



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



ACFC/SR/VI(2023)006

Sixth Report submitted by Slovenia

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
received on 25 July 2023**

**SIXTH PERIODICAL REPORT
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

SINCE THE SUBMISSION OF THE FIFTH REPORT (OF 6 FEBRUARY 2020)
OR UNTIL THE DELIVERY OF THE REPORT

6 JULY 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Slovenia ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter: the Convention) in 1998. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia hereby submits to the Advisory Committee on the Convention the Sixth Periodic Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia, namely from the submission of the Fifth Periodic Report of 6 February 2020 until the date of delivery of the report.

The protection and promotion of respect for human rights, including minority rights, is of great importance to Slovenia. As a State Party, it values its excellent cooperation with the bodies of the Council of Europe with regard to the implementation of the Convention and other monitoring mechanisms. It is also satisfied with the Advisory Committee's finding that the level of protection of national minorities in Slovenia is high.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Government) prepared the Sixth Periodic Report on the Implementation of the Convention (hereinafter: the Sixth Report) based on the findings and recommendations from the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee and its previous opinions, and the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention by Slovenia, which took place on 28 and 29 November 2022 in Ljubljana, and based on Resolution No CM/ResCMN(2022)9 of 30 November 2022. The Government strives to implement them, taking into account all the relevant legislative and other aspects.

Since the Convention does not contain a definition of the term 'national minority', and each party to the Convention is therefore free to determine which ethnic groups are to be treated as national minorities covered by the Convention within their respective territories, the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: Slovenia), in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 33/91-I, 42/97 – UZS68, 66/00 – UZ80, 24/03 – UZ3a, 47, 68, 69/04 – UZ14, 69/04 – UZ43, 69/04 – UZ50, 68/06 – UZ121,140,143, 47/13 – UZ148, 47/13 – UZ90,97,99, 75/16 – UZ70a in 92/21 – UZ62a; hereinafter: the Constitution) and its national legislation, upon ratifying the Convention, declared in writing that the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia are regarded as national minorities. The rules in the Convention also apply to the members of the Roma community living in Slovenia, pursuant to the Constitution and other legislative acts of Slovenia.

Slovenia guarantees special constitutional rights to members of national communities and the Roma community, namely: it guarantees not only to individual members of minorities but also to communities, representation in national or local representative bodies, special rights regardless of the number of members of the minority, and has expressly undertaken to support, materially and morally, the exercise of such rights.¹

¹ "In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, everyone, irrespective of their nationality, has the right to freely express their national affiliation, to foster and give expression to their culture, and to use their language and script, particularly in procedures before national and other authorities deciding on their rights. In addition to the mentioned rights, the Italian and Hungarian national communities are guaranteed additional special collective rights (the right to use their national symbols freely, the right to education and schooling in their own languages, the right to foster relations with their nations of origin, the right to establish their own self-governing communities, the right to be represented in representative bodies, and the right to give consent

Since members of national minorities are citizens of Slovenia, it is all the more important that they are guaranteed special status by the State. The collective and individual rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and their members are laid down in the Constitution in Articles 5, 11, 61, 62 and 64, while the collective rights of Roma are regulated by a special Act and sector-specific legislation.

In the process of monitoring the Convention, Slovenia also considers issues related to other ethnic communities in Slovenia pursuant to the Declaration on the Status of National Communities of Members of Nations of the Former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Declaration), adopted in 2011, and issues related to rights arising from Article 61 of the Constitution.

The Declaration ensures continuous concern for creating opportunities for the members of the communities of Albanians, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians and Serbs to preserve and develop their identity. It also provides the basis for the foundation of a permanent advisory body concerning the questions of these national communities.

The Government therefore adopted Decision No 00405-6/2022/4 of 10 November 2022 establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to national communities of members of nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Council), comprising representatives of Albanians, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians and Serbs, and the ministries responsible for culture, internal affairs, foreign and European affairs, labour, family social affairs and equal opportunities, and education, respectively, and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities (hereinafter: the Government Office for National Minorities).

On 20 December 2022, the Government adopted Decision No 012-59/2022-3340-14 establishing the Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia within the new Government, consisting of representatives of organisations of the Germanophone ethnic group in Slovenia and representatives of the ministries responsible for culture, foreign and European affairs, and education, respectively, and the Government Office for National Minorities (hereinafter: the Working Group). The Working Group is tasked with considering the topics within the remit of the participating ministries, including language and culture, thus ensuring the preservation and further development of linguistic and cultural diversity. The Working Group established under the term of the Government was established in 2020.

The competent national authorities (ministries and government offices), as well as the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the Public Institution Radiotelevizija Slovenija, the Coastal Italian Self-Governing National Community and the Council of the Roma Community of the Republic of

to the adoption of regulations that concern their rights). Roma are guaranteed only some of these collective rights, for example the right to be represented in municipal councils."

(Ustavno pravno varstvo manjšinskih narodnih skupnosti v Sloveniji (Constitutional protection of minority national communities in Slovenia), Ciril Ribičič, 2004, <https://revus.revues.org/1530>)

Slovenia, were involved in the Sixth Report's preparation. The Hungarian Self-Governing National Community of Pomurje was also invited to participate but did not respond.

The Sixth Report of the Republic of Slovenia on the Implementation of the Convention is provided below.

PART I

1. *Measures taken to raise awareness of the results of the fifth monitoring cycle and the Convention*

1. **On which websites were the opinion on the fifth cycle and the related Resolution of the Committee of Ministers published, and in which languages, including minority languages? Provide the relevant links.**

The Fifth Opinion on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was published on 23 September 2022 on the website of the Government Office for National Minorities in the Slovenian and English languages, along with Comments on the findings and recommendations to the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the Implementation of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia, adopted by the Government on 15 September 2022. The news and documents are available at: (<https://www.gov.si/novice/2022-09-23-peto-mnenje-o-uresnicevanju-okvirne-konvencije-za-varstvo-narodnih-manjsin-v-sloveniji/>).

The Resolution on the Implementation of the Convention (CM/ResCMN(2022)9) was published on the website of the Government Office for National Minorities on 2 December 2022 in the English language (<https://www.gov.si/novice/2022-12-02-resolucija-o-uedbi-okvirne-konvencije-za-varstvo-narodnih-manjsin-na-odboru-ministrov-sveta-evrope/>).

2. **Which national monitoring activities were organised, including activities organised in collaboration with the Council of Europe, and what were the outcomes?**

On 28 and 29 November 2022, the Government Office for National Minorities and the Advisory Committee held a follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention based on the Fifth Opinion. Accordingly, the Government Office for Equal Opportunities submitted to the Advisory Committee, on 16 December 2022, 9 January 2023 and 20 March 2023, Slovenia's replies to the measures proposed at the follow-up meeting.

The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to national communities of members of nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia held regular sessions on 31 January 2022, 7 December 2022 and 18 April 2023, and a correspondence session that took place between 21 and 23 February 2023.

Meetings between ministry and government office representatives and the representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community are held daily to address current matters.

3. In what way were minority and other non-governmental organisations involved in the preparation of the Sixth Report?

Slovenia explains that various competent national authorities worked on preparing this report. The Sixth Report was also considered and approved at a correspondence session that took place between 26 June 2023 and 5 July 2023 by the Interministerial Working Group for Human Rights (hereinafter: the Interministerial Working Group), which was established by the Government in April 2013 to coordinate reporting under ratified international instruments for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and reporting on the basis of other mechanisms, as well as to monitor the implementation of assumed human rights obligations. The work of the Interministerial Working Group is organised and coordinated by the ministry responsible for foreign affairs. The Interministerial Working Group is composed of representatives of ministries and government offices, the civil society and the academic community. The Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality have an open invitation to attend the sessions of the Interministerial Working Group.

On 24 October 2022, the umbrella organisations of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community were invited to submit their proposals and opinions for the preparation of the Sixth Report. Having failed to respond, they were again invited to do so on 27 January 2023. The umbrella organisation of the Italian national community and the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia responded to the second invitation. Their responses are enclosed.

4. What other measures were taken to raise awareness of the Convention among the members of national minorities, public employees, local and regional authorities and the general public?

Slovenia strives to publish documents, reports and results and inform all interested parties of the documents of the Council of Europe. Accordingly, all competent national authorities have been informed of the adoption of important documents, information in that respect has also been provided to the public, and documents or links to them have been published on the websites of competent national authorities. The documents were also sent to the umbrella organisations of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community.

PART II

Measures taken to improve the implementation of the Framework Convention and to implement the recommendations based on the fifth cycle

Article 3 of the Convention

Personal scope of application (Reply to Recommendation No 32)

1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

Slovenia explains that a State Party to the Convention is free in interpreting the scope of the Convention's application of *ratione personae* to take into account the prevailing special circumstances in Slovenia. Upon ratifying the Convention, Slovenia made a relevant statement regarding national communities and the Roma community in Slovenia.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

As part of the "CRP 2021" Target Research Programme, the "Analysis of the Situation of the Croatian, German and Serbian Communities in the Republic of Slovenia" was carried out by the European Faculty of Law of the New University in 2022.

A scientific article based on the research project reads:

"In addition to three groups with constitutional protection, many other ethnic groups live in Slovenia, from the German, Croatian and Serbian to the Spanish, Ukrainian and many other ethnic groups that do not hold the status of a national community with special protection. The State nevertheless supports the work of some of these groups and the preservation of their identity in various ways. This mostly concerns members of social groups that arrived here recently due to family, economic or other reasons, including the Croatian, German and Serbian communities (although some of these members possess certain autochthonous attributes, i.e. were historically settled in a specific concentrated area). Slovenia has opted for a model with a very restrictive number of communities holding special rights, and granting a very broad range of minority rights to the two communities meeting these criteria. The Bosniak, Albanian, Montenegrin and Macedonian ethnic groups primarily refer to the size of their populations, as they fail to meet the criterion of an autochthonous community. The history of the German, Croatian and Serbian ethnic groups is somewhat different, however. Today, the German and Serbian communities preserve only the traditional customs of their past settlement in the autochthonous territory. Furthermore, there are hardly any members of the German community still living in the historical autochthonous area. The Croatian community also refers to their autochthonous settlement, but researchers and activists have yet to discover actual locations. The question that therefore arises is how these communities could absorb the same collective rights as those enjoyed by the Italian and Hungarian national communities, if they were granted the same constitutional status."

The Analysis of the Situation of the Croatian, German and Serbian Communities in the Republic of Slovenia, carried out by the European Faculty of Law of the New University, was presented at the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention by Slovenia, which took place on 28 and 29 November 2022 in Ljubljana. The entire study was also sent to the Advisory Committee on the Convention.

Slovenia is not planning any amendments to its Constitution in this respect.

Article 3 of the Convention

Personal scope of application (Reply to Recommendation No 38)

1.

Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

With regard to the collection of accurately disaggregated data about ethnic affiliation and language competence in cooperation with representatives of national and ethnic communities, Slovenia explains that, on 26 January 2023, the new Personal Data Protection Act (ZVOP-2, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], No 163/22) entered into force, which provides in Article 2 (prohibition of discrimination concerning the processing of personal data) that the processing of personal data is prohibited if it is carried out in such a way that it causes or results in unjustified discrimination based on national origin, race, skin colour, religion, ethnic affiliation, gender, language, political or other conviction, sexual orientation, gender identity, financial situation, place of birth, education, social status, disability, citizenship, place or type of residence, medical condition, genetic background or any other personal circumstance of the individual. However, the ZVOP-2 provides as an exception in the public sector the possibility of processing special types of personal data about a person's ethnic or national affiliation (paragraph five of Article 6 of the ZVOP-2) if the legal basis for such processing is stipulated by an (other – sector-specific) Act requiring the consent of the data subject or an Act stipulating the processing of such data in respect of which a person freely expresses their preference. This legislative provision is to be used only for a very narrow range of purposes, where the processing of special types of personal data is required to ensure certain rights, incentives or benefits for individuals or to ensure or enable the equal treatment, equal opportunities and guaranteed special rights of members of national or ethnic communities in the Republic of Slovenia.

Moreover, Slovenia explains that, the first register-based population census was carried out in 2011. This means that it was conducted only on the basis of register data from administrative sources, rather than field survey questionnaires. It was carried out in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses, and the Annual Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2011 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], No 93/10). The regulation specified the obligatory topics, which do not include national/ethnic affiliation or language. Accordingly, data on national/ethnic affiliation and language were not collected, as they are not available for the entire population in any of the used administrative sources in Slovenia. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia as the competent national authority does not conduct any statistical surveys collecting data on national/ethnic affiliation or language.

In 2015, 2018 and 2021, register-based population, households and housing censuses were carried out in accordance with the relevant regulation and based on annual programmes of statistical surveys, using the same methodology and the same administrative sources as in 2011. The next census in Slovenia is envisaged in 2025 according to the same methodology as all previous register-based censuses.

Data on national affiliation and language are not included in the data collected as part of the European Statistical System or Eurostat. At the EU level, there is therefore no binding legal act requiring the collection of data on national affiliation or language.

International Recommendations for population censuses provide that data on national/ethnic affiliation and language may be collected, but their collection is left to the decision of each individual country. It is not a legally binding document but rather a set of methodological recommendations for conducting censuses. All topics in Chapter XII (Ethno-cultural characteristics) of these recommendations are non-obligatory topics.

As part of the European Statistical System (hereinafter: the ESS), there is an ongoing discussion about the need for data concerning discrimination (based on gender, race or ethnic affiliation, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation). The aspects that enable the consideration of equality or discrimination based on gender, age and disability are covered quite well in various studies conducted as part of the ESS. As part of the ESS, the country's opinion is that data such as those on religion, sexual orientation, race or ethnic affiliation cannot be the subject of surveys conducted as part of the ESS due to their sensitive nature but that it would be more appropriate for special, specialised surveys to be conducted by organisations dealing specifically with this topic. The Statistical Office of the European Union has already commenced talks with certain EU organisations on the subject.

2. *Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle*
 - Personal Data Protection Act (the ZVOP-2, Uradni list RS [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia], No 163/22)

Article 4 of the Convention

Legal and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities (Reply to Recommendation No 53)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

In Slovenia, the Convention does not apply to members of the Germanophone ethnic group or members of the Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian national communities, but Slovenia's declaration on the scope of application of the Convention (Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community) made when the Convention instrument was deposited is binding on all national authorities.

Article 4 of the Convention

Institutional framework for combatting discrimination

(Reply to Recommendation No 65)*1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Taking into account the position and the mandate of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Ombudsman) and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Advocate), Slovenia responds that both institutions are independent under the legislation. The Ombudsman will submit an alternative report with regard to the Sixth Report. Certain activities that will take place in 2023 and later on were presented by the Ombudsman and Advocate representatives at the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention by Slovenia, which took place on 28 and 29 November 2022, and are described below.

In response to the recommendation, the Ombudsman adopted a plan of activities for 2023, aimed at raising awareness of their mandate among national and ethnic communities and to strengthen its relationship with them.

The plan envisages the distribution of a brochure describing the Ombudsman's mandate and how people can contact the institution; awareness-raising in relevant media; meetings with representatives of national and ethnic communities; visits to Roma settlements; the organisation of the "Ombudsman's field business days" in areas of the Italian and Hungarian national communities; the presentation of the Ombudsman's mandate to Roma Council members; and consultation with national community organisations in preparing the alternative report for the Advisory Committee as part of the Convention.

At the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention held in November 2022 in Ljubljana, the Ombudsman presented the institution's mandate and a draft plan of activities for raising awareness among the representatives of national and ethnic communities.

At the beginning of 2023, the brochure on the Ombudsman's work and mandate was translated into the Albanian, Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Macedonian languages (supplementing translations into Italian, Hungarian, German and three varieties of Romani). In January and February 2023, the Ombudsman conducted its "field business days" in Ankaran (the Italian national community) and Lendava (the Hungarian national community). These days are designed to make the Ombudsman available to people who cannot attend a meeting at the Ombudsman's offices in Ljubljana due to distance or other reasons. In February 2023, the Ombudsman presented the institution's work and mandate to the newly-elected Roma Council members at an event organised by the Government Office for National Minorities.

At the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention, the Advocate representative provided the following explanations in response to the recommendation:

1. The Advocate responds on a regular basis to proposals for cooperation with civil society organisations working in the field of rights and statuses of groups of people with various personal circumstances and, in the reporting period, also accepted invitations to attend various events and contributed information in the implementation of a civil society organisation's project on the status of Roma in Slovenia.

2. The Advocate's cooperation with civil society organisations includes written enquiries or collection of information on their perceived discrimination. These enquiries also involve civil society organisations dealing with the status and rights of minority communities. This is one of the Advocate's activities to exercise its statutory powers and perform the tasks of monitoring the general situation in relation to discrimination and leading a dialogue with civil society organisations.
 3. For those who do not understand or read Slovenian well, the Advocate issued easy-read publications in paper and electronic formats. One such publication is a brochure presenting the basics of protection against discrimination. The forms for submitting proposals to address discrimination to the Advocate and instructions on how to complete these forms are also available in easy read format.
 4. Information on the Advocate's work and powers is available on its website in the official languages (i.e. in Italian and Hungarian as well) and in English. The Advocate also issues regular annual reports on its work (full and summary versions) in the official languages and in English. The Advocate also issued publications in Italian and Hungarian providing information on its powers and types of assistance to victims of discrimination.
 5. The Advocate is drafting a special publication in Romani. It will inform members of the Roma community who think that they are discriminated against about their rights to protection against discrimination and legal protection.
 6. In 2023, the Advocate plans to carry out a number of awareness-raising activities in general and some specifically designed for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities. These activities will continue in 2024.
 7. The Advocate has visited Roma settlements on several occasions. It was forced to suspend them due to the COVID-19 epidemic, but it plans to resume these visits in the future.
3. *Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures*
- The Ombudsman's and the Advocate's presentations at the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention that took place on 28 and 29 November 2022 were sent to the Advisory Committee immediately after the meeting.

Article 4 of the Convention

Promotion of full and effective equality (Reply to Recommendation No 74)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia explains that, at the end of 2020, within the municipal financing system, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the National Assembly), following the Government's proposal, adopted the Municipal Costs Reduction Act (hereinafter: the ZFRO), which entered into force on 1 January 2021. With this Act, the Financing of Municipalities Act (hereinafter: the ZFO-1) was amended to include a new article (Article 20a), providing additional funding to co-finance obligations of municipalities with registered Roma settlements.

Pursuant to Article 20a of the ZFO-1, municipalities with registered Roma settlements shall be provided funds from the state budget for each fiscal year in the amount of 3.5% of eligible expenditure of municipalities for co-financing the obligations of municipalities with a permanently settled Roma community. A transitional period was established, during which municipalities received a quarter of the amount due in 2021, half in 2022, three-quarters in 2023, and will receive the full amount each year from 2024 onwards. Since 2021, the Government Office for National Minorities has provided additional funding to municipalities with registered Roma settlements determined by the Government in Decision No 41001-6/2020/3 of 7 January 2021.

Based on the initiative and the needs of certain municipalities and on the Government's proposal, the National Assembly adopted on 22 December 2021 the Act Amending the Financing Municipality Act (hereinafter: the ZFO-1D) amending Article 20a pertaining to the provision of additional funding for municipalities with Roma settlements. This amendment provided that, for municipalities in the statistical region where the NUTS3 development threat index, as determined on the basis of the Act governing the promotion of balanced regional development, is more than 125, the amount shall be increased by 100% every year during the programme period (this mainly concerns the municipalities of Pomurje).

Funds for co-financing the obligations of municipalities with registered Roma settlements shall be transferred to the respective municipalities in two instalments, this by 20 March and 20 September of the current year. Municipalities received EUR 1,520,685 in 2021 and EUR 3,836,143 in 2022. More than EUR 6.2 million in total will be transferred to municipalities in 2023 and more than EUR 8.3 million, with a lump sum expenditure of EUR 700, is expected to be transferred in 2024 (tables under point 3).

Slovenia also explains that it is the task of local communities to provide basic utility infrastructure (including drinking water, sanitation and electricity). They must carry out related activities in a comprehensive manner (in confined areas as per number of population units according to EU standards) and to the same extent for all inhabitants in their respective territories. The provision of basic utilities in the sense of secondary connections to individual structures/residential buildings is linked to the fulfilment of minimum requirements of spatial planning and building regulations (ownership, strength and safety of the structure, paid appertaining financial obligations, etc.). The State therefore provides municipalities having registered Roma settlements with additional funding for each fiscal year in the amount of 3.5% of the municipality's eligible expenditure and, in order to promote balanced regional development, additionally co-finances municipalities' projects for the development of basic utility infrastructure in Roma settlements through public calls for tenders.

With respect to the tackling of living conditions of the members of the Roma community, the ministries responsible for the environment and spatial planning strive to ensure that solutions comply with the Constitution and respect the equality of citizens and believe that the existing legislation governing spatial planning, construction and the environment, along with the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act, provides an adequate framework for all stakeholders to contribute to improving the living conditions of the Roma community.

The State also allocates budget funds to municipalities to promote balanced regional development and to co-finance basic utility infrastructure projects in Roma settlements. The two-year Public call for tenders for co-financing infrastructure projects for basic utilities in Roma settlements in 2023 and 2024 (amounting to EUR 1,465,115 in 2023 and EUR 1 million in 2024) was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 17/23, on 10 February 2023. The deadline for submission of tenders was 30 March 2023. In response to the public call, 14 tenders from 12 municipalities were submitted, all of which were approved. Under the first public call, nine projects will be co-financed in 2023 up to the total amount of EUR 950,674.07, and five projects in 2024 up to the total amount of EUR 746,304.14. As there were funds left in the call budget, a second public call was published in Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 64/23 for the same purposes. The deadline for submission of tenders under the second call was 20 July 2023. The tender documents and application forms are available on the website of the ministry responsible for cohesion and regional development: <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-kohezijo-in-regionalni-razvoj/javne-objave-ministrstva-za-kohezijo-in-regionalni-razvoj/>.

The subject of the public tender is the co-financing of municipalities' investment projects in public transport, utilities and electricity infrastructure in registered Roma settlements, for the following justified purposes:

- a) construction, renovation or modernisation of water supply to the point of a consumer's connection;
- b) construction, renovation or modernisation of sewerage systems and small municipal wastewater treatment plants from a consumer's connection to the nearest facility (water) of the public sewerage system;
- c) electrification of compact Roma settlements;
- d) construction, reconstruction or modernisation of municipal public roads and paths with the required elements of a roadway.

The eligible costs of a project include:

- the cost of construction, finishing and installation works;
- the cost of expert construction supervision.

Municipalities with registered Roma settlements were eligible to submit tenders.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Financing of Municipalities Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 123/06, 57/08, 36/11, 14/15 – ZUUJFO, 71/17, 21/18 – corr., 80/20 – ZIUOOPE, 189/20 – ZFRO and 207/21)
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia No 41001-6/2020/3 of 7 January 2021 determining the final list of 25 eligible municipalities with registered Roma settlements
- Public call for tenders for co-financing infrastructure projects for basic utilities in Roma settlements in 2023 and 2024 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 17/23)

3. Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures

Overview of payments based on Article 20a of the ZFO-1 (in euros):

Municipality	2021	2022	2023	Plan for 2024
BELTINCI	44,067	179,386	291,164	388,218
BREŽICE	143,717	292,099	474,047	632,063
CANKOVA	10,867	45,092	73,390	97,854
ČRENŠOVCI	21,777	88,084	143,942	191,922
ČRNOMELJ	85,637	175,507	287,892	383,856
DOBROVNIK	8,659	35,628	56,972	75,962
GROSUPLJE	109,350	223,802	364,367	485,822
IVANČNA GORICA	101,093	209,056	342,780	457,040
KOČEVJE	96,988	198,450	321,952	429,269
KRŠKO	161,441	329,957	531,569	708,759
KUZMA	10,440	42,772	69,784	93,044
LENDAVA	57,004	233,186	388,416	517,888
METLIKA	45,746	94,016	153,998	205,331
MURSKA SOBOTA	91,367	370,800	599,326	799,102
NOVO MESTO	193,477	396,410	646,891	862,521
PUCONCI	40,921	167,412	270,542	360,722
RIBNICA	55,500	115,090	186,164	248,218
ROGAŠOVCI	20,879	84,252	137,772	183,696
SEMIČ	28,046	57,086	92,576	123,435
ŠALOVCI	11,262	45,824	73,306	97,742
ŠENTJERNEJ	44,382	91,457	149,654	199,538
ŠKOCJAN	22,673	46,982	77,047	102,729
TIŠINA	21,247	86,090	138,116	184,154
TREBNJE	77,350	158,667	261,029	348,038
TURNIŠČE	16,795	69,038	109,850	146,466
Total:	1,520,685	3,836,143	6,242,546	8,323,389

Article 5 of the Convention

Preservation and development of minority identities, languages and cultural heritage (Reply to Recommendation No 86)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia explains that, pursuant to Articles 59 and 65 of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 77/07 – official consolidated version and the following; hereinafter: the ZUJIK), the ministry responsible for

culture finances the annual cultural programmes of the Italian and Hungarian national communities under an annual public call on the basis of a direct invitation sent to the central organisations of the two national communities, i.e. the Coastal Italian Self-Governing National Community (hereinafter: the OSSIN community) and the Hungarian Self-Governing National Community of Pomurje (hereinafter: the PMSNS community). The cultural programme includes the operation of an institution (funds for salaries, contributions and other employee expenditure, funds for general operating costs and funds for programme material costs) established by the national community, as well as funds dedicated to public tenders or invitations for other providers of the national community. Each year, the ministry responsible for culture sends to the central organisations of the national communities, by the end of October at the latest, a direct call for requests for the following calendar year. The selection of the specific content of cultural programmes, their priorities (annual, long-term and development-oriented) and performers organisationally falls under the competence of the national communities' central organisations, which, based on the directions of the competent ministry, decide how and through which activities members of national communities can satisfy their cultural needs and exercise their special rights regarding culture.

For 2020 the ministry responsible for culture provided funds for the cultural programmes of both national communities in the amount of EUR 794,014, of which EUR 331,626 was for the Italian national community and EUR 462,388 for the Hungarian national community programme.

For 2021, the amount was increased by EUR 47,807, namely based on the Agreement between the Government and the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities of 3 July 2020. The increased amount was earmarked for the new activities of the Institute for the Culture of the Hungarian National Community, the development of cultural activities and scientific research at the Carlo Combi Italian Centre and the salaries of employees of both institutions (promotions and performance bonuses). The amount of used funds in 2021 for both national communities totalled EUR 841,822, of which EUR 356,191 was for the Italian national community programme and EUR 485,630 for the Hungarian national community programme.

The funds increased again in 2022, namely by EUR 119,999 based on Annex 1 to the Agreement between the Government and the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities of 15 July 2021. The funds were earmarked for the new activities of the Institute for the Culture of the Hungarian National Community, namely for crafts, and for special activities (the celebration of the Year of Tartini) as part of the Italian national community's cultural programme. The amount of used funds in 2022 for both national communities totalled EUR 961,821, of which EUR 376,191 was for the Italian national community programme and EUR 585,630 for the Hungarian national community programme.

The ministry responsible for culture financed seven employees of the Institute for the Culture of the Hungarian National Community until 2022, and 10 employees since 2022. It finances three employees of the Carlo Combi Italian Centre.

In addition to the two institutions, cultural programmes are carried out by all four Italian self-governing national communities (Koper, Izola, Piran and Ankaran) and the Lendava Information Institute on behalf of the Hungarian community.

Pursuant to Article 65 of the ZUJIK, the ministry responsible for culture finances, based on the annual public tender, various cultural projects aimed at the preservation, promotion and development of Roma culture, language and identity, the promotion of Roma community members' cultural activity and creativity, cultural integration while preserving cultural diversity and awareness-raising on the culture and language of the Roma community. The tender is open to the Roma community's non-profit cultural organisations with the status of legal entity governed by private law that are registered for the performance of cultural and artistic activities and the provision of cultural goods in Slovenia and have been for at least one year from the date of registration working on the Roma community, and for culture professionals of the Roma community in Slovenia who have the status of self-employed professionals in culture.

The ministry responsible for culture approved the co-financing of projects in all areas of culture: editorial and publishing activity, website editing and hosting, activity of cultural groups, cultural animation, Roma language preservation activities, international cooperation, mutual cultural cooperation of various minority ethnic groups, presentations of Roma cultural activities and problems to the broader environment, events, lectures, seminars, workshops, digitalisation, etc.

In 2020, a total of EUR 92,115 was approved to co-finance 66 projects. 59 projects in the total amount of EUR 81,715 were carried out. In 2020, the realisation (91.59%) was the lowest since the introduction of this special tender. The reason for this was the COVID-19 epidemic, as providers faced trouble or even impossibility in implementing projects. The first complication was the process of contract signing, which was delayed until autumn for certain providers due to a temporary suspension of the fulfilment of budget obligations. To ease the situation, providers had the possibility of requesting an extension of the deadline for the completion of their project (up to one year), which some of them did and obtained annexes to their contracts.

In 2021, the realisation was high (99.11%) despite certain government measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and the possibility to extend the project completion deadline, which the providers no longer took advantage of. 71 projects totalling EUR 92,115 were approved and 70 projects totalling EUR 91,296 were carried out.

In 2022, the funding available under the tender in question increased, resulting in the approval of 86 projects totalling EUR 142,114 and the realisation or payment of EUR 141,599.11 for 85 projects, a 99.64% realisation.

Article 6 of the Convention

Intercultural dialogue and mutual respect (Reply to Recommendation No 98)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia again explains that Radiotelevizija Slovenija (hereinafter: RTV Slovenia) is an independent public institution of special cultural and national importance. It performs a public service in radio and television activities as specified by the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, for the purpose of providing for the democratic, social and cultural needs of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenes throughout the world, members of the Slovene national minorities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, and the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia.

The founder of the public institution RTV Slovenia is the Republic of Slovenia. The founder's duty shall be to ensure the institutional autonomy and editorial independence of RTV Slovenia and appropriate financing for provision of the public service.

As part of its public service remit, RTV Slovenia also provides the creating, producing, archiving and broadcasting of:

- one radio and television channel each for the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities (hereinafter: the national community channel) and radio and television broadcasts for the Roma ethnic community (hereinafter: broadcasts for Roma);
- radio and television channels for Slovenian national minorities in neighbouring countries and for Slovenian expatriates and migrant workers; and
- radio and television channels for the foreign public.

RTV Slovenia's programme policy is the sole responsibility of the Programme Board of RTV Slovenia, which means that it adopts a programme and production plan concordant with the financial capacity of RTV Slovenia. The Programme Board appoints the Programme Committees for the Italian and Hungarian national community channels, which (among other things) have the following responsibilities:

- the Programme Committees for the national community channels grant their consent to the appointment of respective commissioning editors for the national community channels, and to the channel's scope and programme plan, programme standards and programme scheme, which must be appropriate to the financial capacities of RTV Slovenia and to the regulations governing its work;
- address fulfilment of the programme plan and programme production plan and also that part of the annual report of RTV Slovenia relating to the national community channels;
- address the comments and suggestions of viewers and listeners of the national community channels and indicate their position in this regard;
- offer initiatives to the Programme Board for dealing with issues in the area of the national community channels;
- perform other tasks in the area of national community channels.

Given that RTV Slovenia is a public institution of special importance, granted institutional and editorial autonomy by law, issues concerning HR (the shortage of journalists) and programme scope (increasing the duration and frequency of RTV broadcasts in Hungarian and Romani) fall under the remit of RTV Slovenia. Any changes to the scope of public service or the manner of its performance can be made solely on the basis of an amendment to the law.

Despite the public institution's independence, Slovenia has recently devoted special attention to the issues of RTV broadcasts for the national communities and secured additional funding for the creation and broadcasting of radio and television channels for the Italian and Hungarian

national communities, as presented under point 3. RTV Slovenia can therefore use additional funds for tackling the HR shortage and promoting awareness, respect and understanding with regard to national communities, for the creation and broadcasting of RTV broadcasts.

Pursuant to Article 4 of the Mass Media Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 110/06 – official consolidated version and the following), the ministry responsible for culture supports the mass media in the creation and dissemination of programmes important (among other things) for exercising the right of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenes living abroad, members of the Slovene national minorities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, the Hungarian and Italian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia, and the Roma community in Slovenia to inform the public and be informed.

Furthermore, Slovenia explains that, based on regular annual public tenders for the co-financing of media programmes, the ministry responsible for culture provides funds to co-finance:

- plural and democratic general news printed media,
- plural and democratic programmes of radio and television channels and electronic publications, and
- the development of the programmes of radio and television channels with the status of local, regional or student radio or television channel or non-profit radio or television channel.

The regular annual tender for the co-financing of media programmes published in 2022 (JPR-MV-2022) co-financed five projects (totalling EUR 334,075.59) dealing, among other things, with the issues of both national communities and the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia, namely:

- Pomurski dnevnik – TV IDEA – KANAL 10, d. o. o. – The news broadcast mainly focuses on the life and state of the Hungarian national and Roma ethnic communities that have a strong presence in this local environment (amount of co-financing: EUR 100,000),
- Most sožitja (Bridge of Coexistence) – UNION OF ROMA OF SLOVENIA (Radio Romic) – The Bridge of Coexistence project contains stories that counter prejudices against Roma, present the issues, life, habits and culture of the Roma. The broadcasts are in Slovenian and partly in Romani (amount of co-financing: EUR 29,964.92),
- Zahodno dolenjski odmevi – UNIVOX, d. o. o. (Radio Univox) – The Romani urica broadcast provides information to the Roma and contributes to better cooperation between the Roma and other members of the population, reports on the life of the Roma, their cultural participation, their habits and their education (amount of co-financing: EUR 68,111.03),
- Aktualno – osrednje informativne oddaje na Murskem valu (central informative programmes on Murski val) – RADIO MURSKI VAL, d. o. o. (Radio Murski val) – the central informative programme places particular emphasis on content relating to the Porabje Slovenians, cooperation with the neighbouring Austria, Hungary and Croatia, the lives and work of Hungarians and Roma in Prekmurje. A constant feature of the programme covers border issues and national politics in view of the fact that the Murski val radio operates in the area populated by the Hungarian national community and the

- Roma ethnic community as well as in the neighbourhood area – Porabje, populated with members of the Slovenian nationality (amount of co-financing: EUR 35,999.64),
- Goriška danes (Goriška Today) – Radio Robin, radijska dejavnost, d. o. o. (Radio Robin) – the programmes cover current topics relevant to the life and work of the Italian minority and play an important role in maintaining ties of Slovenians in the neighbouring countries with the motherland. Current topics in the Goriška region are relevant to both the Italian minority and Slovenians in neighbouring countries, and are partly distributed in minority languages (amount of co-financing: EUR 100,000).

Slovenia is engaged in curriculum reform in response to new needs and in awareness-raising about the work and powers of the Ombudsman and the Advocate, and all mechanisms in which Slovenia is a partner or convention party. The key process of the reform will be carried out by the National Education Institute (hereinafter: the ZRSŠ) and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. All curricula, more than 270 of them, will be examined, not only in basic programmes, but also programmes with lower education standards in relation to the Italian and Hungarian national communities, including special needs and adult education. The project is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

The ZRSŠ implemented certain measures with regard to the recommendations. Regarding the education of the Italian national community, all curricula for primary school and grammar school education programmes were translated, and the translation of curricula for upper secondary technical and vocational education programmes is currently underway. Much translation was also done as regards the education of the Hungarian national community, but in a different order and with a slight delay. The reason for this is a shortage of translators who specialize in Hungarian and are familiar with the technical pedagogical terminology.

3. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

Slovenia explains that the cultural programmes of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and all projects selected on the basis of annual public tenders for the Roma community contribute to the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding.

One of the aims of cultural policy on national communities, stated in the Guidelines of the Ministry of Culture that the central organisations of national communities received with the direct call to submit annual programmes, is promoting the exploration and deeper understanding of minority cultures and interethnic relations in culture and intercultural understanding, mutual respect, cooperation and coexistence between various ethnic communities. Particular emphasis is placed on financing activities that enable a deeper understanding of cultures involving members of various minority communities.

One of the main criteria for the assessment of the project application contained in the public tender on the Roma community is the project's contribution to integration activities (cooperation between different minority communities, cooperation between the Roma community and the majority population, presentation of activities to the general public, collaboration between the Roma community providers from different regions of Slovenia, active inclusion of members of the Roma community, the integration of the Roma community into the

local and wider cultural and social environment, etc.). Additional points are also awarded to projects with the active participation of members of multiple vulnerable groups (i.e. Roma children and youth, Roma women, older Roma, etc.) and/or primarily target members of multiple vulnerable groups.

- Mass Media Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 110/06 – official consolidated version, 36/08 – ZPOMK-1, 77/10 – ZSFCJA, 90/10 – Constitutional Court Decision, 87/11 – ZAVMS, 47/12, 47/15 – ZZSDT, 22/16, 39/16, 45/19 – Constitutional Court Decision, 67/19 – Constitutional Court Decision and 82/21)

3. *Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures*

- The Implementing instructions for implementing the bilingual primary school programme and the Implementing instructions for implementing the bilingual Slovenian and Hungarian grammar school education programme were translated.
- Multiple videos covering guidelines for autonomous learning and effective teaching in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic (formative assessment, teaching plan, inclusiveness, etc.), were subtitled for Italian and Hungarian audiences.
- Based on the needs and interest of teachers and other professionals at bilingual schools and schools with Italian as a teaching language, several text books and other study materials were translated, properly adapted, supplemented (for the fields of history, national community culture, etc.) and published for both national communities.
- In order to monitor the achievement of an adequate level of Hungarian language proficiency, it was concluded that Hungarian as a second language should be included in the national examination system. The ZRSŠ prepared the necessary bases for this purpose.
- For closer cooperation and support, the ZRSŠ expanded its personnel working in the field of both national communities: two education advisors for the Italian national community and one education advisor for the Hungarian national community.
- Updates to curricula, made by the ZRSŠ together with external experts, will also be aimed at enabling a greater distribution of information on minority communities, their culture, history and contribution to overall social engagement and development.
- Equal participation of schools and other institutions for the education of national communities in trials, development and applied national and international projects under the remit of the ZRSŠ.
- Equal provision of all forms of advisory services, professional support and training (numerous national conferences, consultations, seminars, seminars at regional units ZRSŠ Koper and Murska Sobota, Italian and Hungarian study meetings).
- The funds provided by Slovenia to co-finance radio and television channels for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community pursuant to the valid Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act have increased in recent years, as shown in the table below.

RTV channels, in EUR	2019	2020	2021	2022	Plan for 2023
Italian national community	1,094,566	1,132,566	1,245,899	1,432,566	1,432,566

Hungarian national community	447,671	447,671	447,671	489,504	489,504
Roma community	183,000	193,000	193,000	193,000	193,000
Total:	1,725,237	1,773,237	1,886,570	2,115,070	2,115,070

Article 6 of the Convention

Hate speech and hate crime (Reply to Recommendation No 110)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

The Act Amending the Criminal Code (KZ-1J) was adopted by the National Assembly at its session on 27 January 2023 and published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 16/23. A new paragraph three was added after paragraph two of Article 49 that reads as follows: "(3) If the motive for a criminal offence is the nationality, race, religion or ethnicity of the injured party, their sex, skin colour, origin, material standing, education, social status, political or other conviction, disability, sexual orientation or any other personal circumstance, it shall be considered an aggravating circumstance."

The Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia has a Working Group for Hate-Motivated Criminal Offences, which is responsible for considering topics relating to hate speech and all hate-motivated criminal offences. Criminal offences with the element of hate carry a special label – 12 files were marked with this label in 2022.

The competition "Young people together against hate speech online", aimed at raising awareness among pupils about hate speech online, was published on the webpage of the ministry responsible for digital transformation (previously the Government Office for Digital Transformation) on 28 October 2022. The campaign against online hate speech "Bite your hateful tongue" was launched in November 2022. Short films of Slovenian athletes who, according to the authors of this campaign, often have to deal with hate speech were published in December 2022.

One of the projects is also aimed at providing young people with knowledge about what constitutes hate speech, how to recognise it, how to combat it at the national level and what action we can take against it as individuals. The activities will continue, with an emphasis on intensifying efforts to combat stereotypes and prejudice against minority communities exposed to hate speech.

Pursuant to Article 23 of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 24/05 –official consolidated version, 109/08, 38/10 –ZUKN, 8/12, 21/13, 47/13 –ZDU-1G, 65/14, 55/17, 163/22), the Prime Minister established the Strategic Council for the Prevention of Hate Speech, an advisory body to the Prime Minister. The Strategic Council's tasks are defined in Article 2 of the instrument on the establishment and appointment of members of the Strategic Council, and detailed priorities were set out by the members at the second council session held on 6 April 2023. These are young people and education, prevention in society, media, operation of institutions, the web,

and law enforcement and the judiciary. The Strategic Council will prepare opinions and expert guidelines related to systemic regulation and prevention. To this end, the members of the Strategic Council agreed, by unanimous vote, that, in its capacity as an advisory body, the council would not express its views on individual specific instances of hate speech. The President of the Strategic Council and national coordinator for the prevention of hate speech was also appointed. According to the government guidelines, a developed society must be based on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and fundamental rights. These values must not be adapted to political needs but must be the same for everyone in comparable circumstances.

Slovenia further explains that the Act Amending the Audiovisual Media Services Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 204/21; hereinafter: the ZAvMS-B) was adopted at the end of 2021, transposing into Slovenia's legal order Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities. A major change brought by the amended ZAvMS-B is the expansion of the scope of regulation to platforms for the distribution of video content uploaded by users (YouTube and similar online platforms). Video distribution platform providers are required to adopt measures to ensure the following: Video distribution platform providers under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Slovenia shall adopt appropriate measures to protect (among other things):

- the general public from programmes, videos and audiovisual commercial communications promoting violence or hate against a group of people or a member of such group based on gender, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, citizenship, association with a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Video distribution platform providers shall lay down and publish a set of rules stipulating:

- the prohibition of publishing videos in contravention of the provisions of the preceding paragraph;
- the possibility to report a violation of the rules in question;
- a procedure to consider reports of rule violations;
- measures for removing illegal content or stopping its distribution;
- a procedure to consider complaints against the measures specified in the previous indent.

The Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia shall be responsible for administrative and inspection supervision of the implementation of the Act in question.

One of the main tasks of the ministry responsible for internal affairs and the Police is upholding constitutionally protected rights. Equality before the law applies to all individuals, regardless of their affiliation. An important part of these activities pertains to the prevention of all forms of intolerance that occur in interpersonal interaction, particularly when certain intolerant behaviour as a form of expression already contains elements of minor offences or even criminal offences. In particular, the Police monitors and analyses all minor offences containing elements of intolerance. The minor offence of incitement to intolerance is defined in Article 20

of the Protection of Public Order Act (ZJRM-1; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 70/06 and 139/20). The Ministry of the Interior has an informal working group for the evaluation of the ZJRM-1 which, among other things, has discussed the need to amend Article 20 of the Act in question to include an "open definition" of personal circumstances, which could cover the potential missing personal circumstance that may lead to incitement to hate, violence or intolerance.

The findings of analyses carried out by the General Police Directorate are communicated to all units at the national, regional and local level. The General Police Directorate also directs, monitors and supervises the implementation of regulations with elements of intolerance and consequently the violations committed in relation to hate speech. The Police's work is and will continue to be based on preventing, detecting and dealing with all forms of intolerance, including hate speech.

In the past, police officers were trained within the verified programme "Recognising stereotypes, overcoming prejudice and eliminating discrimination in a multicultural society". The purpose of the programme was for police officers to recognise stereotypes, overcome prejudice and eliminate discrimination, particularly in relation to the Roma community, although it has also been carried out in practice for other cultural communities living in the territory of Slovenia. In 2022, the programme was revised, and the new version was adopted and approved at the programme session of the Police Academy on 5 December 2022. It is therefore a revised programme that enables the provision of training on the above topics relating to any minority community living within Slovenia. The Police continuously ensures the equal protection of rights of all residents Slovenia, but the amended programme also formally introduced additional trainings.

In addition to the aforementioned additional training, lecturers present individual contents in Police College programmes on the subjects of Ethics and human rights and The Police in society, which set out some key content on equal treatment and special features in a multicultural society, and on the prevention of discrimination with the specifics of a particular community living in Slovenia.

The Police provide trainings "Leadership and management in police organisations" for managers, where the participants in the 1st module of the lectures on the subject "The role of managers in police work in multicultural societies" also learn about the nature and specifics of police work in multicultural societies.

In April 2023, the ministry responsible for internal affairs prepared and published on the website (<https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-notranje-zadeve/o-ministrstvu/direktorat-za-policijo-in-druge-varnostne-naloge/sektor-za-pritozbe-zoper-policijo/>) the leaflet "Complaints Against the Work of Police Officers" in both Italian and Hungarian, making the application of this instrument (aimed at an independent, impartial and professional consideration of complaints against the work and decisions of police officers in certain situations where they are accused of failing to act with due care and thus of violating people's human rights and fundamental freedoms) available to members of national minorities.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Act Amending the Criminal Code (KZ-1J; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No. 16/23)
- Act Amending the Audiovisual Media Services Act (ZAvMS-B; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No. 204/21)
- Instrument on the establishment and appointment of members of the Strategic Council for the Prevention of Hate Speech No 013-7/2023/7 of 17 March 2023
- Protection of Public Order Act (ZJRM-1; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 70/06 and 139/20).

Article 9 of the Convention

Minority broadcast, print and digital media (Reply to Recommendation No 121)

1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

The reply to this point is in the explanation of the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention (Intercultural dialogue and mutual respect (Reply to Recommendation No 98)).

RTV Slovenia has provided the following explanation:

Public media in the Hungarian language:

Radio channel

As regards the radio channel in Hungarian, it should be noted that it is a 24-hour channel and the radio broadcasting time is therefore satisfactory. According to the programme plan, the Pomurje Hungarian radio produces 8760 hours of material per year. The channel is available on FM, AM and DAB+ frequencies and online. The live programme is on from 5:30 to 19:00, followed by broadcast reruns from that day until 22:00, then the night music programme selected by the music editors of the Pomorje Hungarian Radio.

For a few years (until 2012), they used to broadcast live until midnight, but the deterioration of their financial situation forced them to suspend their live night programme between 19:00 and 24:00. However, it is still being broadcast in a different format.

Television channel

The Hungarian national community programme on UPE TV runs 30-minute broadcasts in Hungarian language four times per week. All TV broadcasts in Hungarian on TV Studio Lendava premiere on TV Slovenija 1. Reruns (depending on the show's genre) are broadcast on TV Slovenija 2 or 3 and the TV Maribor frequency. All broadcasts are subtitled and therefore accessible to the majority population. The objective of the broadcasts in Hungarian has always been to bring together the majority and the minority, i.e. two cultures and two languages.

In terms of volume, the television broadcast in Hungarian does lag behind other programmes. With the current number of employees and given other circumstances of TV Studio Lendava, the current volume of the TV broadcast in Hungarian is optimal and they don't see any possibilities to expand it. Any expansion of the broadcast volume would require a significant staff increase at the studio and the fulfilment of other necessary conditions. However, within the current volume of four 30-minute broadcasts, they are trying to report on all events related to the autochthonous Hungarian national community in Slovenia and offer an insight into the

broader environment. They mostly do magazine shows covering virtually all topics. They also do broadcasts for children and young people, travelogues, investigative journalism, talk shows, etc. They strive to provide wide-ranging, comprehensive and objective news to the autochthonous Hungarian national community in their mother tongue and fulfil the expectations of the broadest possible target audience.

Based on additional annual dedicated funds in the amount of EUR 28,500 provided by Slovenia, they employed a young journalist in October 2022, following the departure or resignation of a journalist in April 2022. In January 2023, a one-year fixed-term journalist post was published to replace an employee on maternity leave, but there were no applicants. They would like to republish the job post in the near future. The biggest reason why they have difficulty in finding suitable candidates, particularly for journalist posts, is the brain drain to larger cities, as young people rarely return home once they finish their studies.

Expanding both programmes would require not only by replacing staff departures but by increasing the number of employees. Not replacing staff departures would also put at risk the current volume and quality of the radio and television broadcasts in the Hungarian language.

The number of employees in the Hungarian programme studio has not decreased recently, as the number of staff departures due to retirement was not significant. More departures due to retirement are expected in 2024 (with a partial onboarding of a new hire in 2023) and 2025.

As part of their project to recruit younger staff, the Hungarian programme studio offered part-time employment for 2 years, which was converted to permanent employment on 1 January 2023. In 2023, 2024 and 2025, they would like to replace all employee departures due to retirement. Slovenia will strive to ensure additional funds for this purpose, including based on the Agreement signed on 25 May 2023 between the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the term of office lasting until 2026. The Agreement also contains a provision providing that technicians, journalists and editors in the Hungarian programme studio of RTV Slovenia retiring every year be replaced in 2023 and 2024 in accordance with the principle of protection of the acquired rights of autochthonous national communities in Slovenia. Additional funds will be provided for this purpose (approximately EUR 66,500 for 2023 and EUR 134,500 for 2024).

It should be noted that since 2021, as part of the co-financing of radio and television channels for the Hungarian national community, Slovenia annually provides additional funds in the amount of EUR 13,333 for one additional employment post for the needs of the Pomurje Hungarian radio and Studio Hidak – Mostovi and new activities.

Public media in the Italian language:

Job posts at the Regional Koper/Capodistria RTV for the Italian national community channel were aimed at long-term employees whose employment is co-financed by the Government Office for National Minorities and whose part-time employment contracts were converted to permanent contracts. These jobs could be created because of the understanding and financial support provided by the Government Office for National Minorities and the leadership of RTV Slovenia.

Based on the funds allocated from the state budget to co-finance the Italian national community channel, the job posts were published to acquire staff for the two Italian national community channels under the Regional RTV Koper/Capodistria. Additional co-financing provided by the State for the television and radio channel of the Italian autochthonous national community enabled a partial replacement of staff or employment contracts for nine part-time employees at the end of 2022.

On the initiative of the OSSIN community and the representative of the Italian minority in the National Assembly, the Government, through the Government Office for National Minorities, approved additional funding from the state budget to mitigate the staff shortage at the Italian national community channel of RTV Slovenia.

Their wish and hope is that additional funding be allocated in the state budget for 2023 and 2024 to finance broadcasts for the autochthonous Italian national community, thus helping to ease the situation in a field that suffered big losses and enabling regular and continuous work in both editorial offices, production and common services. All these are short-staffed but vital to the existence and further development in a period of great changes in radio, television and media.

The above is substantiated by actual data on job replacements for the Italian national community channels Radio Capodistria and TV Capodistria. The most concerning was the decrease in employees between 2015 and the end of 2019.

Based on official data, the figures were as follows:

TV channel:

- 2015: 45 employees, 7 permanent external staff members. Total: 52 employees,
- 2019: 46 employees: a total of 46 employees (minus 6 employees, i.e. minus 12%).

Radio channel:

- 2015: 36 employees, 2 permanent external staff members. Total: 38 employees,
- 2019: 29 employees. A total of 29 employees (minus 9 employees, i.e. minus 24%).

Total television and radio (2015–2019): 15 employees less or minus 17% of all employees at the RTV Slovenia Italian national community channel.

At the end of 2021, they lost another four positions, meaning that the total decrease in the number of employees was 21% compared to 2015, which is more than one-fifth of all employees and external staff members of the entire team at the RTV Slovenia Italian national community channels. Based on the Agreement signed between the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities and the Government for the 2020–2022 period (hereinafter: the Agreement) on 3 July 2020, Slovenia, through the Government Office for National Minorities, provided RTV Slovenia with an additional EUR 100,000 for 2021 for the preservation of acquired rights in relation to the public information system or radio and television channel in Italian as part of the Regional RTV Koper/Capodistria to ensure stable and continued services of radio and television channels for the Italian national community. In 2022, these additional funds were preserved and, based on the Annex to the Agreement, additional funding in the amount of EUR 200,000 was provided to replace the four positions lost in previous years.

Slovenia will strive to ensure additional funds for this purpose, also based on the Agreement signed on 25 May 2023 between the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities and the Government for the term lasting until 2026. The Agreement also contains a provision stating that the staff in the Regional Koper/Capodistria RTV retiring each year be replaced in 2023 and 2024 in accordance with the principle of protection of the acquired rights of autochthonous national communities in Slovenia. Additional funds will be provided for this purpose (approximately EUR 120,000 for 2023 and EUR 120,000 for 2024).

The staff shortage in the radio and television for the autochthonous Italian national community was presented at the follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Convention. The

Government Office for Equal Opportunities invited representatives of RTV Slovenia to attend the meeting. The initiatives they presented concerned "Thematic area 2: Supporting broadcasts in Italian by addressing the shortage of Italian-speaking journalists and increasing the duration and frequency of broadcasting in Hungarian by public media".

Among the proposals for the existence and development of channels for the autochthonous Italian national community in Slovenia, special emphasis was placed on the "scholarship policy" initiative due to the employees' predominantly older age structure. Editorial teams should attract young people belonging to the Italian national community. An important measure in this respect is granting targeted scholarships in cooperation with the ministry responsible for labour, the ministry responsible for education, the Government Office for National Minorities, RTV Slovenia and institutions of the Italian national community in Slovenia.

The protection of frequencies in Slovenia and the overspill of minority radio and television signals across borders, to Italy and Croatia, were highlighted. The field is extremely important for the existence, functioning and development of the Italian national community channel, as it enables members of the Italian national community living in Slovenia to have contact with their motherland and the part of the minority living in Croatia.

Since 2020, Slovenia, through the Government Office for National Minorities, has provided an additional EUR 10,000 per year for the co-financing of radio and television channels for the Roma community (a total of EUR 193,000).

Slovenia expresses great understanding and support for radio and television channels for the constitutionally recognised national communities and the Roma community, which is also reflected in co-financing. The main source of financing for all radio and television channels, in accordance with the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, is a contribution, a special type of public duty aimed at financing the public media service.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

Slovenia explains that the ministry responsible for culture supports the publication of media by financing their content. Every year, as part of their cultural programme, national communities apply with various publishing projects. In the 2020–2022 period, the ministry responsible for culture supported:

for the Italian national community:

- ensuring the continuity of traditional publications of verified quality that represent an important aspect of the creative endeavours of the Italian national community (the cultural publication *La Purissima*, the publications *Il Trillo* and *Il Trillo appuntamenti*, the publication *Il Mandracchio* and the website *Il Mandracchio Online*),
- issuing new high-quality publications that constitute an important acquisition for the Italian national community,
- organising special events: Month of Culture/*Mese della cultura*, Book Week/*Settimana del libro*, The Week of the Italian Language/*Settimana della lingua italiana*, the International Poetry Festival and Competition/*Festival della poesia del mare*, the cycle of Italian movies *Cineforum*,
- collaboration with the magazine *Kulturni občasnik za mlade zanesenjake* "Svetilnik" – the *Conosciamoci – Let's Get To Know Reach Other* column,

- the project "L'età dei lumi. Giuseppe Tartini, Gian Rinaldo Carli e la cultura del Settecento./The Enlightenment. Giuseppe Tartini, Gian Rinaldo Carli and 18th-century Culture",
- the publication of the school brochure Dante Alighieri visto dalla sponda dell'Adriatico Orientale/Dante Alighieri – A View on the Poet From the Eastern Side of the Mediterranean;

for the Hungarian national community:

- issuing continuous Pomurje Hungarian publications: the Naptár almanach, the Muratáj scientific publication,
- publishing manuscripts,
- publishing literary, local history or ethnographical studies and other content,
- publishing the Hungarian children's newspaper Kelepelő.

As part of a public tender for the Roma community, the ministry responsible for culture also finances publishing projects, mostly domestic newspapers, namely:

- Romano them – Roma Council, co-financing of the main newspaper published by the Union of Roma of Slovenia,
 - Romano Nevijpe – Roma news, co-financing of the newspaper published by Romani Union,
 - Romano haberi – Roma bulletin, co-financing of the newspaper published by the Romano Pralipe, so.p. society,
 - Romano lil – Roma information publication, co-financing of the newspaper published by the Anglunipe Roma Information and Scientific Research Centre of Slovenia Association.
- Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, signed on 3 July 2020
 - Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, signed on 25 May 2023

3. *Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures*

- Table 1: Posts for jobs at the Hungarian Studio at the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023

Post	Type of post	Employment	Note
Journalist reporter	External staff – applications by 27 August 2022	15 October 2022, permanent	Substitution of extraordinary departure
Journalist	Internal – applications by 5 December 2022	1 January 2023, permanent	Change of employment status from part-time to permanent

Specialist journalist	Internal – applications by 5 December 2022	5 January 2023, part-time until 4 January 2024	Substitution of maternity leave
Journalist reporter	External staff – applications by 16 December 2022	No applications	Substitution of an employee transferred to another position 1 year ago

- Table 2: Overview of the co-financing of RTV channels for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community through the Government Office for National Minorities, including amounts indicated in the text below point 1

RTV channels, in EUR	2019	2020	2021	2022	Plan for 2023
Italian national community	1,094,566	1,132,566	1,245,899	1,432,566	1,432,566
Hungarian national community	447,671	447,671	447,671	489,504	489,504
Roma community	183,000	193,000	193,000	193,000	193,000
Total:	1,725,237	1,773,237	1,886,570	2,115,070	2,115,070

Article 9 of the Convention

Minority broadcast, print and digital media (Reply to Recommendation No 122)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia's reply is given in the interpretation of the implementation of Article 9 of the Convention (Minority broadcast, print and digital media (reply to Recommendation No 121)).

Article 10 of the Convention

Use of minority languages with administrative and judicial authorities (Reply to Recommendation No 135)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

In the Comments on the findings and recommendations to the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on the implementation of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia of 14 September 2022 (hereinafter: the Comments), it was explained that the Public Employees Act (hereinafter: the ZJU) provides that proficiency in the language of the Italian or Hungarian national community is a set as a

special condition for employment (Article 17 of the ZJU). For posts of public employees where an Act also requires use of the language of a national community as an official language, proficiency in such language shall be set as a condition for employment. Accordingly, a public employee must meet this requirement as a preliminary condition for employment. This means that public employees must have the necessary knowledge of the language of the national community even before starting employment, or that knowledge of the language of the national community is a preliminary condition for employment with a particular authority. In other words, it is not possible to employ a person that lacks the required level of knowledge of the language of the national community in jobs where this is required by law.

On 24 March 2021, the ministry responsible for public administration organised the sixth consultation on the implementation of bilingualism in nine municipalities with Italian and Hungarian national communities. The annual consultation is part of the systemic efforts of the ministry responsible for local self-government and the nine municipalities inhabited by the Italian and Hungarian national communities to close the gap between the prescribed and actual level of bilingualism. The topic of discussion was bilingualism in the times of the COVID-19 epidemic. It was emphasised that, despite the health crisis, the lives of people and therefore the state and local administrations must go on. Through a gradual and multi-step process, a broad range of measures was implemented, from basic hygiene recommendations to partial or complete restrictions on people's movement. It is important that the entire population is informed of these measures by making the measures understandable to everyone in their mother tongue or the languages of the national communities. The aspect of bilingualism was also taken into account in developing the mobile app for the protection of public health #OstaniZdrav (#StayHealthy) and the content in the Italian and Hungarian languages. The participants discussed the specifics of implementing constitutional and legislative provisions relating to the special rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities; the provision of services for members of the Hungarian national community during the COVID-19 epidemic and the performance of inspection and warden tasks during the COVID-19 epidemic. They also learned about the services of the Lendava Library and the bilingual services of the public enterprise Javno podjetje Marjetica Koper during the epidemic.

On 1 June 2022, the ministry responsible for public administration organised the seventh consultation on bilingualism. The central topic of discussion were the issues of implementing bilingualism in the year of regular local elections. The consultation featured a presentation of experiences with organising and holding local elections or of the role of state authorities in carrying out elections to councils of self-governing national communities. The legal bases for elections to councils of self-governing national communities and the compilation of electoral registers of citizens were presented. The consultation also featured the specifics of local elections to councils of self-governing national communities.

Slovenia further explains that, on 14 May 2020, the Government adopted a decision on establishing the Working Group for Drafting the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Implementation of Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Republic of Slovenia and Monitoring its Implementation (hereinafter: the Government Working Group). In cooperation with the responsible ministries, the Government Working Group drew up a draft Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Implementation of Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Republic of

Slovenia 2021–2025, adopted by the Government on 18 August 2021 based on Decision No 00700-12/2021/6, instructing the responsible competent ministries and government offices to implement measures within the agreed time limits.

In 2022, the Judicial Training Centre, which operates as part of the ministry responsible for justice, carried out:

- a workshop entitled Legal Terminology of Minority Languages – Hungarian for Judges, State Prosecutors and State Attorneys,
- a workshop entitled Legal Terminology of Minority Languages – Hungarian for Court Staff,
- a workshop entitled Legal Terminology of Minority Languages – Italian for Judges, State Prosecutors and State Attorneys, and
- a workshop entitled Legal Terminology of Minority Languages – Italian for Court Staff.

The courts have new websites in Italian and Hungarian (<https://nasodiscu.si/it> and <https://nasodiscu.si/hu>), containing a lot of useful information about court proceedings, thus ensuring a more efficient access to justice to members of national communities.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Government Decision on establishing the Working Group for Drafting the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Implementation of Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Republic of Slovenia and Monitoring its Implementation of 14 May 2020
- Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Implementation of Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Republic of Slovenia 2021–2025, adopted on 18 August 2021 based on Government Decision No 00700-12/2021/6

Article 10 of the Convention

Use of minority languages with administrative and judicial authorities (Reply to Recommendation No 136)

1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

The status and special rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community differ, as laid down in the Constitution. This differentiation is also observed in the legislation.

The Constitution stipulates that the official language in Slovenia is Slovenian. In those municipalities where Italian or Hungarian national communities reside, Italian or Hungarian shall also be official languages.

Regarding the official use of Romani, it should be noted that past attempts at the official standardisation and codification of Romani in Slovenia proved unsuccessful.

A court interpreter for Romani was appointed in 2022.

Article 11 of the Convention

Display of topographical indications in minority languages (Reply to Recommendation No 142)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia explains that the adoption and use of topographical indications are going smoothly in the areas populated by the autochthonous national communities.

Article 12 of the Convention

Intercultural education, teacher training, teaching and learning materials (Reply to Recommendation No 145)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia provided a reply to this recommendation in the explanation of the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention (Intercultural dialogue and mutual respect (Reply to Recommendation No 98)).

Article 12 of the Convention

Effective access to education for Roma (Reply to Recommendation No 152)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia explains that incentive measures are being implemented to increase the number of enrolled Roma children from pre-school education onwards. It is a well-known fact that the kindergarten is the most important and influential social space and factor for the integration of children into a new institutional and social environment, which to a significant extent shapes and affects their future quality of life.

The ministry responsible for education encourages enrolment in pre-school education at least two years before the start of primary school in the following ways:

- with general financial incentives,
- in cooperation with Roma assistants in kindergartens and in cooperation with the local community,
- by financing higher costs of kindergarten units where Roma children are enrolled,
- by publishing calls for tenders for 240-hour kindergarten programmes and by promoting such programmes.

General financial incentives

The purpose of the measure of reduced kindergarten fees, which applies to all the inhabitants of Slovenia, including Roma, is to reduce kindergarten fees for parents, to facilitate their decision to have another child, i.e. to increase the birth rate, and to enhance the enrolment of all children in kindergartens. The fee is reduced for children enrolled in public kindergartens, private kindergartens with a concession and private kindergartens financed from municipal budgets. Parents with two children enrolled in a kindergarten at the same time are exempt from paying for the younger child. Parents are also exempt from paying kindergarten fees for their third and any subsequent child, regardless of whether the child is enrolled in a kindergarten at the same time as their sibling. The amount is determined as a percentage of the price of the preschool programme based on the average monthly income per person and the income bracket. The state budget compensates for the reduction of the parents' kindergarten fees.

Publishing calls for tenders for short 240-hour kindergarten programmes and promoting such programmes

Since the 2018/2019 school year, kindergartens may also offer shorter programmes. Short kindergarten programmes of 240 hours per school year are designed for children who will reach the age of five or six years by the end of the calendar year and who are not enrolled in other kindergarten programmes and for their younger, four-year-old siblings. The organisation and implementation of short kindergarten programmes provides a more varied range of kindergarten programmes tailored to the interests and needs of the different target groups of parents and children. This enables pre-school children who are not enrolled in kindergarten in the year before they enter primary school to attend pre-school programmes.

The aim of these short programmes – despite the already high enrolment rate in kindergartens in the second age group – is to further increase the number of pre-school children in the education system. This is also a measure that brings us closer to the education benchmarks for 2030, which require that at least 96% of children aged three years and older up to the start of compulsory education are enrolled in pre-school education in view of the recognised positive impact of kindergarten on children's development and learning.

As has been the case every year since the introduction of the new short programme in the 2018/2019 school year, a call for tenders for the organisation and implementation of a short-programme unit in kindergartens was also published in the 2021/2022 school year. The call for tenders was open to kindergartens until April 2022 and the programme was implemented until 31 August 2022. Tenders were submitted by 10 kindergartens that carried out 240-hour programmes for varying lengths of time, depending mainly on the conditions necessary for the programme's implementation, the specifics of the local environment, and the needs and wishes of the parents of enrolled children. Roma and immigrant children made up the majority of short-programme participants. We would like to emphasise that this is not a segregated form of kindergarten and that all five- and six-year-olds and their younger siblings aged four, as well as children of parents living in Slovenia who have not chosen to enrol their child in alternative

programmes, i.e. day or half-day kindergarten programmes, are welcome to attend. In the 2021/22 school year, approximately 100 children were enrolled in short programmes. Given that Slovenia has an extremely high enrolment rate of five-year-olds (i.e. 95%, and 91.1% of four- and five-year-olds enrolled in pre-school education compared to 81.3% of all children enrolled in pre-school education for the same period), despite the fact that pre-school education is not compulsory, we do not expect that many will opt for short programmes in the final year before compulsory primary education. Most children are already enrolled in whole-day programmes (94%), which is also the optimal situation, as children stand to benefit most from high-quality pre-school education programmes.

A new call for tenders for short programmes in the 2022/23 school year, published in October 2022, is open to kindergartens until April 2023 and will be implemented until 31 August 2023.

Financing the higher costs incurred by regular kindergarten units, i.e. labour costs and costs of materials and services.

Financing units for Roma children

Financing is provided for the higher operational costs of kindergarten units for Roma children.

The possibility of applying for a reduction of or an exemption from kindergarten fees, which also applies to members of the Roma community.

If the family's income is very low or below EUR 200.78 per person per month calculated as a percentage of the net average wage, the child attends kindergarten free of charge. Kindergartens also provide meals for children as part of their whole- and half-day programmes. Furthermore, the amendment to the Kindergarten Act, adopted in 2021, is of paramount importance, as it introduced, on 1 September 2021, free kindergarten for second children who are enrolled in kindergarten at the same time as their sibling. Kindergarten is also free of charge for families with more than two children. This means that a parent whose two children are enrolled in kindergarten is entitled to free kindergarten for their younger child. If their first child is enrolled in school and the second one in kindergarten, parents still have to pay for the kindergarten. However, parents of three or more children are exempt from kindergarten fees: if their first and second children are in primary school and their third child is in kindergarten, the parents are exempt from kindergarten fees for their youngest child (and each child thereafter). The purpose of this systemic measure is to increase the number of children enrolled in pre-school education, especially from large families, for whom the costs used to be much higher.

Cooperation with local communities and kindergartens

Many activities are being carried out to encourage as many Roma parents as possible to enrol their children in kindergarten, such as the promotion of short programmes among kindergarten directors; Roma assistants, who have been employed by kindergartens on a regular basis since 1 September 2021; project work in multi-purpose Roma centres; meetings with representatives of local communities; and the work of the inter-ministerial working group on Roma issues composed of secretaries of state.

Employing Roma assistants in kindergartens

For Roma children, starting kindergarten is usually the first time they come into direct contact with the non-Roma world and are separated from their parents. In kindergarten, such children

are confronted with new people speaking a different language, while at the same time the values of Roma children differ from those of non-Roma children. This is stressful for Roma children, and, further, Roma children often are not encouraged by their parents and extended family at home to attend kindergarten. Roma children are usually not integrated into the cultural and social life of the wider environment in which they live and rarely, or only with difficulty, integrate into the life of the wider society, even later in life.

If the parents of Roma children are more integrated in the wider society and accept the values of that society, it will not be so difficult for them to enrol their children in kindergarten. Otherwise, it will often be the case that parents do not trust the kindergarten as an institution, spread that mistrust to the kindergarten staff and simply do not bring their children to kindergarten. This is where the Roma assistant comes in as an important link between Roma children, their parents and kindergarten staff.

The post of Roma assistant has been systemically introduced for the second school year and has been well received by kindergartens. Since 1 September 2021, when it became possible to employ Roma assistants in kindergartens and finance their employment from the state budget, the post of Roma assistant was introduced in 15 kindergartens, totalling nine posts. This school year (2022/2023), the post of Roma assistant was introduced in 18 kindergartens, totalling 11.5 posts. In 2022, 231 Roma children were enrolled in these units and this year as many as 305. Following the first year of the systemic introduction of the post of Roma assistant in kindergartens, a short survey was carried out to establish the effectiveness of these posts. According to the survey, 80% of the respondents believe that the employment of Roma assistants in kindergartens has had a positive impact on working with Roma pre-school children. This is reflected in their socialisation, speech and language and in the more regular attendance of Roma children at kindergarten, as well as in the strengthening of cooperation between kindergartens and parents and their trust in the institution. The main challenge for kindergartens is finding a candidate for this post; moreover, kindergartens would like to recruit members of the Roma community as Roma assistants.

In the school year 2022/2023, three additional kindergartens introduced the post of Roma assistant compared to the previous school year, making for 2.5 more posts than last year.

The state budget provides funding for Roma assistants in kindergartens on the basis of an employment contract concluded between the institution and the public employee holding the post of Roma assistant.

In 2022, the ministry responsible for education, together with the ZRSŠ, joined the Council of Europe project Romani Plurilingual Policy Experimentation ([RPPE](#)) – Integrating Roma children in Education – Testing Multilingual Approaches. It is a four-year project involving four primary schools in Slovenia. The project is based on testing approaches developed from the Council of Europe Recommendation: The Importance of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democratic Culture (2022).

Multi-purpose Roma Centres as Innovative Learning Environments

Several years of experience carrying out educational support activities in settlements (seven multi-purpose Roma centres were established in Roma settlements) clearly show that Roma children who take part in such activities are much better prepared for starting school, and are better adapted and more successful in school later. While this is not always reflected in better grades, as these children still have many disadvantages from before because they did not go to pre-school and face other (language, emotional and social) barriers, they still have an easier

time following the educational process and are motivated for schoolwork, as they have constant on-site support and help from assistants at their disposal.

The current project focuses on:

- a) developing innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work with Roma children

This activity involves the development of innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work with Roma children, taking into consideration the identified needs of Roma children in this field and adapted to the specific features of working with this group of children. The work is based on existing successful teaching practices and forms of educational work with this group of children, developed in previous projects and upgraded by focusing on improving the integration of Roma children in the education system and their success within it, thereby broadening their competencies, skills and knowledge for greater integration into the wider society.

- b) Introducing innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work into the learning environments of multi-purpose Roma centres, with the active involvement of the professional staff in educational institutions in order to raise their professional competences

This activity involves the development of innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work introduced in the learning environments of multipurpose Roma centres. These multi-purpose centres were set up in Roma settlements under previous projects and, as a result of their continuous operation over several years, are recognised by children as safe and stimulating environments that allow them to successfully develop their abilities, acquire key competencies and skills, and foster their integration into the wider society.

Continuous professional education and development of school staff

Education and training programmes are offered every year, including for work in a multicultural environment.

Multi-purpose Roma centres in the 2017–2021 period, with an emphasis on the social inclusion of the members of the Roma community

In terms of social inclusion, the ministry responsible for labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities co-financed multi-purpose Roma centres (hereinafter: the MPRC), aimed primarily at activities to strengthen the socio-economic status of members of the Roma community (acquiring new skills and competences that enable a more successful appearance on the labour market), raising the quality of life, to promote and strengthen integration into the wider community, and to build trust and cooperation with the majority population. A total of 7 MPRCs were established in the 2017–2021 period.

The workshops carried out at MPRCs covered:

- health (hygiene, healthy life style (diet/physical activity), first aid training, breaking down the taboo of gynaecological examinations, substance abuse, safe sex, etc.),
- the importance of including children in pre-school education, the importance and benefits of completing or continuing school and the promotion of active parenthood,
- financial literacy and financial planning,
- the safe use of IT,
- breaking the taboo of forced marriage, young people's escapism into harmful environments, teen parenthood, etc.

The workshops also included the promotion of education (encouraging the target group to participate in the educational process and presenting opportunities for adult education in the

local environment) and activities to strengthen social networks and improve cooperation with the majority population.

The project was well-received by local Roma communities as well as the providers and the wider local environment. Its main achievement was building the trust of local Roma communities in the providers' activities and strengthening communication channels that allowed for certain social phenomena to be addressed in a timely manner. The participation of Roma women, teenagers and children in activities aimed at empowerment, strengthening social competences and practical skills increased significantly.

No MPRC programmes were held in 2022, as the co-financing of the MPRC network within the OP ECP ended in 2021. A new public tender is envisaged for 2023 to secure the further co-financing of MPRC programmes until 2027 in a total amount of EUR 2.5 million.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities co-finances more and more programmes within the MPRC network each year. A total of six MPRC programmes were co-financed in 2022, aimed at empowering and encouraging the social inclusion of the members of the Roma community:

- the Daycare Centre for Roma Children (provider: the Association for Developing Voluntary Work, Novo mesto),
- the Kher Šu Beši Daycare Centre (provider: the Dolenjska and Bela krajina Social Work Centre, Trebnje unit),
- the Green and healthy social inclusion of the Roma – ZZ ROM (provider: the Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakičan),

Multi-generational centres

As part of the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014–2020, the ministry responsible for labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities issued a public tender for five-year projects, establishing a network of 15 multi-generational centres (hereinafter: the MGC) aimed at vulnerable social groups. The projects' diverse, accessible and preventive programmes helped raise the quality of life of vulnerable groups and prevent them slipping into social exclusion and poverty. They were carried out until the end of March 2022 but some MGCs are still operating with the support of the local community.

The groups at high risk of social exclusion targeted the Roma community in five MGCs operating in the areas inhabited by Roma: Dolenjska, Bela krajina, Pomurje, Posavje and the wider area of the Ljubljana Basin. Aimed at increasing integration, Roma were engaged in various activities to develop their competences, while certain content was specifically aimed at increasing the social inclusion of Roma families, especially children and young people. The MGC projects featured topic-specific workshops for Roma parents, which were mainly attended by women (for example sex and protection, childcare, the importance of education, the role of the mother and responsible parenthood), discussion groups for Roma parents, holiday workshops and study help for children and young people, job search training, reading literacy workshops for Roma children and parents, financial literacy workshops, workshops fostering the development of everyday skills and classes on IT use. The Roma community could also benefit from information services, informal socialising and individual counselling. Approximately 10,000 hours of activities involving Roma were carried out between 2017 and 2022.

Further activities to prevent the social exclusion of Roma are also envisaged as part of the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2021–2027. A new public tender is planned for 2023. The measure of co-financing MGC activities for the social inclusion of Roma as part of strategic aim 3.2.2 is included in the Government's National Programme of Measures for the Roma for 2021–30.

In June 2022, the Police started the prevention project "SCHOOL – THE PATH TO SUCCESS". It has been established that a lack of basic socialisation is the main reason for the failure to integrate Roma and to prevent safety problems associated with the Roma population. On the basis of the project, the Novo mesto, Ljubljana and Murska Sobota police directorates during this period established contacts with social work centres, representatives of Roma organisations, local communities and representatives of the education system. The awareness that solving Roma issues is closely related to the work of Police in all areas is the basis for the implementation of the prevention project "SCHOOL – THE PATH TO SUCCESS". The purpose of the project is simply expressed in the title to be understood and internalised by the target Roma population. Another aim is for the untypically police-related title to improve safety in the long term and improve the Roma's integration in society. Police officers, including members of the Roma community, make an incredible contribution to this project's implementation through their work in settlements, their activities and their very example. Various Roma camps were held in summer and the participation of police officers who are members of the Roma community was of great significance for the implementation of the prevention project. In addition to all other activities undertaken by the Police, the purpose of the project is to carry out targeted activities related to the project. These activities are neither extensive nor very burdensome, but rather consist of short talks and outreach to Roma parents and Roma children about the importance of schooling and the opportunities offered to Roma children who complete a selected training programme. Increasing socialisation and raising the level of education will certainly have a positive effect on security in the future.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 62/10, 40/11, 40/12 – ZUJF, 57/12 – ZPCP-2D, 14/13, 56/13 – ZŠtip-1, 99/13, 14/15 – ZUUJFO, 57/15, 90/15, 38/16 – Constitutional Court Decision, 51/16 – Constitutional Court Decision, 88/16, 61/17 – ZUPŠ, 75/17, 77/18, 47/19, 189/20 – ZFRO and 54/22 – ZUPŠ-1)
- Kindergartens Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 100/05 – official consolidated version, 25/08, 98/09 – ZIUZGK, 36/10, 62/10 – ZUPJS, 94/10 – ZIU, 40/12 – ZUJF, 14/15 – ZUUJFO, 55/17 and 18/21)
- Rules amending the Rules on standards to conduct pre-school education activities (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 54/21)
- Rules amending the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 54/21)
- Rules amending the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programmes for children with special needs (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 54/21)

- Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the basic school programme in bilingual basic schools and basic schools with Italian language of instruction (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 54/21)
- 3. *Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures*
- Short survey on the effectiveness of the post of Roma assistant in kindergartens, available at gov.si (Integration of the Roma in the education process)

Article 12 of the Convention

Teaching in and of minority languages (Reply to Recommendation No 164)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

With regard to improving the language competences of minority language teachers in bilingual educational institutions in Prekmurje and Porabje, Slovenia explains that the need for additional teacher training has been identified in view of the specific needs of bilingual educational institutions. As a result, the project "Raising the Quality of Bilingual Education through New Teaching Approaches for the Hungarian National Community in Slovenia and the Slovenian National Community in Hungary" was launched in 2021, which provides language support in the mother tongue and teacher training by developing teachers' general linguistic and didactic competences, as well as new forms of teaching (a combination of digital and traditional teaching, distance learning (online) and blended learning, and hybrid learning and teaching in bilingual areas as a result of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic). The programme "Improving the learning of Hungarian through music lessons in all bilingual kindergartens from January 2021" introduced new forms of music lessons for children and new music teaching methods for pre-school teachers and teachers, as well as new approaches to the implementation of fairy tale activities within the programme: "Improving the learning of Hungarian through fairy tales enriched with handicraft activities and music". The aim of this activity is to develop children's ability to communicate, to listen to and read stories, to promote children's communication skills and to develop their oral and written expression in Hungarian (mother tongue). In this way, the creative capacity for communicative and creative literary and reading education in kindergartens and primary schools will be further improved.

In Porabje, a class teacher in bilingual schools is using new learning and teaching methods. The bilingual primary schools in Porabje need a class teacher who is a native speaker of the Slovenian language to provide bilingual education from grade 1 to grade 4, which will strengthen the teaching of Slovenian in the lower grades of primary school. This will raise the level of Slovenian language proficiency and thus improve the chances of obtaining further education at a higher level and the chances of entering the labour market. In addition to the teaching of and in Slovenian, it is important to develop extracurricular activities such as dancing, singing, drama clubs, etc., as these activities not only raise the level of language proficiency, but also contribute to raising national awareness, preserving cultural heritage and raising awareness of the importance of minority languages and culture.

In 2021 and 2022, EUR 160,000 has been earmarked for this purpose.

Article 12 of the Convention

Teaching in and of minority languages (Reply to Recommendation No 165)

1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

Slovenia is aware that children, pupils and upper secondary students whose first language is not Slovenian are also included in the Slovenian education system, and therefore it makes every effort to ensure that Slovenian is taught effectively, since knowledge of the language of instruction is a prerequisite for equal access to education and thus for ensuring equity. Slovenia also supports projects that in practice explore possibilities and apply various teaching and learning methods that take into account the linguistic repertoires of children, pupils and upper secondary school students. The Slovenian education system provides foreign language instruction for all pupils and upper secondary students (including German, which is the second-most taught foreign language after English), as well as instruction on the mother tongue and culture for pupils and upper secondary students of other nationalities, in cooperation with their countries of origin. The method of co-financing these supplementary courses is described in point 3 of the reply to this recommendation.

The languages of the nationalities of the former Yugoslav republics and German are not minority languages and therefore do not have a special status in the Slovenian education system. Nevertheless, these languages are taught as foreign languages and there is also the option of teaching these languages to children of other nationalities as part of supplementary courses in mother tongue and culture. As regards the learning of the languages of the national communities of the former SFRY in primary schools, there is the option to learn a second foreign language as part of the compulsory elective course in the third education cycle and to learn an additional foreign language as part of the non-compulsory elective course.

It should be noted that plurilingualism is a universal asset, and that it is important to develop ways of using and upgrading this asset. This is evident in the plan for new legislation to regulate school libraries that collect reading material in the languages of other nationalities in order to enable members of those national communities to read in their own language through inter-library loan. This presentation is also attached to point 3 of the reply to this recommendation.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

– Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2021–2025 (ReNPJP21–25)

3. Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures

- The languages of the members of the national communities of the former SFRY in Slovenia in the Slovenian education system and the method of co-financing the above-mentioned supplementary courses (presented at the first meeting of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, in its new composition, as answers to the questions of the members of the national communities of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia, on 7 December 2022)

Article 12 of the Convention

Teaching in and of minority languages (Reply to Recommendation No 166)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia co-finances primary education activities for Roma. These are measures of positive discrimination that establish a different, more favourable norm for the classification of a second teaching professional in first grade attended by Roma pupils.

The number of teaching hours for a second teaching professional in first grade classes with at least three Roma pupils enrolled is determined by the number of pupils, as follows:

- 10–14 pupils – 15 hours,
- 15–21 pupils – 20 hours.

The number of teaching hours for a second teaching professional in the combined classes with at least three Roma pupils enrolled is determined by number of pupils, as follows:

- up to 8 pupils – 10 hours,
- 9–13 pupils – 15 hours,
- 14 pupils and more – 20 hours.

The criteria for the classification of a post of an additional professional to work with Roma pupils have also been determined.

The school may divide the share of the post between the post of a teacher for additional professional support for Roma pupils and the post of a counsellor. In the 2021/2022 school year, 63.7 posts of an additional professional assistant to work with Roma pupils in primary schools were added to the classification of posts.

The criteria for setting up classes with at least three Roma pupils have also been determined. In this case, the norm for setting up a class is lowered to 21 pupils instead of 28 pupils.

The norm for setting up a combined class from two classes, in which at least three Roma pupils are enrolled, is 16 pupils, and the norm for setting up a combined class from three or more classes, in which at least three Roma pupils enrolled, is 10 pupils. (The regular norm for setting up a combined class from two classes is 21 pupils, from three classes is 14 pupils, from four classes and more is 10 pupils.)

From 1 September 2021, it is also possible to employ a professional worker for work with Roma pupils and a Roma assistant in primary schools with an adapted programme, as well as in institutions for the education of children and young people with special needs.

The criteria and methodology for the evaluation of material costs for the implementation of the primary school programmes and adapted primary school programme, which are financed from the state budget, have been laid down, namely for the reimbursement of costs to employees

in accordance with the collective labour agreement (subsistence allowances, travel allowances, night allowances), the purchase of classroom and teaching aids, defined as small inventory items, specialist literature and consumables for the preparation and delivery of lessons, the costs of compulsory excursions, the costs of external services, telecommunications costs, the costs of payment transactions, the cost of continuing education and training for professional and other staff, the costs for the medical examinations of staff (hereinafter: programme-related costs), and the costs of the care for children and young people with special needs in accordance with the guidance decision.

Roma assistants in primary schools

The job classification of the post of Roma assistant in primary schools, primary schools with an adapted programme and bilingual primary schools is a measure in force since 1 September 2021. In the 2021/2022 school year, 29.5 Roma assistant posts for work with Roma pupils in primary schools were added to the classification of posts.

Support for the learning of Romani as a mother tongue and for the learning of Slovenian

One of the objectives of the project "Multi-purpose Roma Centres as Innovative Learning Environments" is to provide Roma children with a high-quality linguistic experience in both their mother tongue and the language of the majority population.

The pilot implementation of supplementary courses in Romani and culture began in the 2021/2022 school year at the Metlika Primary School and the Beltinci Primary School. The evaluation after the first year of the project's implementation at the Metlika Primary School shows that the programme is as beneficial to Roma children as it could possibly be. The pilot project establishes a new attitude towards school as an institution where their mother tongue is used and even taught. The children are happy to stay at school in the afternoons after regular lessons. In addition to establishing a different attitude towards school and learning, repeating the curriculum content in Romani helps them immensely in learning Slovenian and in mastering the regular curriculum.

The project "Multi-purpose Roma Centres as Innovative Learning Environments"

The project "Multi-purpose Roma Centres as Innovative Learning Environments", co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund and by the ministry responsible for education, is led by the Centre for School and Outdoor Education. It was launched in September 2021 and will run until August 2023. Its main purpose is to strengthen Roma children's general and vocational skills, knowledge, and competences by improving their inclusion and performance in the education system and society. The project builds on educational activities in Roma settlements and includes activities for pre-school children.

It is implemented in some multi-purpose Roma centres, most of which are located in Roma settlements, and includes pre-school education programmes for children not enrolled in kindergarten. The main objective of these programmes is to prepare children for the school environment, to strengthen their linguistic abilities in their mother tongue and the language of instruction, and to establish routines (getting up early, tidying up and active participation in the learning process). The providers in the Roma multi-purpose centres liaise with nearby kindergartens and other key stakeholders in the local environment in order to raise awareness among Roma parents about the importance of pre-school education for their children's optimum development.

As part of the project, the following activities are carried out:

- a) developing innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work with Roma children

This activity focuses on the development and introduction of two innovative teaching methods and more flexible forms of educational work with Roma children, which complement each other and are integrated into the above-mentioned innovative programme elements, i.e. individualised programmes for Roma children (discovering and further developing the child's strengths). It also focuses on the Roma cultural heritage (learning about Romani, Roma culture and history in order to strengthen Roma children's social and cultural identity).

- b) Introducing innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work into the learning environments of multi-purpose Roma centres, with the active involvement of the professional staff in educational institutions in order to raise their professional competences

As part of this activity, the developed innovative teaching practices and more flexible forms of educational work (individualised programmes for Roma children, Roma cultural heritage) are introduced in the learning environments of multi-purpose Roma centres. These multi-purpose centres were set up in Roma settlements under the previous projects and, as a result of their continuous operation over several years, are recognised by children as safe and stimulating learning environments. By introducing more flexible and tailored teaching methods, children develop their potential and acquire key competences, skills and knowledge that contribute significantly to their better integration and success in the education system and beyond.

The multi-purpose Roma centres offer programmes at basic and advanced levels. The basic programme is designed for all Roma children who regularly or occasionally participate in the activities of a Roma multi-purpose centre. This programme provides Roma children with appropriate learning assistance and other support, contributing significantly to their better academic performance and integration into the wider social environment. Targeted activities enable Roma children to strengthen their skills and competences in the areas where the greatest deficits have been identified (language, mathematics), while at the same time discovering and promoting their strengths. In addition to the activity providers in each multi-purpose Roma centre, professionals from partner educational institutions are also engaged in providing support for learning and strengthening children's potential.

Roma children who show the motivation to achieve more ambitious goals are also included in the extended programme. As part of this programme, individualised programmes are designed for each participating Roma child, with a special focus on developing their strengths and talents. Such individualised programmes are designed together with the children, their parents, activity providers in a multi-purpose Roma centre, and professionals from the partner educational institutions, all working together to ensure that the objectives are achieved as successfully as possible. In this programme, children are given appropriate support to improve their academic performance, progress regularly to the next grade of school, complete their primary education and choose the best and most appropriate career path. By supporting children's strengths and talents, we also enable them to engage in a variety of interest groups outside their home environment, thereby also increasing their ability to integrate into the wider social environment.

The project "Together for Knowledge (*Skupaj za znanje*) – implementing the activities of support mechanisms for knowledge acquisition by Roma community members"

The project with the short title "Together for Knowledge" was implemented by the Centre for School and Outdoor Education in the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 August 2021. The project was co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund, and the ministry responsible for education. The project's deliverables are presented on the website of the "Together for Knowledge" project and in the brochure "Achievements – Together for Knowledge". Prior to this project, the Centre for School and Outdoor Education carried out the project "Towards Knowledge Together (*Skupaj do znanja*) – implementing the objectives of the Education Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Slovenia".

The objectives of the project "Together for Knowledge", which built on the experience of previous successful projects and their mechanisms (Roma assistants, Roma education incubators as venues for activities in the environments where Roma live, and extracurricular activities), were:

- upgrading Roma education incubators into multi-purpose centres;
- upgrading the activities of the multi-purpose centres by strengthening their work with pre-school children;
- expanding extracurricular activities to all sites of the multi-purpose centres where Roma assistants work, and increasing the number of these activities;
- increasing the number of Roma assistants and improving their education structure;
- setting up systems to integrate Roma children into regular kindergarten units to facilitate their transition to primary school with the help of Roma assistants, activities in multi-purpose centres and extracurricular activities;
- involving Roma parents in the educational activities of Roma assistants, multi-purpose centres and extracurricular activities;
- enhancing social and cultural capital and promoting knowledge as a value in areas where members of the Roma community live;
- linking Roma education activities with other activities for the integration of the Roma community into the local environment and wider society.

The project's four key pillars were:

1. Roma assistants: in primary schools, they facilitate the integration of children into the learning process and are also an important link between the school, pupils and parents from the Roma community;
2. the multi-purpose centres: these are places where children can receive additional learning support and take part in a range of education, creative and sporting activities. The centres are located in areas where members of the Roma community live;
3. extracurricular activities: the project offers children and parents the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that promote learning outdoors and in nature. Extracurricular activities include exploring the local environment, professional excursions and outdoor school;
4. pre-school education: a preparatory kindergarten in Kerinov Grm, and activities for pre-school children at other locations in cooperation with Roma assistants, multi-purpose centres and providers of extra-curricular activities.

Appropriate qualifications of professionals working with members of the Roma community

The Ministry of Education aims to optimise the qualifications of education professionals and their participation in training programmes by promoting training and selecting high-quality topics.

In 2022, five programmes covering topics relevant to the education of Roma children were published in the catalogue of further education and training. These programmes were also implemented. The implementation of the programmes was entrusted to the National Education Institute: (1) Successful integration of children from vulnerable groups into the education process, and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana: (2) Children in the process of learning Slovenian as a second language in kindergarten and the first education period, (3) Teaching Slovenian and testing the knowledge of primary school pupils and upper secondary students who speak Slovenian as their second language, (4) Teaching Slovenian as a second language to pupils in upper grades of primary school and to upper secondary students, and (5) Slovenian as a second language and the language of instruction. The implementation of the programmes was co-financed for a total of EUR 2,272.21. A total of 119 professional workers (54 from kindergartens, 53 from primary schools, 11 from upper secondary schools and one from outside the education system) were engaged in the programmes.

Addressing truancy

One of the measures to tackle the problem of truancy is the employment of Roma assistants. In parallel, the measures taken by the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport (hereinafter: the Inspectorate) are implemented more rigorously. In 2020, the Inspectorate conducted a total of 129 infringement procedures relating to school non-attendance, 99 of which in relation to truancy (class non-attendance). In 2021, the Inspectorate conducted 332 infringement procedures, 116 of which in relation to truancy. In this context, it should be noted that in these two years, schools were closed for a considerable period of time due to the COVID-19 epidemic. As a result, these offences were not as numerous, but there was a predominance of offences (mainly in 2021) related to measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. During home schooling, it was not possible to detect or prosecute offences because the children were at home. In 2022, the Inspectorate conducted 245 infringement procedures, 223 of which in relation to truancy. The Inspectorate carried out these procedures in the 43 cases where it found that schools had failed to inform the social work centres.

Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia for the 2021–2030 period

The Strategy for the education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia for the 2021–2030 period was adopted in 2022. It includes a comprehensive overview of all activities carried out by the competent ministry with respect to the education of Roma, and proposals and guidelines for further measures.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia for the 2021–2030 period is available at: <https://www.gov.si teme/vzgoja-otrok-romov-in-izobrazevanje-pripadnikov-romske-skupnosti/>

3. Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures

- A performed evaluation study to analyse the needs, conditions and possibilities of the compulsory inclusion of children in a preschool education programme with a view to reducing social, economic and cultural inequalities at the national level. The study may serve as a basis for possible changes to the inclusion of children in pre-school programmes; planned from the 2022/2023 school year onwards.
- List of municipalities in which the pilot project on the teaching of Romani is being implemented

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Reply to Recommendation No 179)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia's reply is provided in the interpretation of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention (Legal and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities (Reply to Recommendation No 53)).

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Reply to Recommendation No 180)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia's reply is provided in the interpretation of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention (Legal and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities (Reply to Recommendation No 53)).

Slovenia also explains that, in accordance with the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Act and the Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, and in accordance with the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Status of the National Communities of Members of Nations of the Former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia, the Government adopted, first on 18 August 2021 (Decision No 00405-5/2021/3) and then again on 9 December 2021 (Decision No 00405-5/2021/7) a Decision establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Council) and subsequently also the Decision appointing the members of the Council (Decision No 00405-6/2021/6). The Government thereby established a special consultative body whose purpose is to address the issues, requests and proposals of the members of the national communities concerned and to adopt positions on proposals for decisions of the Government

and the ministries that would concern these national communities (the Panel of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia). The Council's active role enables the Government to engage in constructive dialogue with the national communities concerned.

By way of a decision on the establishment, composition, organisation and tasks of the Council, such a Council was established on five occasions until 2022, namely on 22 August 2013, 26 February 2015, 11 July 2019, 18 August 2021 and 9 December 2021. At that time, the term of office of the members of the Council was linked to the term of office of the Government, and with the change of the Government, the Council ceased to function. In order to ensure the continuity of the Council's work, as from 2021 onwards, the members of the Council hold office for a term of five years from the date of the decision appointing them, with the possibility of reappointment, except in the case of the President and the members of the Government who hold public office and whose term of office is terminated prematurely by reason of the termination of their function. A representative of the ministry responsible for culture is appointed President of the Council, while the post of Vice-President is reserved for representatives of the national communities, who rotate in this position. In 2022, the Vice-President of the Council was a representative of the Croatian national community, Mr Đanino Kutnjak, and in 2023 this position is held by Dr Ilija Dimitrievski. Administrative and technical support for the work of the Council is provided by the ministry responsible for culture through the Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Service

In order to respond to the request of the ministry responsible for labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities, it was decided by the Decision establishing the Council on 9 December 2021 (Decision no. 00405-5/2021/7) to add an additional member to the Council. This broke the Council's parity composition, and on 10 November 2022, the Government adopted a Decision amending the decision establishing the Council, which restored the Council's parity composition. The Council now consists of 12 members, 6 of whom are representatives of state authorities (the ministry responsible for culture, the ministry responsible for education, the ministry responsible for internal affairs, the ministry responsible for foreign and European affairs, the ministry responsible for labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities, and the Government Office for National Minorities), and the other six are representatives of national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY (Albanians, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians, and Serbs).

The Council met twice in 2022, in its founding session on 31 January 2022, chaired by Dr Ignacija Fridl Jarc, State Secretary and representative of the ministry responsible for culture, and in a new composition following the change of the Government on 7 December 2022, chaired by Dr Asta Vrečko, Minister and representative of the ministry responsible for Culture. Previously, new members were appointed to the Council by Government Decision No 00405-6/2022/4 of 10 November 2022 on the appointment of members of the Council.

At the Council's founding session on 31 January 2022, the Council adopted its Rules of Procedure, appointed the Vice-President of the Council and agreed that future meetings of the Council would address topics relating to language policy, invitations to tender, the Foreigners Act, the renaming of the Council, and the exercise of the rights of the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in Slovenia, each time up to a maximum of two topics per meeting.

At its first session in the new composition on 7 December 2022, the Council first adopted and approved the minutes of the Council's founding session of 31 January 2022, and thus all previously adopted decisions on the Council's Rules of Procedure, the alphabetical order in which a new representative of a national community is to be appointed each year as the Vice-

President of the Council, and the order in which matters are to be discussed. The Council then took note of the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2021–2025 (ReNPJP21–25), as well as of the substantive parts relating to the languages of the members of the nations of the former SFRY. It also took note of the systemic framework for teaching the languages of the members of the nations of the former SFRY within the education system. It took the view that, before drafting or adopting any resolution or similar document concerning the members of the national communities of the former SFRY, their representatives should be invited to participate. In view of the topicality of the subject, it also adopted a revised decision that at the next session, in addition to the subject of tenders, the implementation of the Convention, which, according to the national communities of the members of the nations of the former SFRY, could form the basis for a law on the exercise of collective rights, should be discussed. It was reiterated that the Council can only discuss or take note of initiatives regarding the implementation of collective rights of the national communities of the members of the nations of the former SFRY, but has no authority to propose such initiatives. As a consultative body of the Government, the Council can only propose that the Government should consider the adoption of such a law or reconsider the possibility of submitting such a law that was already submitted for consideration in one of the previous terms of office. The second (correspondence) session of the Council was held from 21 February 2023 to 23 February 2023, during which the Council members approved the report on the work of the Council for 2022.

The Council's third session was held on 18 April 2023, at which Slovenia's position on the implementation of the Convention was presented. The session was suspended and resumed on 9 May 2023.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Government Decision No 00405-5/2021/3 of 18 August 2021 establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
- Government Decision No 00405-5/2021/7 of 9 December 2021 establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
- Government Decision No 00405-6/2021/6 of 9 December 2021 appointing the members of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
- Government Decision No 00405-4/2022/3 of 10 November 2022 amending the Decision establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
- Government Decision No 00405-6/2022/4 of 10 November 2022 appointing the members of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
- Government Decision No 00405-5/2022/9 of 13 April 2023 amending the Decision establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining

to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia

- Government Decision No 00405-6/2022/10 of 13 April 2023 amending the Decision appointing the members of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
 - Government Decision No 00405-6/2022/12 of 13 April 2023 amending the Decision appointing the members of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia
3. *Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures*
- Report on the work of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia for 2021
 - Report on the work of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for issues pertaining to the national communities of members of the nations of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia for 2022

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Reply to Recommendation No 181)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia's reply is provided in the interpretation of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention (Legal and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities (Reply to Recommendation No 53)).

Slovenia further explains that, with a view to deepening and strengthening the constructive dialogue with representatives of the Germanophone ethnic group in Slovenia, the ministry responsible for culture, by decision of 22 September 2020, established a special Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Working Group). In addition to representatives of the organisations of the Germanophone ethnic group in Slovenia, it included representatives of the ministries responsible for culture, foreign affairs and education, science and sport. The Working Group's purpose is to address issues of members of the Germanophone ethnic group in Slovenia, which relate to the work areas of the participating ministries, including language and culture, in order to preserve and develop linguistic and cultural diversity. The Working Group held two meetings in 2021. On 10 March 2021, the first (founding) meeting of the Working Group was held, during which representatives of the aforementioned ministries presented current activities and opportunities for members of the Germanophone ethnic group. Representatives of the two umbrella organisations of members of the Germanophone ethnic

group (the Association of Cultural Societies of the Germanophone Ethnic Group and the Union of Organisations of the Kočevje Germans) presented their organisations' activities. They agreed on the group's future work. On 6 December 2021, a second session was held to discuss the ten most important substantive items on the agenda following the proposal by representatives of the two umbrella organisations of the Germanophone ethnic group in Slovenia. It should be noted that dialogue with representatives of the Germanophone ethnic group began. A number of substantive issues were raised, which were resolved or clarified during the reasoned dialogue.

As the Working Group was established during the term of office of Minister Vasko Simoniti, it was re-established by decision of the new Minister, Asta Vrečko, on 20 December 2022 with the newly appointed representative of the Government Office for National Minorities and the representative of the newly established Association of Cultural Societies of the Kočevje and Štajerska in Slovenia. Slovenia will endeavour to ensure that the Working Group continues to meet on an as-needed basis.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Decision No 510-77/2019/22 of the Ministry of Culture of 22 September 2020 establishing a special Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia
- Decision No 012-59/2022-3340-14 of the Ministry of Culture of 20 December 2022 establishing and appointing a special Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia
- Decision amending Decision No 012-59/2022-3340-15 of the Ministry of Culture of 8 December 2023 establishing and appointing a special Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia

3. Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures

- Report on the work of the Working Group for Permanent Dialogue with Representatives of the Germanophone Ethnic Group in the Republic of Slovenia for 2021

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Reply to Recommendation No 182)

1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article

In Slovenia, the Convention does not apply to the members of the Germanophone ethnic group or to the members of the Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian national communities, as the declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the scope of application

of the Convention (Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community), made when depositing the Convention instrument, is binding on all national authorities. As a result, the activities of representatives of the Germanophone ethnic group and members of the Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian national communities are funded from the state budget on a project basis rather than directly.

Slovenia also states that the Government Office for National Minorities co-financed the purchase of new business premises in Murska Sobota in 2021 to facilitate and improve the functioning of the Roma Community Council.

In order to make the OSSIN's work easier and more economical, the Government Office for National Minorities co-financed the purchase of business premises in Koper in 2022, where the OSSIN and the Italian national community organisations would operate. In this way, the spatial problem has been solved permanently and definitively, while at the same time ensuring that the organisations of the Italian national community operate from a single address, strengthening their effective functioning and the exercise of the fundamental rights of the Italian national community for the benefit of the members of the Italian national community.

On the basis of an agreement signed by the deputies of the National Assembly for national communities with the Government in 2020 (and an annex in 2021) for the 2020–2022 term of office, additional annual funding was granted to the umbrella organisations of the Italian and Hungarian national communities for the establishment of the Offices for Bilingualism. The offices employ two people each and operate under the auspices of the OSSIN Community and the PMSNS community. They began to operate at the beginning of 2022. To this end, Slovenia provides an additional EUR 64,000 per year to each of the two umbrella organisations.

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Reply to Recommendation No 183)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

In Slovenia, the Convention does not apply to the members of the Germanophone ethnic group or to the members of the Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian national communities, as the declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the scope of application of the Convention (Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community), made when depositing the Convention instrument, is binding on all national authorities. Participation is therefore only possible in the Council and in the Working Group, which facilitate an active dialogue between the above-mentioned representatives and the Slovenian Government.

Article 15 of the Convention

Effective participation in socio-economic life

(Reply to Recommendation No 192)*1. Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia explains that under employment regulations Roma have the same rights and obligations as other citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. With a view to increasing their employment opportunities, unemployed Roma, like all other job seekers, have the right and obligation to be included in the measures of active employment policy (AEP) and labour market services. Roma are a priority target group for inclusion in the AEP measures and labour market services: priority is given to unemployment allowance recipients, social assistance recipients, members of vulnerable groups in the labour market (Roma are part of this group) and unemployed people not included in any other AEP measure.

The promotion of Roma employment is addressed by the State as part of the existing legislation and strategic and programming documents in this field, which identify Roma as one of the vulnerable groups particularly characterised by long-term unemployment. The State is addressing this issue as part of the AEP measures.

The integration of the Roma population into the labour market is a multi-faceted issue and requires prior action to be taken in various cross-sectoral fields (housing, education, protection of children, women and young people, etc.). The main obstacles to the integration of unemployed Roma into the labour market are as follows:

- low levels of education,
- a lack of work experience, and
- a lack of ability and willingness to identify even more actively their own skills, competencies and interests to make decisions about education, training, career choices and employment.

Against this background, members of the Roma community are a priority target group for inclusion in the state labour market measures, such as the AEP and labour market services. They are also given priority in the provision of services by career centres. Not only are they a priority target group for inclusion in various measures, but also the inclusion of Roma in public works as one of the AEP measures is co-financed by the ministry responsible for labour at a rate of 95% (wage co-financing), while the inclusion of other target groups of the long-term unemployed persons in public works is co-financed at a rate of between 50% and 80%. Furthermore, Roma can be included in a public works programme for up to two years, while target groups other than people with disabilities and persons aged 58 and over can only be included in public works programmes for one year. With a view to the employment and social activation of long-term unemployed Roma, the public works programmes are tailored to the greatest possible extent to the needs of unemployed Roma and Roma who are users of public works services. Two tailor-made public works programmes are being implemented for Roma. They are aimed at (1) improving Roma settlements and (2) helping Roma members to socialise.

In Slovenia, all citizens are treated equally and are not segregated on the grounds of their ethnic, religious, national or any other affiliation. For effective integration into the labour market, the State is committed to empowering, as much as possible, all those who need help and

encouragement in this respect. Despite the commitment to the equal treatment of all those who need assistance to integrate into the labour market, positive discrimination measures against members of the Roma community, as outlined above, are also being implemented in the employment sector.

In this regard, measures are also being implemented under the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2017–2021, adopted on 25 May 2017, the Supplementary Measures to the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2017–2021, adopted on 23 December 2020, and the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2021–2030 (hereinafter: NPMR), adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on 28 December 2021. Given the long-term nature of the process of improving Roma employability given the education levels of unemployed Roma, the measures are aimed at improving the education levels and work experience of Roma (on-the-job training, social and labour market inclusion). The measure of including Roma in the state labour market measures encompasses three sets:

(1) AEP set: training and education programmes, employment incentives, job creation and promotion of self-employment. These programmes promote employment as well as social and labour market inclusion. They cover, for example, public works, on-the-job training and workshops;

(2) Labour market service set: workshops to acquire skills to learn about personal interests and competences, to recognise opportunities in the environment, to formulate and pursue employment and career goals, to motivate the pursuit of career goals, and to acquire job search skills. Supporting a quicker and easier transition between employment and unemployment, which helps reduce Roma social exclusion, is also an important aspect of including Roma in these workshops.

(3) Career centre set: services (e.g. basic and in-depth career guidance, rehabilitation counselling) are aimed at assisting members of the Roma community in planning their education or employment careers. At career centres, Roma have access, on their own and with the assistance of counsellors, to all job search and career management tools. They can participate in seminars and social activation programmes, and prepare for job interviews (one person can ask for help several times, the institution records each visit for each person).

Social activation measure

Social activation is one of the measures aimed at improving the social inclusion of the long-term unemployed and people with complex social problems, as well as at increasing their employment opportunities. The purpose of social activation programmes is providing excellent programmes that are accessible and diverse and assist people from the target group in developing social competences, improving functional competences to actively address their social problems, increasing their motivation and empowerment for entering the labour market, and increasing or acquiring work competences, namely useful knowledge, skills and abilities to open up opportunities for entering the labour market.

Within the 2019–2022 period, the co-financing of social activation programmes also covered three programmes aimed at the social activation of Roma women, namely:

- For Equality, for Employment, for Women, for Roma Women (provider: the Epeka Association)

- Activate yourself in Novo mesto and Črnomelj (provider: the Development and Education Centre Novo mesto)
- Trust Yourself – Patja Andi Tute (provider: the Research and Education Centre Mansion Rakičan)

The target group of these programmes are adult Roma women who are:

- beneficiaries/recipients of social assistance benefits, or
- registered in the records of unemployed persons based on the ZUTD, or
- registered in the records of temporarily unemployable persons based on the ZUTD, or
- inactive persons with complex social problems.

The contract value of these three programmes in 2022 amounted to EUR 478,707.55. The social activation programmes for Roma women were carried out on five locations, namely in Maribor, Lendava, Beltinci, Črnomelj and Novo mesto. Throughout the project implementation period (from 23 September 2019 to 30 September 2022), a total of 334 Roma women participated in the social activation programmes for Roma women, of which approximately 120 found employment or looked for a job or enrolled in education/training or a qualification programme after completing the programme, which is more than 25%.

The publication of new public tender for co-financing social activation projects is envisaged in 2023 (for the period until 2027). A special lot section target Roma women to finance four projects in six towns (Kočevje, Maribor, Lendava, Murska Sobota, Črnomelj and Novo mesto).

The synergy of all measures taken by the State in the labour market is a prerequisite for the effective promotion of the employment of members of the Roma community.

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- Labour Market Regulation Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 80/10, 40/12 – ZUJF, 21/13, 63/13, 100/13 and 32/14 – ZPDZC-1, 47/15 – ZZSDT, 55/17, 75/19, 11/20 – Dec. of the CC, 189/20 – ZFRO, 54/21, 172/21 – ZODPol-G, 54/22 in 59/22 – Dec. of the CC; ZUTD)
- Rules on the selection and co-financing of public works programmes (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 96/13, 84/15, 67/16, 55/17, 77/19 and 180/20)
- National Programme of Measures for Roma 2017–2021
- Supplementary Measures to the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2017–2021
- National Programme of Measures for Roma 2021–2030

3. Relevant data, statistics and other information that enable an assessment of the impact of these measures

- Funding

The table below shows the total amount of funds allocated to the measure "Inclusion of Roma in the state labour market measures", broken down by funds from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia and funds from the European Social Fund (ESF).

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
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state budget funds	881,258.00	1,066,715.00	816,512.00	748,336.50	1,052,119.00
ESF funds	474,239.00	380,838.00	245,460.00	497,306.00	561,916.00
outturn (total amount)	1,355,497.00	1,447,553.00	1,061,972.00	1,245,642.50	1,614,035.00

All amounts are in EUR.

Number of the Roma community members covered by the measure "Inclusion of Roma in the state labour market measures"

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Roma included in the active employment policy (AEP) measure	457	480	447	362	352	546
(2) Number of Roma included in the labour market service measure	246	225	146	41	53	90
(3) Number of Roma included the Career centres measure	2,561	2,957	2,941	2,760	2,831	2,843
Number of Roma included in the AEP measure (1 + 2 + 3)	3,264	3,662	3,534	3,163	3,236	3,479

Articles 17 and 18 of the Convention

Bilateral and multilateral co-operation (Reply to Recommendation No 196)

1. *Legal, political and practical measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Advisory Committee with regard to this Article*

Slovenia's reply is partly given in the interpretation of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention (Promotion of full and effective equality, reply to Recommendation No 74), paragraphs one to three.

In 2020, the Government issued the Decree amending the Decree laying down detailed spending purposes and criteria for calculating the amount of funds allocated to municipalities or municipal self-governing national communities (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 157/20; hereinafter: the Decree). The Decree amended the 2018 Decree, namely indent two of Article 4 has been amended so that, in implementing their activities and programmes, the municipal self-governing national communities may also use up to 30% of the funds that were allocated to the material costs of operation for the major maintenance and repair of movable and immovable property.

Under the Decree, the Government issues an annual decision on the co-financing of bilingualism and the exercise of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities' constitutional rights, on the basis of which payments are made to the municipalities of Koper (urban municipality), Izola, Piran, Ankaran, Lendava, Moravske Toplice, Dobrovnik, Šalovci and Hodoš, and directly to the municipal self-governing communities if they opt for such a decision.

Decisions for 2020 were issued by the Government on 29 January 2020 and 12 October 2020 to provide additional funding due to the increase in the lump sum payments, the decision for 2021 was issued on 10 January 2021, for 2022 on 2 February 2022 and for 2023 on 2 February 2023.

Based on the financial plan of the Government Office for National Minorities, the State co-finances the following on a systemic basis:

- The Hungarian Self-Governing National Community of Pomurje (PMSNS) as the umbrella organisation of the Hungarian national community in Slovenia;
- Institute for the Information Activity of the Hungarian National Community (MNTI);
- radio and television broadcasts for the Hungarian national community as part of Radio-Television Slovenia;
- bilingualism and the exercise of the constitutional rights of the Hungarian national community in the municipalities of Lendava, Moravske Toplice, Dobrovnik, Hodoš and Šalovci;
- Coastal Italian Self-Governing National Community (OSSIN) as the umbrella organisation of the Italian national community in Slovenia;
- radio and television broadcasts for the Italian national community as part of RTV Slovenia;
- bilingualism and the exercise of the constitutional rights of the Italian national community in the municipalities of Koper (urban municipality), Izola, Piran and Ankaran.

On the basis of the Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia of 3 July 2021 and its Annex No 1 of 15 July 2021, additional funds were provided to the Italian and Hungarian national communities for the 2020-2022 period.

A new Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia was signed on 25 May 2023 for the duration of the current Government's term of office (2022-2026). All obligations arising from the Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia of 3 July 2021 and its Annex No 1 of 15 July 2021 have been included by the Government Office for National Minorities in the budget for 2022 and in the budgets for 2023 and 2024.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Decision, the municipal self-governing national communities are also eligible for the programme costs of ensuring contacts with the nation of origin (the presentation of various groups and associations in Italy and Hungary, Italian and Hungarian groups and associations in Slovenia, etc.).

By law, the Government Office for National Minorities co-finances the activities of the umbrella organisations of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and of the Roma community.

On the basis of the work programmes submitted, the Office concludes annual contracts with all three umbrella organisations. Other eligible purposes include the costs of contacts with the nation of origin or, in the case of the Roma community, the costs of international activities.

With regard to their cross-border co-operation, the annual reports of the municipalities and self-governing national communities in which members of the Hungarian national community live mainly describe contacts and participation in working meetings with representatives of the local authorities of Hungarian towns, participation in official meetings with high-level representatives of Hungary, participation in meetings with representatives of Hungarian associations and societies, Hungarian schools and cultural institutions, business meetings in Hungary, participation in cultural and art events, and fairs in Hungary, as well as participation in other social events promoting mutual contacts and friendship.

In 2020, the PMSNS community continued to carry out activities from the previous period, with no changes to the guidelines. The representatives of the PMSNS community had working meetings with the Hungarian Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, several Hungarian and Slovenian ministers, the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Hungary, the Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to Slovenia, the President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), and a number of high-level political representatives of socio-political organisations. They also took part in the preparations for the Slovenian-Hungarian Joint Minority Commission in Ljubljana and Budapest, which was cancelled due to the pandemic. The aim of these meetings was to exchange experiences in all areas of activity and to explore new opportunities for the development of the national community, the implementation of joint projects and the deepening of economic cooperation. As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, the activities of the PMSNS community were highly adapted, with many programmes cancelled due to restrictive measures or delivered in an adapted format or via video-link. Because of the ban on gathering, the PMSNS community cancelled one of its key events, namely the commemoration marking Hungary's 1848-49 revolution and freedom fight, which was due to take place on 15 March. The second main event, Statehood Day (20 August), was held because the measures in place at the time were less stringent. The newly-appointed Hungarian Ambassador to Slovenia, Andor Ferenc Dávid, delivered the speech at the Statehood Day ceremony. To commemorate the 1956 revolution (23 October), the PMSNS community organised a video-link event. A wreath-laying ceremony in honour of the martyrs of Arad was held at the Holy Trinity Chapel (6 October), and an event entitled "Povezani v pripadnosti 1920–2020" (Connected by Affiliation) was held at the Hetés Friendship Park in Žitkovci on 4 July. The President and Vice-President of the Council of the PMSNS, the Ambassador of Hungary to Slovenia and representatives of the Consulate-General in Lendava discussed on several occasions various issues related to the protection and exercise of the special rights of the Hungarian national community of Pomurje. The PMSNS community held several working meetings with representatives of the Hungarian business sector. The representatives discussed opportunities for cooperation in the economic and agricultural sectors. The PMSNS community actively participated in various meetings in Slovenia and Hungary. A great deal of attention was paid to presenting the national community's projects to representatives from various ministries and national authorities. In 2020, the PMSNS community also held a number of events and meetings via video link. Both the Hungarian and Slovenian authorities provided funding for various purposes as a result of these activities.

Some of the most important actions in which the PMSNS community has actively participated include the following:

- the adoption of the Decree laying down detailed spending purposes and criteria for calculating the amount of funds allocated to municipalities or municipal self-governing national communities. Accordingly, the municipal self-governing national communities may spend a maximum of 30% of the allocated funds on the major maintenance and repair of movable and immovable property necessary for the operation or implementation of their programmes;
- the prevention of the transfer of the Hungarian national minority broadcasts from the TV SLO 1 channel to the TV Maribor or TV SLO 3 channels;
- the promotion of economic development in an ethnically mixed area (talks with the ministries of both countries, with representatives of various organisations, representatives of local communities and others);
- the maintenance and expansion of the model of bilingual literacy instruction, Hungarian and Slovenian;
- the functioning of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) established between the community of the Porabje Slovenians and the PMSNS community and the competent municipalities;
- dealing with the issue concerning the Slovenian Regional Development Fund's call for proposals for funding national communities;
- drafting the Government action plan for the implementation of regulations governing the exercise of the rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia;
- ensuring that more Hungarian television programmes are broadcast by service providers, etc.

During the summer months, the PMSNS community continued to run various camps (football, theatre and so on). It also participated in the presentation of the Hungarian national community and culture in various places in Hungary and Slovenia (at the time when this was allowed). In an effort to encourage the implementation of common European projects, the PMSNS community met with border counties in Hungary, representatives of local communities in Slovenia and the management of the Murska Sobota Development Centre. The PMSNS community continued its activities related to the list of the Hungarian unique and distinctive features and values in the Prekmurje region. Following a call for tenders, the PMSNS community commissioned the restoration of the church bells in Pordašinci and Dolga Vas. As part of the Memorial Year of György Zala, the PMSNS community organised a travelling exhibition on the subject in several places. The PMSNS community also arranged for the relocation of the memorial plaque in Hrastovec to a more appropriate site to commemorate the more than 500 Prekmurje Hungarians who were interned in the Hrastovec concentration camp in 1945. It also completed the Carpathian Basin kindergarten development programme. The programme, funded by the Hungarian Government through Bethlen Gábor Alapkezelő Zrt in cooperation with the Secretariat of National Policy and the PMSNS community, ended in December. Under the programme, kindergartens in Prosenjakovci, Dolga Vas and Gaber have been renovated, new playgrounds have been built and each bilingual kindergarten unit has been outfitted with new playground equipment. Alongside these investments, the children received regular music and dance lessons, and were treated to concerts, puppet shows and theatre performances.

The PMSNS community also focused on implementing the Programme for the Promotion of

the Economic Base of the Hungarian National Community 2017–2020, adopted by the Government. The programme aimed to develop the economic base of the area inhabited by members of the autochthonous Hungarian national community, by creating new jobs and preserving existing ones, creating new and modernising existing infrastructure, and increasing the area's attractiveness. The four-year programme sought to address as effectively as possible the consequences of the economic crisis and the underdevelopment of the area, which, according to data, still lags behind other regions in the country. It targeted all beneficiaries whose activities were carried out in the area inhabited by members of the autochthonous Hungarian ethnic community and who, through the implementation of their projects, contributed to the achievement of the programme's objectives. The programme measures that were successfully implemented were:

- boosting investments in the economic sector;
- the promotion of tourism activities and products, the promotion of the area, and support for the programme's implementation (the website: Muravidek.re – Pomurje was established);
- the creation of two (2) new jobs.

After the project's completion, the PMSNS community participated in the development of the Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Hungarian National Community 2021–2024.

The PMSNS community also co-financed various cultural, research, informative and economic activities to help develop the Hungarian national community in Pomurje, but was very limited in this respect due to financial constraints. In order to carry out all its activities and investments, it also participates in various tenders, mainly in Hungary. In this way, the PMSNS community is able to carry out some programmes that it would not have been able to carry out otherwise (organising various camps, seminars, workshops, events, football matches of the Pomurje Hungarian community team, conducting music education for families with young children, supplying professional teachers for various interest clubs in bilingual schools, etc.). Under the Hungarian Village Programme in Prekmurje, which was also funded by Hungary, the local authorities and associations received funding for investments through a call for tenders. The PMSNS community participated in the implementation and co-financing of the "Magyarul a Muravidéken" programme, which aims to promote the learning of Hungarian as a mother tongue in the ethnically mixed area of Prekmurje.

The project "Increasing the quality of national education for the Hungarian national community living in Slovenia and the Slovenian national community living in Hungary" was successfully completed. The project is a follow-up of the activities carried out by the bilingual educational institutions of Prekmurje and Porabje. The PMSNS community was the sole partner in the five-year project, involving bilingual schools and kindergartens in Prekmurje and Porabje. The project's purpose was to enable children enrolled in education at all levels in the Hungarian and Slovenian language to benefit from well-trained teaching staff with professional and teaching qualifications and from additional learning support. It provided members of the Hungarian and Slovenian minorities and indeed all children with better opportunities for education in the Hungarian and Slovenian language, raising their awareness, integration into the environment, and additional employment opportunities. The project's aim is to improve and further develop the language and professional skills of the professional staff of educational institutions in Prekmurje and Porabje and to disseminate the educational system in bilingual educational institutions in Prekmurje and Porabje. As a fundamental objective, the project seeks to increase the quality of national education for the Hungarian national community living

in Slovenia and the Slovenian national community living in Hungary, and, consequently, making the knowledge levels of children enrolled in bilingual educational institutions in Prekmurje in Porabje more competitive. The project also employed two teachers. The PMSNS community organised a remote seminar on the exchange of experience and good practices among pre-school teachers and pre-school teacher assistants in Porabje and Pomurje.

In 2021, representatives of the PMSNS community had working meetings with the Slovenian and Hungarian Prime Ministers, the Presidents of the Republic of Slovenia and Hungary, the Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, several Hungarian and Slovenian ministers, the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Hungary, the Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to Slovenia, the President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), the Hungarian State Secretary for National Policy, the State Secretary for Church and Ethnic Relations, mayors and other representatives of socio-political organisations. They also attended the plenary session of Slovenia and Hungary. In addition to the joint session between the two governments, various political and economic bilateral meetings were held, with the participation of the PMSNS community delegation. The participants were acquainted with the projects that the PMSNS community implemented in Pomurje on economy, agriculture, tourism, culture, and science, as well as for national minorities.

In 2021, the PMSNS community was also visited by a delegation from the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The main purpose of the talks was to assess progress made in the protection of national minorities in Slovenia.

Community activities in 2021 were also curtailed because of the COVID-19 epidemic, with many programmes cancelled due to restrictive measures or delivered in an adapted format or via video link.

For example, the PMSNS community cancelled one of its key events, namely the commemoration of Hungary's 1848-49 revolution and freedom fight, because of the ban on gathering. The event was replaced by a wreath-laying ceremony held on 14 March 2021. The second major event, Statehood Day (20 August), was able to be held because the measures in place at the time were less stringent and gatherings were allowed under certain conditions. On the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), wreaths were laid at the Jewish cemetery in Dolga Vas and a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of the martyrs of Arad was held at the Holy Trinity Chapel (6 October). To commemorate the 1956 revolution (23 October), the PMSNS community organised an event at the Lendava theatre and concert hall.

The President and Vice-President of the PMSNS community's Council, the Ambassador of Hungary to Slovenia and representatives of the Consulate-General in Lendava discussed on several occasions various issues related to the protection and exercise of the special rights of the Hungarian national community of Pomurje. The PMSNS community held several working meetings with representatives of the Hungarian business sector. The representatives discussed opportunities for cooperation in the economic and agricultural sectors. In 2021, the PMSNS community also held a number of events and meetings via video call. Both the Hungarian and Slovenian authorities provided funding for various purposes as a result of these activities.

During the summer months, the PMSNS community continued to run various camps (football, theatre and so on). It also participated in the presentation of the Hungarian national community

and culture in various places in Hungary and Slovenia (at the time when this was allowed). In an effort to encourage the implementation of common European projects, the PMSNS community met with border counties in Hungary, representatives of local communities in Slovenia and the management of the Murska Sobota Development Centre. The PMSNS community continued its activities related to the list of the Hungarian unique and distinctive features and values in the Prekmurje region. In this context, it held a competition for bilingual primary and upper secondary students. This research work has resulted in a new publication. The PMSNS community also implemented the Hungarian Village Programme for Prekmurje, which enabled settlements in ethnically mixed areas to obtain funding for small investments. Under the programme supported by the Secretariat for National Policy at the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office and the manager of the Bethlen Gabor CJSC Fund, the settlements renovated villages and fire stations and various monuments and purchased certain equipment. With the help of the Hungarian Government, the PMSNS community obtained funding for the construction of a gymnasium to meet the needs of the DOŠ I Lendava branch school in Gaber and purchased sports equipment for bilingual schools in Prekmurje. In 2021, as every year, the PMSNS community provided free textbooks to the students of the Bilingual Secondary School Lendava, who learn Hungarian at the native-speaker level.

The Pomurje Gallop, co-organised by the PMSNS community with funding from Hungary, is one of the main events that attracts large numbers of people. It is the biggest equestrian event in Prekmurje. Riders compete for the right to take part in the final race of the Hungarian National Gallop. The event is accompanied by various cultural and culinary highlights. In 2021, the PMSNS community published a publication entitled "Co-existence", which gives an insight into the life of the Hungarian community in Prekmurje. The publication was distributed to every household in the ethnically mixed area. The PMSNS community signed a cooperation agreement with the People's University of Lendava with a view to successful mutual cooperation in the joint implementation of various projects and to cooperation in education, training, science and culture.

In 2022, representatives of the PMSNS community had working meetings with the Slovenian and Hungarian Prime Ministers, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, several Hungarian and Slovenian ministers, the Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Hungary, the Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to Slovenia, the President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), the Hungarian State Secretary for National Policy, the Hungarian State Secretary for Church and Ethnic Relations, Deputy Barna Pál Zsigmond, the Slovenian Minister for Digital Transformation, mayors and other representatives of socio-political organisations. They took part in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Hungarian-Slovenian diplomatic relations at the Parliament in Budapest, met with representatives of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, representatives of the Porabje and Carinthian Slovenians, representatives of the Italian national community in Slovenia and various organisations and parties of the Hungarian minority in the Carpathian Basin. The aim of these meetings was to exchange experiences in all areas of activity and to explore new opportunities for the development of the national community and the implementation of joint projects.

Representatives of the PMSNS community also attended the XVIII plenary session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Intergovernmental Joint Commission, where current issues of the Hungarian community in Slovenia and the Slovenian community in Hungary were discussed, as well as proposals for the future of the community, which were recorded in the minutes. The

representatives also attended a conference on national policy in the Carpathian Basin with the leaders of the Hungarian parties/organisations from abroad.

After two difficult years marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, two major events were held: one on 15 March to commemorate Hungary's 1848-49 revolution and freedom fight and the other on 20 August to celebrate Hungary's Statehood Day. The guests at the spring event were the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on autonomy issues beyond the borders, Dr Katalin Szili, who is also a former Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, and the President of the General Assembly of Vas County, László Majthényi. The keynote speaker at the celebration of Statehood Day was Péter Szilágyi, Hungarian Deputy State Secretary for National Policy. In addition to these two events, the community organised various commemorative events, among which a ceremony on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), the commemoration of the martyrs of Arad (6 October) and the commemoration of the 1956 revolution (23 October) deserve special mention.

The President and Vice-President of the Council of the PMSNS, the Ambassador of Hungary to Slovenia and representatives of the Consulate-General in Lendava discussed on several occasions various issues related to the protection and exercise of the special rights of the Hungarian national community of Pomurje. The PMSNS community held several working meetings with representatives of the Hungarian business sector. The representatives discussed opportunities for cooperation in the economic and agricultural sectors. Various ministries, state authorities, local communities and other organisations were presented with the projects that the PMSNS community successfully implemented in Pomurje in the fields of economy, agriculture, tourism, culture, science and national minorities. Both the Hungarian and Slovenian authorities provided funding for various purposes as a result of these activities. On 21 February 2022, the Slovenian and Hungarian Prime Ministers signed an agreement in Lendava on cooperation in the economic and social development of the ethnically mixed area on both sides of the Slovenian-Hungarian border, i.e. Pomurje and Porabje, under which the two communities will each receive EUR 25 million over the next five years. The initiative for the joint funding of the Hungarian national community in Pomurje and the Slovenian national community in Porabje, which was launched four years ago by the President of the PMSNS community's Council and Deputy of the Slovenian National Assembly for the Hungarian national community, Ferenc Horvath, has thus come to fruition.

During the summer months, the PMSNS community continued to run various camps (football, drama, swimming, etc.). It also collaborated in the presentation of the Hungarian national community and culture in various places in Hungary and Slovenia. In an effort to encourage the implementation of common European projects, the PMSNS community met with border counties in Hungary, representatives of local communities in Slovenia and the management of the Murska Sobota Development Centre. The PMSNS presidency met with the mayors of the Pomurje municipalities where members of the Hungarian national community live. The President of the PMSNS community's Council presented projects for culture, education, tourism economy and agriculture that were implemented by the PMSNS and its organisations in Pomurje and the border areas, in good cooperation with municipalities, their institutions, associations and other stakeholders. The implementation of the programme for the promotion of the economic base of the Hungarian nationality, adopted by the Government for the period 2021–2024, was presented to the mayors.

On a similar topic, representatives of the PMSNS community had a working meeting with the representatives of the Circular Economy Science and Innovation Park in Nagykanizsa, the University of Pannonia in Veszprém and the Maribor-based Regional Development Agency for

Podravje. The purpose of the visit was to identify joint cross-border projects for circular economy, renewable energy and sound waste management that could be implemented in north-eastern Slovenia in the coming period.

The PMSNS community continued its activities related to the list of the Hungarian unique and distinctive features and values in the Prekmurje region. In this context, two Prekmurje values were included in the Collection of Hungarian Values (Hungarikums), namely the national costume of the Hetés and the Prekmurje minced lard. These two values were thus awarded the title of "outstanding national value".

At the beginning of the year, the Office for Bilingualism within the PMSNS community became operational. In its first year of operation, the Office focused mainly on providing translations for bilingual institutions, covering a wide range of materials (contracts, formal applications, letters, correspondence, brochures and documentation from Slovenian into Hungarian and vice versa). In its first year of operation, the Office's main tasks were as follows:

- providing translations of professional literature, letters, correspondence, documentation,
- assisting Hungarian institutions in ethnically mixed areas with translations,
- providing advice regarding the use and translation of the Hungarian language and translations intended for members of the national community,
- monitoring the use of bilingualism in the bilingual area and reporting any infringements.

The funds for the operation of the Office for Bilingualism are provided by the Slovenian Government Office for National Minorities on the basis of a general co-financing agreement. The Pomurje Gallop, co-organised by the PMSNS community with funding from Hungary, is one of the main events that attracts large numbers of people. It is the biggest equestrian event in Prekmurje. Riders compete for the right to take part in the final race of the Hungarian National Gallop. The event is accompanied by various cultural and culinary highlights. The PMSNS community published the second part of the publication entitled "Co-existence", which gives an insight into the life of the Hungarian community in Prekmurje. The publication was distributed to every household in the ethnically mixed area.

With the help of the Hungarian Government, the PMSNS community received funding for the renovation of the building and courtyard of the former school in Čentiba, which will allow the Lendava Kindergarten to establish three new departments. As every year, the PMSNS community provided free textbooks to the students of the Bilingual Secondary School Lendava, who learn Hungarian at the native-speaker level.

The PMSNS community was actively involved in discussions about the following major projects and their implementation:

- the renovation of existing and construction of new ethnographic houses in cooperation with individual municipal self-governing national communities;
- the introduction of new education programmes and the construction of new rooms at the Bilingual Secondary School Lendava;
- the establishment of a development centre for children with early development problems (Radmožanci Development Centre);
- the purchase and setting up of a model farm in Banuta;
- the purchase and setting up of an accommodation, catering and entertainment centre (lodging and restaurant in Dolga Vas);
- tourist train programme;
- the improvement of the infrastructure and working conditions of bilingual kindergartens;
- the regulation of current issues in bilingual education and training.

The PMSNS community has devoted considerable attention to the implementation of the Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Hungarian National Community 2021–2024, adopted by the Slovenian Government. The programme aims to develop the economic base of the area inhabited by members of the autochthonous Hungarian national community, by creating new jobs and preserving existing ones, creating new infrastructure and modernising the existing one, promoting agriculture and the supply of local agricultural products or foodstuffs in the programme area, and increasing the attractiveness of the area. It targets all beneficiaries whose activities are carried out in the area inhabited by members of the autochthonous Hungarian national community and who, through the implementation of their projects, contribute to the achievement of the programme's objectives. The four-year programme seeks to tackle as effectively as possible the underdevelopment of the area, which, according to data, still lags behind other regions in the country. The measures of the programme include the promotion of investments in the economy of the programme area, the promotion of tourism activities and products, the promotion of the programme area, the support of the implementation of the programme and the promotion of agriculture in the area covered by the programme. As part of this programme, the PMSNS community also participated in the Alpe-Adria Fair, the Celje Fair and Hungexpo.

Within the framework of the Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Hungarian National Community 2021–2024, the Government has included two PMSNS projects in the current national Development Programmes Plan 2022–2025, namely the project for the establishment and development of a model farm and the project of a model farm for the promotion of agricultural development. The project aims to support the development of agricultural and food activities in the ethnically mixed area of the Pomurje region through the establishment of a model farm that will be accessible to all. The model farm will promote and organise development, research, education and other non-profit activities related to agricultural production. They will aim to develop a resilient and competitive agriculture in the bilingual area of Pomurje and will contribute to the preservation of the national identity of members of the Hungarian national community. The model farm will be a contact point for best agricultural practices and will provide all necessary information, knowledge, recommendations and other non-profit services to promote agricultural development.

For the benefit of the development of the Hungarian national community in Pomurje, the PMSNS community co-financed various cultural, research, information and economic activities. With regard to the implementation of the various programmes, it should be noted that the funds currently received from the state budget (according to the Government Office for National Minorities) are only sufficient to cover the running costs (labour costs, chairperson's fees, meeting fees, transfers to associations and institutions, and some expenditure on goods and services). As regards the implementation of other activities and investments, the PMSNS community is dependent on the success of negotiations with various ministries and other organisations in both Slovenia and Hungary. In this respect, the PMSNS community has been very successful in recent times in obtaining substantial funding to implement a number of specific projects. It is certainly worth highlighting the funding that the community obtains on the basis of the agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government. Through public calls for tenders, especially in Hungary, the PMSNS community has been able to carry out some programmes that it would not have been able to carry out otherwise (organising various camps, seminars, workshops, events, football matches of the Pomurje Hungarian community team,

providing music education for families with young children, supplying professional teachers for various interest clubs in bilingual schools, etc.).

The project "Increasing the quality of national education through new teaching approaches for the Hungarian national community living in Slovenia and the Slovenian national community living in Hungary" was successfully completed. The project's purpose was to provide language support in the mother tongue and teacher training by developing teachers' general linguistic and didactic competences, as well as new forms of teaching (a combination of digital and traditional teaching, distance learning (online) and blended learning, and hybrid learning in teaching in bilingual areas as a result of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic). The project aimed to involve children and teachers in flexible forms of learning, with a focus on learning and teaching with new pedagogic methods, leading to them acquiring digital skills and to increasing the connectivity between minority educational organisations in Porabje and Prekmurje. The project also had an intercultural dimension. The networking of teachers and pupils from minorities on both sides of the border and the joint school days have not only contributed to cooperation and the exchange of information and experiences, but also to learning about the cultural values of the neighbouring nation and, indirectly, to embracing difference and intercultural dialogue. The project employed three people for working on and managing the project.

The PMSNS community is also involved in the European project "Connected Through Mobility". The overarching goal of this pilot project is to strengthen the educational and VET (vocational education and training) system and introduce the four the Western Balkan countries targeted by the program (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro) to the opportunities of the vocational mobility programmes within the Erasmus+ framework. The partnership is made up of the Central European and Western Balkan entities working in business and education and will provide VET students, teachers as well as trainers and managers who support mobility with the opportunity to take part in a range of activities.

Representatives of the PMSNS community were also actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the Government action plan for the implementation of the regulations governing the exercise of the rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia, and monitoring the agreement on the acquisition of funds for the operation and implementation of the projects of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation MURABA (hereinafter: MURABA EGTC), established between the community of Porabje Slovenians and the PMSNS community and the competent municipalities.

Example 1: Presentation of the international activities of the PMSNS community (source: the financial and substantive reports of the PMSNS community for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).

Efforts to ensure effective cross-border cooperation are also reflected in the annual reports of the municipalities and self-governing communities, where members of the Italian national community live. They maintain close contacts with members of the Italian national community in the Republic of Croatia and members of the nation of origin in the Republic of Italy. In 2020, the OSSIN community carried out activities for the protection of the special rights of the Italian national community guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and legislation. The competent authorities of the community considered and examined issues relating to the status of the Italian national community in Slovenia, adopted positions, submitted initiatives to the competent authorities, gave their consent to matters relating to the protection of the special rights of the Italian national community, and promoted and organised activities contributing to the preservation of the national identity of the members of the Italian national community. The

OSSIN community promoted the development of cultural, research, information, publishing and economic activities with the aim of preserving the identity of the community and its members; monitored and promoted the development of education for members of the Italian national community and participated in the planning and organisation of educational work and in the drafting of education programmes; developed contacts with the nation of origin and members of national communities in other countries, and with international organisations. It submitted proposals, initiatives and opinions to the National Assembly, the Government and other public authorities on matters relating to the situation of members of the Italian national community and the protection and exercise of their special rights. The cooperation with the deputy of the Slovenian National Assembly for the Italian national community was very frequent and effective. In 2020, there was an increase in the total cost of wages and salaries of resulting from the fulfilment of legal obligations, or from the payment of job performance bonuses to employees and the payment for an increased workload to employees during the mentoring period of a newly recruited employee (fixed-term contract) under the programme for promoting the economic base for the Italian national community.

A lot of work has been done as regards bilingualism in all four coastal municipalities. In this respect, the OSSIN community, as the umbrella organisation in Slovenia, drafted a joint inter-municipal ordinance on the use of bilingualism and provided translators and legal assistance for this purpose.

This year, the OSSIN award ceremony was held at the Manzioli Palace in Izola. Due to the epidemiological situation of the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak (March 2020) and, of course, the restrictions on gatherings and Government bans on operations/gatherings and restrictions on free movement, it was very difficult to implement the activities and the programme. Some events could not be organised as in the previous years. There were no theatre performances and no major traditional events. Special circumstances that affected everyone (both nationally and globally) also affected the programme and activities of the Italian national community.

Working with all stakeholders, the OSSIN community wanted to keep most of its activities and programmes alive, and this was largely achieved through web applications and other means. In 2021, the OSSIN community carried out activities in line with the programme, paying particular attention to the adoption of the Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Italian National Community 2021–2024, which provided for four different measures, on the basis of which public calls for tenders and calls for proposals were launched, enabling beneficiaries to obtain funding for business-oriented projects.

In order to use the funds that the OSSIN community receives annually from the ministry responsible for culture in a more efficient and effective way, a special working group was set up within the OSSIN community's Council to examine a new formula for redistributing these funds among the municipal self-governing communities. The working group set itself objectives and the first results of its work were expected in the first half of 2022.

The good cooperation between the OSSIN community and the ministry responsible for culture continues. At the annual joint meeting, representative of the OSSIN community and the Director of the Carlo Combi Italian Centre for Promotion, Culture, Education and Development presented the ongoing activities of the Italian national community. They also agreed on the issues to be resolved regarding funding and the way in which it would be allocated, as well as on the measures to be taken to contain the COVID-19 epidemic and its consequences in the implementation of the cultural programme of the Italian national community.

The additional funds obtained by the OSSIN community from the Government Office for National Minorities on the basis of the Annexe of 25 October 2021 to Contract No 1540-21-000002 on the co-financing of the OSSIN's activities enabled the purchase of two pages in the monthly magazine OBALApplus. The monthly magazine, which also runs as an online portal, has a broad readership (including members of the majority nation) and provides an overview of the activities of the Italian national community as a whole and the work of the Member of the Parliament, thus raising its profile in bilingual municipalities.

In addition to the regular dialogue between the OSSIN community and the media of the Italian self-governing national community (Radio Capodistria, TV Koper/Capodistria, the Adriatic News Agency, etc.), it is important to draw attention to the exceptional event in 2021, namely the anniversary of TV Koper/Capodistria. As part of the anniversary celebration, a gala performance was held at the Portorož Auditorium in August, which was attended by distinguished guests, including the President of the Republic of Slovenia. The President of OSSIN, Alberto Scheriani, gave a keynote speech on the occasion. The OSSIN was also involved in preparing the celebration.

One of the main events organised by the OSSIN community was "30 years of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia: The steps leading to the recognition of the special rights of the Italian national community". In October, it held a discussion with Roberto Battelli, a former deputy of the Slovenian National Assembly for the Italian national minority. The occasion was dedicated to the presentation of the landmark moments that led to the inclusion and recognition of the special rights of the Italian national community in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and their recognition in 1991.

A traditional OSSIN awards event was held in June 2021.

In the first half of the year, a great deal of work was devoted to finalising the draft of the joint inter-municipal ordinance on the use of bilingualism (hereinafter: the ordinance). In order to ensure maximum transparency and the involvement of the civic society initiative, the OSSIN community, in cooperation with the deputy of the National Assembly, held a debate on the use of bilingualism in the four coastal municipalities in April, and subsequently launched a public debate on the ordinance. The level of participation was extremely high, clearly demonstrating the desire to integrate a large number of members of the Italian national community into every part of our society. The draft ordinance was presented to the mayors of the four coastal municipalities at a meeting of the P.I.K.A. Coordination at the beginning of June. The mayors enthusiastically accepted the idea of a joint ordinance, identical in all municipalities, and assured the OSSIN that the document would be put to the vote in individual municipal councils. As regards the implementation of bilingualism, it is important to highlight the main achievement, namely the establishment of the Office for Bilingualism. In close and excellent cooperation with the Government Office for National Minorities and with the Deputy of the Slovenian National Assembly for the Italian national community, it was possible to jointly conceptualise and create a special department within the OSSIN community, whose tasks and objectives are geared towards a more efficient and proper implementation of bilingualism. Two new members of staff, an assistant and a translator, were planned to be recruited to run the Office.

In 2021, the OSSIN community monitored and promoted the development of education for members of the Italian national community, and participated in the planning and organisation of educational work and in the development of education programmes. On the initiative of the OSSIN community's President or of the deputy of the National Assembly for the Italian national community, several meetings and conferences were held with the principals of kindergartens,

primary and upper secondary schools where Italian is the language of instruction, as well as with various educational consultants. The purpose of the meetings was to build on the existing situation and to analyse it with a view to future changes and improvements. In this context, debates were held on topical issues, on the formulation of joint positions and on the approval of the ministry responsible for education. This includes a proposal for amendment to the Act Guaranteeing Special Rights to Members of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education.

The development of contacts with the nation of origin and members of national communities in other countries and with international organisations was successful. Throughout the year, the OSSIN community maintained contact with the Italian Embassy in Slovenia. The President of the OSSIN community participated in the formal reception of the newly appointed Consul General of the Italian Republic in Koper.

He and the deputy of the National Assembly for the Italian national community were invited to a meeting in Rome at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic. On this occasion, the two shared their experiences on the current situation of the Italian national community with high-level representatives of Italian politics. The participants concluded the meeting with the hope of even more fruitful cooperation in the future.

The OSSIN community hosted a delegation from the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This was an opportunity to analyse and evaluate the current situation of the members of the Italian national community in the area and the level of the protection of their recognised rights.

The OSSIN community submitted proposals, initiatives and opinions to the National Assembly, the Government and other public authorities on matters relating to the situation of the members of the Italian national community and the protection and exercise of their special rights.

Activities were severely hampered by the COVID-19 epidemic, it was difficult to schedule events as the number of participants was limited and some events could not take place in the same way as in previous years. Theatre performances could not take place, nor were there any major traditional events. The programme and activities of the Italian national community were also affected by the situation.

In 2022, the OSSIN community carried out various activities for the protection of the special rights of the Italian national community guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the sector-specific legislation. It promoted the development of cultural, research, information, publishing and economic activities with the aim of preserving the identity of the community and its members. The OSSIN community was also involved in the activities of two European projects. The first project is Interreg ITA – SLO PRIMIS – Multicultural journey between Slovenia and Italy through the prism of minorities, and the second is the Erasmus+ project entitled MUSE. The activities related to the first projects include the definition and mapping of the content to be used in the multimedia centre in Koper, as well as the publication and identification of the provider who would set up the graphics and multimedia centre. As regards the MUSE project, the OSSIN community helped organise the event by filming and producing a DVD in the "St Francis of Assisi" Ceremonial and Entertainment Hall in Koper and was present during the project phases in Portugal and Italy. The most important achievement has been the establishment of the Office for Bilingualism (hereinafter: the Office) in cooperation with the Government Office for National Minorities and the deputy of the National Assembly

for the Italian national community. The Office, staffed by a translator and a specialist assistant, operates as a special department within the OSSIN community.

Representatives of the OSSIN community attended a follow-up meeting in November with representatives of the Framework Convention's Advisory Committee following the consideration of the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Framework Convention in the Republic of Slovenia. On the invitation of the Government Office for National Minorities, the OSSIN community also began to prepare and coordinate the papers and materials for the sixth period report on the implementation of the Convention.

The biggest project and achievement of the OSSIN community in 2022 was the purchase of the Tarsia Palace in Koper. The purchase process was coordinated in very close and fruitful cooperation with the Government Office for National Minorities.

In July 2022, the OSSIN community signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region on "cooperation between the Central Office for the Slovene Language within the Office for Minority Languages and Compatriots Abroad of the Central Directorate for Local Self-Government, the Civil Servants, Security and Immigration System of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Coastal Italian Self-Governing National Community (OSSIN) in standardising and unifying the legal and administrative terminology for the Italian-Slovenian language combination". It is a landmark document, the result of several years of work and efforts made by the OSSIN community to connect the Office for the Slovene Language and the newly established OSSIN Office. In September 2022, the OSSIN community delegation attended a high-level conference organised by the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities to mark the 10th anniversary of the launch of the OSCE HCNM Ljubljana Guidelines on the Integration of Diverse Societies. A meeting with High Commissioner Kairat Abdrakhman followed. Example 2: Presentation of the OSSIN community's international activities (source: the OSSIN's financial and substantive reports for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).

The main task of the Roma Community Council is to monitor the situation of the Roma community in Slovenia and current developments concerning Roma. The Roma Community Council discusses the situation and current developments, takes decisions at its meetings, and determines the activities to be carried out in a specific area where a need or problem arises. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic and the restrictive measures, representatives of the Roma Community Council were not active in all areas. However, they helped Roma associations and members of the Roma community to cope with the epidemic. To this end, a working group was also set up to assess the situation in the Roma settlements and within the Roma community, and provide assistance in the local community. The group cooperates with all stakeholders relevant to the development of the Roma community. In 2020, several Roma organisations produced various bilingual leaflets and posters providing information to the Roma community about the COVID-19 epidemic and about the protective measures to prevent the spread of the infection. The Roma Community Council took on the role of coordinator and helped to distribute the materials to the remaining Roma organisations, associations, councillors and activists, through whom the materials were delivered to the Roma community in the settlements.

In 2021, restrictive measures were still in place and therefore the activities of the Roma Community Council were limited and within the framework of the adopted measures. To mark the anniversary of the Roma Community Council, a formal session was held at the premises of the Union of Roma of Slovenia in Murska Sobota. The session was followed by the opening

of the new business premises of the Roma Community Council, which were purchased with the support of the Government Office for National Minorities. As a result of the measures, the traditional meetings to celebrate International Roma Day were cancelled, as well as pre-arranged meetings in municipalities and international events. Members of the Roma Community Council attended the visit of representatives of the Framework Convention's Advisory Committee. The session began with a discussion at the premises of the Roma Community Council, focusing on hate speech. The participants also briefly discussed other issues that they believed should be highlighted when talking about the Roma community in Slovenia (education, employment, housing).

After the discussion, representatives of the Advisory Committee visited Radio Romic, the Roma Education Centre and the library. Representatives of the Roma Community Council then accompanied them to the Roma settlement of Pušča, where they first visited the Romano kindergarten and then toured the settlement themselves. The meeting in Pušča was also attended by a Roma councillor from the Municipality of Murska Sobota, who gave the visitors a detailed presentation of the settlement and its activities.

Members of the Roma Community Council took part in a one-day professional excursion to Zagreb and Bjelovar in Croatia. First, they stopped in Zagreb, where they visited the Croatian Romani Union "Kali Sara" and met with Roma minority member of parliament Veljko Kajtazi. They then went to Bjelovar, where they visited a Roma House – *Romska Kuća Bjelovar*. During the excursion, the members of the Roma Community Council were introduced to the work of Roma organisations in Croatia and to some positive examples of the project implementation in Roma settlements in Croatia.

The leadership of the Roma Community Council responded to the invitation and participated in the international conference "Inclusive Policy for Roma" held in Belgrade on 8 December 2021.

In 2022, the Roma Community Council continued its visits to the Roma settlements and municipalities where Roma live. The response, particularly from the local communities and services dealing with the Roma community, has been very good and these activities will continue. In addition, thematic debates were also organised.

As part of international cooperation, the Roma Community Council organised a one-day professional excursion for its members to Budapest, Hungary. They visited TV and Radio Dikh, the Gypsy/Roma Library and the Roma Art archives and gallery. They then met with representatives of the 100 Gypsy Violins Orchestra at their premises. The members were also received by the Government Commissioner for Roma Relations, Attila Sztojka.

The leadership of the Roma Community Council took part in the Conference on Roma Studies held in Belgrade, Serbia. The President of the Roma Community Council, Jožef Horvat Sandreli, was also among the speakers.

The Vice-President of the Roma Community Council attended the traditional meeting on the socio-political situation of the Roma community in Europe and the Balkans, which was held in Rijeka, Croatia.

The President of the Roma Community Council received the "Ferenc Stojka" Lifetime Achievement Award, which was presented to him by the Croatian Roma Union Kali Sara. The event took place at the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb. The President and Vice-President of the Roma Community Council attended the Congress of the International Romani Union (IRU), which took place in Riga, Latvia. Example 3: Presentation of the international activities of the

Roma Community Council (source: the financial and substantive reports of the Roma Community Council for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).

2. Developments in legislation, policies and national case law, and practical measures taken to implement this Article since the adoption of the opinion regarding the fifth cycle

- The Decree amending the Decree laying down detailed spending purposes and criteria for calculating the amount of funds allocated to municipalities or municipal self-governing national communities, issued by the Government on 29 October 2020 and published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*] No 157/20;
- Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Hungarian National Community 2021–2024;
- Programme for the Promotion of the Economic Base of the Italian National Community 2021–2024;
- Example 1: Presentation of the international activities of the PMSNS community (source: the financial and substantive reports of the PMSNS community for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).
- Example 2: Presentation of the OSSIN community's international activities (source: the financial and substantive reports of the OSSIN community for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).
- Example 3: Presentation of the international activities of the Roma Community Council (source: the financial and substantive reports of the Roma Community Council for 2020 to 2022 inclusive).
- Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, signed on 3 July 2020
- Annex No 1 to the Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, signed on 15 July 2021;
- Agreement on cooperation in the economic and social development of the ethnically mixed area on both sides of the Slovenian-Hungarian border, signed by the Slovenian and Hungarian Prime Ministers on 21 February 2022;
- Agreement on cooperation between the deputies of the National Assembly for the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, signed on 25 May 2023

PART III

Specific questions

As part of further dialogue with the Advisory Committee, States Parties may be invited to provide answers to specific questions relating to specific national circumstances.

No additional comments are made in relation to specific national circumstances.

PART IV

Additional information:

- A specific document on the contact details of the authorities or associations representing members of the national minorities and/or promoting their rights is attached. That document will not be made public and will therefore be enclosed when it is handed over to the Council of Europe.

Enclosures:

- OSSIN Response No 02.01.01/2023-019 of 14 February 2023;
- Response of the Roma Community Council of 6 March 2023;
- Contact details of authorities or associations representing members of the national minorities and/or promoting their rights, 5 July 2023;
- All the other enclosures mentioned above are available on the gov.si web portal.