministry (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, International Organization for Migration, International Committee of the Red Cross).

237. The conditions for the provision of subsidies of the MoLSAF SR, provided to support children's school attendance, have been adjusted so that they can also be provided to children from Ukraine integrated into Slovak schools.

238. Regardless of the migration situation caused by the war conflict in Ukraine, Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services (hereinafter referred to as the “Social Services Act”) defines that recipients of social services may also include natural persons from third countries, if they meet the conditions established by law. The Social Services Act applies the principle of equal treatment in accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Act.

239. The needs of persons with serious disabilities who left Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict and are staying in the territory of the Slovak Republic were specifically addressed. Act No. 447/2008 Coll. on Cash Benefits for Compensation of Severe Disability defines also nationals of third countries to be participants in legal relations as long as they meet the conditions specified by law. The Act also defines the principle of equal treatment.

ARTICLE 16

No new facts.

ARTICLE 17

No new facts.

ARTICLE 18

240. In the monitored period, no measures were taken that would limit the possibilities to fulfil agreements with other countries or to establish and maintain cross-border cooperation in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to national minorities concerned.

241. The activities of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “MSHC”), created under the *Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the Hungarian Republic*, signed on 19 March 1995 in Paris, continued. In the monitored period, two plenary meetings of the XV Session of the MSHC were held – 13 September 2022 and 3 November 2022 in Budapest. The meetings were concluded without signing the joint minutes due to the request of the Hungarian side to include the Beneš decrees. Members of the Slovak section of the MSHC for state administration (MFEA SR, MESRS SR, MoI SR, MoC SR, the Office of Slovaks Living Abroad, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM) and self-government (Trnava Self-Governing Region, city of Komárno) provided full cooperation at the meeting and presented positions and comments on recommendations of the minutes from the point of view of their competence.

242. The tasks from the previous XIV Sessions are fulfilled by relevant ministries and entities. In December 2022, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic informed his partners about the current status of the XV Session of the MSHC and asked them to assess the possibility of implementing selected recommendations.

243. At the 23rd meeting of the Slovak-Bavarian Commission (27- 28 April 2023), the *Work Program of the Slovak-Bavarian Commission for the years 2023-2025* was signed. Within the framework of cooperation in the cultural area, the MoC SR is, among other things, responsible for the affairs of the German national minority, namely for the continuation of the digitization of written documents and periodicals about the culture of the German national minority in Slovakia and for the support of activities aimed at preserving and maintaining the culture of the German national minority (educational, cultural and geographical-historical seminars).

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

LIST OF RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE AND NON-LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS AND STATISTICS FOR THE REPORT

- 1. Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021 – 2022**
https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/3561/anglicka_verzia_spravy_2021-2022.pdf?csrt=6068306679536186300 (available in English)
- 2. Report on the State of Use of Languages of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic for 2021-2022**
https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/3562/report_eng.pdf?csrt=6068306679536186300 (available in English)
- 3. Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the years 2021-2025**
https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/3563/akcny_plan_ochrany_p_rav_osob_patriacich_k_narodnostnym_mensinam_a_etnickym_skupinam_na_roky_2021_-_2025.pdf?csrt=17694156177406827098 (available in Slovak)
- 4. Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030**
https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1526/strategy_of_equality_inclusion_and_participation_of_roma_until_2030.pdf?csrt=4755113708766966871 (available in English)
- 5. Action Plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2022-2024**
https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1526/action_plans_2022_2024_of_the_strategy_of_equality_inclusion_and_participation_of_roma_until_2030-1.pdf?csrt=4755113708766966871 (available in English)
- 6. Act No. 138/2017 of 10 May 2017 on the Fund for Promoting the Culture of National Minorities and on Amendments to Certain Acts**
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2017/138/20220801> (available in Slovak)
- 7. Act No. 182 of 5 May 2022 on Financial Support for the Hungarian Social and Cultural Association in Slovakia – Csemadok**
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/182/20220701> (available in Slovak)
- 8. Act No. 264 of 22 June 2022 on Media Services and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Media Services Act)**
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/264/20230101> (available in Slovak)
- 9. Act No. 532 of 15 December 2010 on Radio and Television of Slovakia and on Amendments to Certain Acts**
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2010/532/20230701> (available in Slovak)
- 10. Act No. 265 of 22 June 2022 on Publishers of Publications and on the Register in the Field of Media and Audiovisual Media and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Publications Act)**
<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2022/265/20220801> (available in Slovak)
- 11. Vision for the Development of Roma Culture, Language and Identity Support and the Action Plan for 2022-2024**
https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/27460/1?fbclid=IwAR1oIbJ8DDE6K73dNGpsAEccnD-x5IS7UBkZ5Is_bHU33_jesPsq1N0LoOA (available in Slovak)

12. Information on Annual Reports on the Activities of National Minority Museums in Slovakia in 2022

(Annex No. 3 to the minutes of the 49th meeting of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups)

<https://narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/vybor-pre-narodnostne-mensiny-a-etnicke-skupiny/zasadnutia-vnmes/?csrt=5219974078921286> (available in Slovak)

13. Annual Report on the Culture of National Minorities 2022

https://www.culture.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NM1-01_o_kulture_narodnostnych_mensin_2022.pdf (available in Slovak)

14. Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021 – 2022

(statistical information on education in national minority languages: p. 76-79)

https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/3561/anglicka_verzia_spravy_2021-2022.pdf?csrt=6068306679536186300 (available in English)

15. 2023 Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic – “Only together can we face the challenges of the 21st century”

https://www.vlada.gov.sk/share/uvsr/vlada/pvvsr_odpocet.pdf?csrt=2958044886289861047 (available in Slovak)

16. Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (Education Act) and on amendments to certain acts, as amended

(definition of national minority education pursuant to: §§ 2, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 12)

(definition of educational publication pursuant to: §§ 12 and 13)

<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2008/245/20230901> (available in Slovak)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Act No. 265/2022 Coll.: Act No. 265/2022 Coll. on Publishers of Publications and on the Register in the Field of Media and Audiovisual Media and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Publications Act)
- Act No. 300/1993 Coll.: NC SR Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on Name and Surname, as amended
- Act No. 596/2003 Coll.: Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government and on Amendments to Certain Acts
- Act on Minority Languages: Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, as amended
- Action Plans: Action Plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2022-2024
- 2021-2025 Action Plan: Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the years 2021-2025
- Anti-Discrimination Act: Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and on amendments to certain acts (Anti-Discrimination Act)
- Centre: Legal Assistance Centre
- CERD: UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- CM of the Council of Europe: Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- CMS: Council for Media Services
- CNMEG: Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality
- Concept: Concept of Combating the Radicalisation and Extremism by 2024
- Council: Council of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations
- Counselling Centre: Counselling Centre for Civil and Human Rights
- Constitution: Constitution of the Slovak Republic
- Decree: MESRS SR Decree No. 202/2022 Coll. of 3 June 2022, establishing the criteria for determining the maximum number of students in the first year of secondary schools
- Education Act: Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education (Education Act) and on amendments to certain acts, as amended
- Employment NAP: National Action Plan for Women's Employment for 2022-2030
- Equality AP: Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities for the years 2021-2027
- Equality Strategy: *National Strategy of Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities in the Slovak Republic for the years 2021-2027*
- EU: European Union
- Framework Convention: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- Fund: Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities
- Fund Act: Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended
- Government Council: Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality
- Grant Scheme: Grant Scheme to Support Early Care and Early Intervention for Children Aged 0-6, Especially from Marginalized Roma Communities and Generational Poverty
- HSA: Health Support Assistant
- Inclusive Strategy: Strategy of Inclusive Education and Training
- language advisory group: advisory group for ensuring the alignment of practice with the applicable act on the use of languages of national minorities
- Media Services Act: Act No. 264/2022 Coll. on Media Services and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Media Services Act)

- MESRS SR: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
- MFEA SR: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic
- MoC SR: Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic
- MoH SR: Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic
- MoI SR: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
- MoJ SR: Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic
- MoLSAF SR: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
- MoT SR: Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic
- MRC: marginalized Roma communities
- MSHC: Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs
- MŠ: kindergartens
- National Centre: Slovak National Centre for Human Rights
- NAP: National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for the years 2022-2027
- NEP: National Education Programme
- NIEY: National Institute of Education and Youth
- NC SR: National Council of the Slovak Republic
- NP LS: National Project Support for Land Settlement in Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities
- NP A-LS: National Project Assistance to Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities in Land Settlement under Dwellings
- Plenipotentiary for NM: Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities
- Plenipotentiary for RC: Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities
- police officers: members of the Police Force
- PPF: Presidium of the Police Force
- PRIM II: National Project Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities II
- Regulation No. 35/2023 Coll.: Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 35/2023 Coll., issuing a list of municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 15% of the population
- RICPaP: Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology
- RTVS: Radio and Television of Slovakia
- SDE: socially disadvantaged environment
- Seminar: Follow-up seminar on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Slovak Republic
- Slovak Government: Government of the Slovak Republic
- Slovak Government Office: Government Office of the Slovak Republic
- Slovak Railways: Railways of the Slovak Republic
- SNM: Slovak National Museum
- SO SR: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
- Social Services Act: Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services and on Amendments to Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing, as amended
- State Language Act: Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the State Language, as amended
- TEM: temporary equalizing measures
- The Office of the Plenipotentiary for NM: The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities
- The Office of the Plenipotentiary for RC: The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities
- 2021 PHC: 2021 Population and Housing Census

- 2030 Strategy: Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030