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**REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 25, PARAGRAPH 1
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION
OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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Introduction

The Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities (further referred to as the Convention) entered into force following its prescribed ratification by a minimum of twelve member States of the Council of Europe (further referred to as the CE) on 1.2.1998. 23 States have ratified this document so far. The Slovak Republic (further referred to as the SR) actively participated in the preparation of the Convention through its experts and ratified the Convention as early as 14.9.1995, being the third member State of the CE to do so. Relevant ministries and institutions responsible for the implementation of minority policy took part in the preparation of the 1st official report on the implementation of the Convention in the SR and prepared all the necessary information and documents to be included in this Report.

In 1993 - in connection with the SR's accession to the CE - the SR extended its internal legislation with 3 new legal regulations: the Registers Act (No. 154/1994 Coll.), Names and Surnames Act (No. 300/1993 Coll.) and the Act on Indication of Settlements in the Language of National Minorities (No. 191/1994 Coll.).

Slovakia's initiative, displayed by its being the only member State of the CE to submit a report on the practical implementation of all provisions of the Convention in the Slovak Republic to CE bodies every year, continues to be of importance.

The SR has already gained valuable experience with regard to the obligation of all States that ratified this Convention to present a comprehensive report on its practical implementation in their countries to the CE bodies within 1 year of its entry into force.

The SR is attempting to fulfill two key roles and tasks through its minority policy: the creation of all necessary legal and practical conditions for securing the equality of all of Slovakia's citizens without discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, color of skin, sex, status, etc., and, at the same time, the creation of conditions for the full integration of all citizens into society while preserving and developing the cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities. In the preparation and implementation of this policy, the SR has built upon valid international and domestic legal documents on this area.

After 1989, when the countries of the so-called "Eastern bloc" started their social, political and economic transition towards building plural democratic systems with market economies, specific changes in the situation and status of persons belonging to national minorities occurred as a part of the transition. The establishment of the sovereign SR in 1993 became another stimulus for these changes. The SR - as a new country in Europe - for the first time started to independently address these specific issues of a part of its population, its relationship to the new state and majority nation, the majority nation's relationship towards it, as well as relations between national minorities themselves. Besides problems common to all national minorities in Slovakia, it was also necessary to address the specific problem of the Romany minority, which lies in their worse economic, social, cultural and educational situation compared to the rest of the population.

Legal Protection

Comprehensive list of legal norms valid within the SR's legal system that partially address the individual rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

1. Constitutional Act No. 23/1991 Coll., which introduces the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms (especially Articles 24, 25, 37)
2. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic (Articles 6,12, 33, 34, 47)
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Decree No. 95/1974 Coll. concerning the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
4. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Decree No. 120/1976 Coll. concerning the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
5. Act No. 468/1991 Coll. on the Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasting as amended by later regulations (section 9 paragraph 2 letter c/)
6. Act of the Slovak National Council No. 254/1991 Coll. on Slovak Television (section 3 paragraph 3 and section 6 letter j/)
7. Act of the Slovak National Council No. 255/1991 Coll. on Slovak Radio (section 6 letter d/)
8. Act of the Slovak National Council No. 36/1978 Coll. on Theaters as amended by Act of the Slovak National Council No. 115/1989 (section 31 letter f/)
9. Act No. 29/1984 Coll. on the Network of Primary and Secondary Schools as amended by later regulations (section 3 paragraph 1)
10. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Decree No. 293/1991 Coll. concerning the Schools Inspectorate (section 6 paragraph 1 letter e/)
11. Government of the Slovak Republic Ordinance No. 282/1994 Coll. on the Use of Textbooks and Classroom Texts
12. Ministry of Education Decree No. 280/1994 Coll. concerning private schools
13. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 279/1993 Coll. on School Facilities as amended by later regulations
14. Ministry of Education Decree No. 353/1994 Coll. concerning pre-school facilities as amended by later regulations
15. Act of the Slovak National Council No. 542/1990 Coll. on State Administration in Education and Self-administration of Schools as amended by later regulations

16. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health Decree No. 536/1990 Coll. concerning the establishment and operation of church schools
17. Government of the Slovak Republic Ordinance No. 113/1991 Coll. on the Provision of Subsidies to Private Schools from the State Budget
18. Association of Citizens Act No. 83/1990 Coll. as amended by later regulations (section 4 letter a/)
19. Right to Assembly Act No. 84/1990 Coll. as amended by Act No. 175/1990 Coll. (section 10 paragraph I letter a/)
20. Right to Petition Act No. 85/1990 Coll. (section 1 paragraph 4)
21. Act No. 256/1992 Coll. on the Protection of Personal Data in Information Systems (section 16)
22. Names and Surnames Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 300/1993 Coll. (section 2 paragraph 1, section 4 paragraph 4 and section 14)
23. Registers Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 154/1994 (section 16, section 19 paragraphs 3 and 5)
24. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 191/1994 Coll. on Indication of Settlements in the Language of National Minorities (section 1 paragraph 1)
25. Civil Procedure Act No. 70/1992 Coll.
26. Civil Code No. 40/1964 Coll. as amended by later regulations
27. Criminal Court Proceedings Act No. 141/1961 Coll. (Criminal Procedure) (section 2 paragraph 14)
28. Criminal Code No. 140/1961 Coll. as amended by later regulations (section 196, 198 and 259)
29. Labor Code No. 65/1965 Coll. as amended by later regulations
30. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 38/1993 Coll. on the Organization of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, Proceedings Before it and the Position of its Judges as amended by Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 293/1995 Coll. (section 23)
31. Courts and Judges Act No. 335/1991 Coll. (section 7 paragraph 3)
32. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Decree No. 280/1991 Coll. concerning the completion of studies at secondary schools and the completion of preparation at apprentice schools as amended by later regulations (section 10).

Fulfillment of the Provisions of the Convention

The SR recognizes, for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles that form the common heritage of the CE, that one of the methods by which those aims are to be pursued is the maintenance and further realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. That is why it protects the existence of national minorities within its territory. The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is essential to stability, democratic security and peace in Europe. As a pluralist and genuinely democratic society, the SR not only respects the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also creates appropriate conditions enabling these persons to express, preserve and develop this identity. The SR endeavors to create a climate of tolerance and dialogue between national minorities, the Government and the majority population, which is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source of enrichment for the whole society, not of division. The realization of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend solely on co-operation between States but also requires functioning transfrontier co-operation, without prejudice to the Constitution and territorial integrity of our state.

In its minority policy, the SR proceeds in line with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and on the basis of commitments concerning the protection of national minorities in United Nations conventions and declarations and in the documents of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, particularly the Copenhagen Document of 29 June 1990, in order to ensure the effective protection of national minorities and the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities within the rule of law, respecting the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Slovakia.

We present a comprehensive report on the implementation of this Convention in the conditions of the SR in the following text.

Evaluation of the Fulfillment of the Convention By Article

Article 1 (not available)

Article 2

The provisions of this framework Convention shall be applied in good faith, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and in conformity with the principles of good neighborliness, friendly relations and co-operation between States.

In the spirit of this Article, containing one of the fundamental principles of international law *pacta sunt servanda*, the Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Hungary, into which the Convention was fully incorporated, was ratified. On 9.12.1998, the Government of the SR approved the Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary concerning the creation of a mechanism facilitating the application of the Treaty. On its basis, 11 mixed expert commissions will be gradually set up, one of which will engage in national minority issues. The Government of the SR assigned the

ministries responsible the task of securing that the mixed commissions start to operate by the end of January 1999.

The Government of the SR sees the overall coverage of commitments arising from the Convention's provisions as satisfactory (at present at least 26 legal regulations related to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities are valid in the SR). It is understandable that, just like in other countries, the internal legislation in the SR is also gradually developing and improving. In order to create more favorable conditions for citizens belonging to national minorities in the SR and because of certain necessary corrections to the existing legislation in relation to the Constitution of the SR, commitments resulting from the Convention, etc., the Government will gradually take further necessary legislative and practical measures. These measures, for example, include the preparation of the act on the use of languages of national minorities in official contact or the return to the long tradition of issuing bilingual school reports at schools with minority languages as the language of instruction. The Slovak Republic is an active member of international organizations, which is manifested in the fact that it actively participates in addressing national minority issues at various international forum and initiates international co-operation.

Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Constitution of the SR, Article 12,

(3) "Everyone has the right to freely decide his nationality. Any influence on this decision and any form of coercion aimed at assimilation are prohibited."

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law.

(2) In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,
- c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

(1) The exercise of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against other citizens."

The Constitution of the SR enacts principles of equality and does not allow any form of discrimination against citizens. Citizens belonging to national minorities are above all equal citizens of the SR. Everyone is given the right to freely choose his nationality, while any intervention into this decision and any forms of coercion aimed at assimilation are forbidden. The SR's legislation guarantees citizens belonging to national minorities all rights to which the SR has committed itself in relevant international and political documents. These rights can be applied either individually or in community with others.

There is no legal definition of the term national minority in the SR's legislation at present. Equally, there is no formal system for the official recognition of national minorities. The existence of national minorities is based on the individual fundamental rights of persons belonging to national minorities enacted in the Constitution of the SR, other relevant domestic laws and international legal documents. Official statistics (the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic engages in demographic statistics in the SR) derived from censuses show that at present there are a total of 11 national minorities in the SR, which are stated in the following table. There are no other original ethnic groups or national minorities in Slovakia besides these national minorities.

Structure of Nationalities in the SR

Nationality	Total number	%
Slovak	4,590,100	85.7
Hungarian	568,714	10.6
Romany	83,988	1.6
Bohemian	51,293	1
Ruthenian	17,277	0.3
Ukrainian	14,341	0.3
German	5,380	0.1
Moravian, Silesian	6,361	0.1
Croatian	4,000	0.07
Jewish	3,500	0.06
Polish	3,039	0.05
Bulgarian	1,400	0.02
others	6,814	0.1
total:	5,356,207	100.00

Article 4

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

Constitution of the SR, Article 12,

(1) "People are free and equal in both their dignity and rights. Fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable, irrevocable, and absolutely perpetual.

(2) Basic rights and freedoms on the territory of the Slovak Republic are guaranteed to everyone regardless of sex, race, color of skin, language, faith and religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin, affiliation to a nationality or ethnic group, property, descent, or another status. No one must be harmed, preferred or discriminated against on these grounds."

Constitution of the SR, Article 33,

"Affiliation to any national minority or ethnic group must not be to anyone's detriment."

The SR has a long record in the issues of securing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The population's current structure of nationalities, which explicitly shows the correctness of the policy of respecting the legitimate interests of national minorities on one hand, and securing the state's role on the other, is also an outcome of historical development. The result of the current total of 11 visits by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities to Slovakia is his comments and recommendations concerning the completion of the legislative side of the application of the SR's international commitments in this area to ensure better transparency, relations between the Government and organizations representing national minorities, financing of national minority culture or the maintenance of conditions securing education in national minority languages. Together with the succession of the new Slovak Government, direct and wide participation by representatives of national minorities in the administration of the state in the highest posts of state power bodies, as well as the creation of the office of Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the SR for human rights, national minorities and regional development and a change in approach by the new leadership of relevant ministries, progress was made in some neglected or only partly addressed issues. This particularly involves the completion of Slovakia's internal legislation so that it fully covers the SR's international commitments, the justified requirements of individual national minorities, particularly in the area of culture, education and participation in governing matters related to them and, last but not least, the conditions for the full integration and participation of all citizens in society.

Article 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their Identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

Constitution of the SR, Article 1,

"The Slovak Republic is a sovereign, democratic state governed by the rule of law. It is not bound by any ideology or religion."

Constitution of the SR, Article 6,

(1) "The Slovak language is the state language on the territory of the Slovak Republic.

(2) The use of languages other than the state language in official contact shall be determined by law."

Constitution of the SR, Article 12,

(3) "Everyone has the right to freely decide his nationality. Any influence on this decision and any form of coercion aimed at assimilation are prohibited."

Constitution of the SR, Article 29,

(4) "Political parties and political movements, as well as unions, societies, and other associations are separated from the state."

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group,

(2) disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law.

(3) In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,

c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

(1) The exercise of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against other citizens."

Information provided by the individual churches shows that in Roman Catholic dioceses the percentage representation of clergy claiming membership of the Hungarian national minority are as follows: 13.1% in the Bratislava-Trnava archdiocese, 2.2% in the Nitra diocese, 12.8% in the Roznava diocese and 7.1% in the Kosice archdiocese.

As regards the Evangelical church (Augsburg Confession), in the western and eastern districts of Slovakia, that cover all the country, the equivalent figure is 1.3% for the western and 0.8% for the eastern.

In the Presov diocese of the Greek Orthodox church, which covers the whole country, there are 4.8% of clergy of Hungarian ethnic origin, and in the Orthodox church, the figure is 2.2%.

In the Reformed Christian church in Slovakia, which is active mainly in the southern regions of Slovakia, the proportion of clergy of Hungarian ethnic background is 82.4%.

It must be stressed that individual organizational units of the church consider as ethnically mixed territories only those parishes in which, apart from the Slovak language, the language of national minorities is used in services, or where the language of minorities is used exclusively. In areas defined in this manner, the percentages of services in the Hungarian language are as follows: 71.4% in the Bratislava-Trnava archdiocese, 41.4% in the Nitra diocese, 40.6% in the Roznava diocese, 35.5% in the Kosice archdiocese, 54.5% in the western district of the Evangelical church (Augsburg Confession), 18.1% in the eastern district of the Evangelical church (Augsburg Confession), 82.6% in the Presov diocese of the Greek Orthodox church and 75.5% in the Reformed Christian church. The Orthodox church uses Old Church Slavonic as the language of service.

Note: One specific phenomenon should be pointed out as regards the religious needs of persons belonging to national minorities: the Reformed Christian church, in which believers professing to be Calvinist are organized. Of the total number of 82,545 Calvinists in Slovakia, 64,533 are persons of Hungarian ethnic origin. This is therefore a prevalingly Hungarian church organization. In 1993, there were 145 clergymen in the church, i.e. 1 clergyman per 586 worshipers (for comparison there is 1 clergyman per 913 worshipers in the Greek Catholic church, 1 per 1144 in the Evangelical church and 1 per 2113 in the Roman Catholic church). The church has a publishing company ("KALVIN") and publishes the monthlies "Kalvinista szemle" and "Kalvinske hlasy".

The Creation of Conditions for the Maintenance and Development of Minorities' Cultural Heritage through State Support of their Culture

In its minority policy, the Government of the SR endeavors to secure its key goals and, at the same time, the fundamental sense of the protection of persons belonging to national minorities, which include the following:

* Equal status of all citizens before the law, i.e. to secure fundamental rights and freedoms for all citizens on the territory of the SR, regardless of sex, race, color of skin, language,

faith and religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin, affiliation to a nationality or ethnic group, property, descent, or other status. The relationship between the citizen and the state is the decisive relationship here, because it gives the widest possible rights to persons belonging to national minorities.

* Conditions ensuring the possibility of full integration of all citizens into society.

* Conditions ensuring the maintenance of national minorities' cultural values as the state's cultural heritage.

Besides the above key goals, minority policy also fulfills other roles to a varying extent. This primarily includes a certain simplification of conditions for national minorities. However, in international documents, these roles are not as necessary or as binding for states as the basic roles in the protection of national minorities. The tasks for the state and national minorities also arise from this.

Individual national minorities have a rich and constantly developing cultural life in the conditions of the SR, which manifests itself in the existence of minority cultural unions. Organizations freely, independently and actively co-ordinate the work of numerous vital artistic ensembles and groups and a varied range of various unique and valuable educational, cultural and artistic events. The wide spectrum of interesting voluntary social activities is completed by professional minority theaters, professional singing and dance groups, minority-publishers, museums, national minority periodical and non-periodical press, and so on.

According to sociological surveys, about 70% of the members of the Hungarian national minority use their mother tongue at home. This right is guaranteed and this area of linguistic rights is not limited or regulated by any legal norm.

The issue of national minority culture in the SR primarily falls under the scope of the Ministry of Culture, which has established a special unit for this purpose - the Minority Cultures Section. Issues of religion are also under the responsibility of this Ministry. The coordinating body for national minority issues is the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, National Minorities and Regional Development. Besides Article 12 of the Constitution of the SR, which states that all people are free in dignity and rights and that fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to everyone regardless of color of skin, sex, affiliation to a nationality, language, faith, social origin, and so on, there is no special law in the SR that expresses the general policy of integration. However, this clearly arises from the above key goals of minority policy.

In line with the Policy Statement of the Government of the SR of 2 December 1998, the Ministry of Culture carried out some changes in support for minority cultures (particularly in the manner of provision of funds), with the aim of ensuring objectivity and transparency in the provision of financial resources to members of national minorities from the state budget.

In the past, the Ministry of Culture provided funds on the basis of a contract between the Ministry of Culture and the relevant legal or physical person which had submitted a project concerned with the development of a minority culture. All submitted projects were evaluated by one expert commission for minority cultures set up by the Minister of Culture, which was made up of members of national minorities (Hungarian, Croatian, German, Romany, Jewish, and Ukrainian) and experts on minority cultures from state bodies and scientific institutes.

Members of the expert commission assessed projects for the development of minority cultures submitted by legal and physical persons and also prepared a comprehensive final proposal for the provision of financial contributions for individual grants for the applicants. The final decision was made by the Minister of Culture, in line with Budgetary Rules Act No. 303/1995 Coll. of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The procedure for the use of provided funds from the Ministry of Culture was based on the "Principles of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic for the Provision and Accounting of Financial Subsidies from the Budgetary Chapter of the Ministry of Culture for Cultural Activities of Civic Associations, Foundations and Interest Associations of Legal Persons" (No. MK-1727/1997-HU).

The current leadership of the Ministry of Culture continues to use a system of grants, on the basis of which it will provide funds for selected projects through contracts between the Ministry of Culture and legal or physical persons. However, the assessment system for projects for the development of minority cultures has changed and, on the basis of the prepared "Procedure of the Expert Commission and Sub-Commissions for the Assessment of Minority Culture Projects", an expert commission was set up. It consists of 19 representatives of national minorities with the following structure: 5 representatives of the Hungarian national minority, 3 representatives of the Romany minority, 2 representatives of the Bohemian national minority, and one representative of each the Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Croatian, Bulgarian, Polish, Jewish, Moravian and the newly developing Russian national minorities. This commission's role will be to determine the amount of finance from the total resources approved by the National Council for the development of minority cultures and its division among 12 minority cultures for the publication of periodical and non-periodical press and the organization of cultural activities. The expert commission can establish a sub-commission to assess projects for the development of relevant minority cultures and propose the amount of finance for selected projects. In line with the law, the Minister approves the amount of finance provided after it has been discussed by the expert commission.

On the basis of the Policy Statement of the Government of the SR, a Minority Cultures Section was established at the Ministry of Culture to initiate new approaches to the development of the culture of members of national minorities and participate in the creation of new legal norms and intra-sectoral orders related to the creation of conditions for members of national minorities in line with the Constitution of the SR and international documents.

The creation of conditions for members of national minorities to maintain their identity, mother tongue and culture is carried out through the culture sector and regional state administration offices on several levels:

1. provision of funds for the organization of cultural activities of national minorities
2. provision of funds for the publication of periodical and non-periodical press
3. financing of the institutional sphere (theaters, museums, professional ensembles). Pursuant to Act No. 222/96, these cultural establishments are financed from the budgets of regional state administration offices.

In 1998, special funds were allocated for the organization of events developing the culture of national minorities. The percentage of financial resources for individual legal and physical persons developing the cultural activities of minorities in 1998 was as follows:

- a) for 7 legal entities developing Hungarian minority culture (the Hungarian Folk Association, Podium Theater Company, Zmierenie Foundation, Hungarian Cultural Association, Ohrady Women's Singing Group, Women's Singing Group Association) – 20.2%
- b) for 2 legal entities developing German minority culture (Carpathian-German Union, Carpathian-German Union for Culture and Education) - 18.8%
- c) for legal entities developing Jewish minority culture (Slovak National Museum (SNM) - Museum of Jewish Culture, Prešov Jewish Religious Community) - 17.8%
- d) for 1 entity developing Croatian minority culture (Croatian Cultural Union) – 11.2%.
- e) for 7 entities developing Romany minority culture (Roman) Culture, Roma Gemer, Box Club Rom Slovakia, Union of Romany Youth and Civic Association of Roma) - 6.7%
- f) for 1 entity developing Ukrainian minority culture (Ruthenian-Ukrainian Union of the SR) - 5.1%
- g) for 1 entity developing Bulgarian minority culture (Cultural Union of Bulgarians and their Friends in Slovakia) - 2.9%
- h) for 1 entity developing Moravian minority culture (Union of Moravians in Slovakia) - 2.4%
- i) for 1 entity developing Bohemian minority culture (Bohemian Union in Slovakia) -1.3%
- j) for 1 entity developing Ruthenian minority culture (Ruthenian Revival) - 0.5%
- k) other entities (the town of Spisske Podhradie, the town of Nitra) - 13.1%.

In connection with this, it needs to be mentioned that despite the fact that the expert commission proposed to provide funds of SKK 710,000 for selected cultural activities of CSEMADOK in 1998 (e.g. Kazinczy's Days of Language Culture, 10th Ringing Song Festival, Competition of the Rendition of Mihaly Tompa's Poetry and Prose, Podunajska Spring, Gombasek 98 National Folk Festival, 28th Cultural and Literary Days of Zoltan Fabry and 29th Days of Albert Molnar-Szenczi), they were not provided. The percentage of finance for individual entities which are publishing the periodical press of national minorities was as follows:

1. for 5 legal entities developing Hungarian minority culture (Eletunk, Iroldami Szemle, Tucsok Kalligram, Tabortuz) - 36.0%
2. for 4 legal entities developing Ukrainian minority culture (Nove Zitta, Druzno vpered, Veselka, Dukla) - 14.2%
3. for 4 legal entities developing Romany minority culture (Romano I'il nevo, Roma, Lulud'i, Ternipen) - 9.0%
4. for 2 legal entities developing Ruthenian minority culture (Narodne novinky, Rusin) - 4.2%
5. for 1 legal entity developing German minority culture (Karpatenblatt) - 5.6%

6. for 1 legal entity developing Bulgarian minority culture (Roden Glas) - 2.3%
7. for 1 legal entity developing Bohemian minority culture (Ceska beseda) - 1.1%
8. for 1 legal entity developing Moravian minority culture (Moravsky hlas) - 0.6%
9. for other legal entities (Kubko Goral – Slovensky juh publishing company, supplement to daily Slovenska republika - Narodnostne noviny) - 27%

Conditions for the preservation of the cultural identity of persons belonging to national minorities are also created in the public media, such as Slovak Radio and Slovak Television. Broadcasts for members of national minorities and ethnic groups on Slovak Radio, for which SKK26,412,642 was provided, totaled 2911 hours in 1997. Broadcasts for members of national minorities on Slovak Television, for which SKK 9,626,000 was used, totaled 48 hours in 1997.

Review of the Use of Provided Funds by Individual Contributions and Subsidies from the Ministry of Culture in 1998

subsidy	subsidy
minority civic associations - cultural activities	22,019,000
periodical press of national minorities	19,560,000
non-periodical press of national minorities	3,015,000
total:	44,594,000

Detailed information on funds provided in 1998 by individual areas of financing and individual entities is included in the following tables.

The Following Contributions were Provided to Individual Organisations from the Budgets of Regional State Administration Offices

organization	1998 subsidy in SKK
<u>theaters:</u>	
Romathan Kosice	7,284,000
Thalia Kosice	5,564,000
JOKAI Theater in Komarno	9,542,000
DUCHNOVIC Theater in Presov	10,657,000
<u>museums:</u>	
Podduklianske Museum of Ukrainian-Ruthenian Culture in Svidnik	5,928,000
total:	38,975,000
Young Hearts ensemble (NOC)	4,150,000
1998 total:	43,125,000

Minority Civic Associations in the SR - 1998

no.	Organization/item 642	1998 subsidy
1	Romani Culture	282,000
2	Roma Gemer	548,000
3	Moravian Union	470,000
4	Croatian Cultural Union	2,190,000
5	Bohemian Union	250,000
6	Ruthenian-Ukrainian Union	1,000,000
7	Rusinska Obroda	100,000
8	Cultural Union of Bulgarians	560,000
9	Carpathian-German Union	1,490,000
10	Hungarian Folk Association	30,000
11	"Podium" theater company	20,000
12	"Zmierenie" Foundation	3,366,450
13	Carpathian-German Academic Union	580,000
14	Hungarian Cultural Union	500,000
15	Box Club Rom Slovakia	90,000
16	"Ohrady" women's singing group	10,000
17	Association for Addressing the Romany Issue	0
18	Union for Romany Youth	500,000
19	the town of Brezno - synagogue	450,000
20	"Local" radio Komarno	600,000
21	SNM - Museum of the Culture of Carpathian Germans	1,710,000
22	SNM - Museum of Jewish Culture	4,173,000
23	Presov Jewish Religious Community	1,500,000
24	the town of Spisske Podhradie	950,000
25	the town of Brezno	450,000
26	the town of Nitra - synagogue	1,000,000
	total:	12,236,450

Periodical Press of National Minorities - 1998

No.	Publisher/periodical	1998 subsidy
1	Jekhetane Association	
	Romano l'il nevo	950,000
2	Romani Culture	
	Roma	400,000
	Luludi	400,000
3	Ruthenian-Ukrainian Union	
	Nove Zitt'a	1,000,000
	Druzno vpered	750,000
	Veselka	350,000
4	Rusinska Obroda	

	Narodne noviny	750,000
	Rusin	350,000
5	Carpathian-German Union	4,950,000
	Karpatenblatt	1,000,000
6	Union of Ukrainian Writers	
	Dukla	420,000
7	Bohemian Union	
	Ceska beseda	340,000
8	Moravian Union	
	Moravsky Hlas	100,000
9	"Zmierenie" Foundation	
	ELETUNK	6,000,000
10	Roma Gemer	
	Ternipen	300,000
11	Cultural Union of Bulgarians	
	Roden Glas	400,000
12	Kubko Goral	
	Slovensky juh	1,800,000
13	Madach Posonium	
	Irodalmi Szemle	100,000
	Tucsok	100,000
14	Kalligram	
	Kalligram	100,000
15	KT Komarno publishing company	
	Tabortuz	100,000
16	R-Press	
	Republika - supplement	3,000,000
17	Monitor - Polonijny	250,000
	total:	18,620,000

Non-periodical Minority Press - 1998

no.	Publisher	1998 subsidy
1	Kalligram	200,000
2	ZRUS	25,000
3	EXCO	165,000
4	Carpathian-German Academic Union	425,000
5	Ruthenian revival	50,000
6	Kubko Goral - Porozumenie	610,000
7	Roma Gemer	500,000
8	"Zmierenie" Foundation	450,000
9	Moravian Union	100,000
10	Cultural Union of Bulgarians	420,000
11	DD Studio	70,000
	total:	3,015,000

Article 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular In the fields of education, culture and the media.

2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

Interethnic relations between the citizens of the SR can be assessed as satisfactory. However, certain manifestations of intolerance are a part of life in every society. The SR is no exception. According to official statistics, there were a total of 15 cases of racially motivated crimes in Slovakia in 1997. This includes cases processed by courts of the SR and closed by a court ruling. Relations between persons of Hungarian ethnic origin and citizens of Slovak origin in the ethnically mixed areas of southern Slovakia are friendly, non-confrontational and stabilized as a result of long-term co-existence. Ruthenians and Ukrainians compete with each other over the theoretical identification of their own historical origin and some other questions. The Government's position on this issue remains unchanged and it recognizes the right of every person to freely decide their nationality.

Constitution of the SR, Article 12, (2) "Basic rights and freedoms on the territory of the Slovak Republic are guaranteed to everyone regardless of sex, race, color of skin, language, faith and religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin, affiliation to a nationality or ethnic group, property, descent, or another status. No one must be harmed, preferred or discriminated against on these grounds."

Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Hungary, Article 14,

"The Contracting Parties shall foster the climate of tolerance and understanding among their citizens of different ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic origin. (...)"

Criminal Code No. 392/1992 Coll., section 196,

(2) "Whosoever uses violence against a group of persons or individuals, or threatens death, damage to health or substantial damage as a result of their political conviction, nationality, race, or faith or no faith, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to two years."

Note: The special post of Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for Addressing the Issues of Roma was created in the SR in 1999.

Article 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Constitution of the SR, Article 24,

(1) "Freedom of thought, conscience, religious belief and faith are guaranteed."

Constitution of the SR, Article 26,

(1) "The freedom of speech and the right to information are guaranteed."

Constitution of the SR, Article 28,

(1) "The right to assemble peacefully is guaranteed."

Constitution of the SR, Article 29,

(1) "The right to freely associate is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to associate with others in unions, societies, or other associations.

(2) Citizens have the right to establish political parties and political movements and to associate in them."

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law.

(2) In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,
- c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

(3) The exercise of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against other citizens."

Right to Assembly Act No. 84/1990 Coll., section 1,

(1) "Citizens have the right to assemble peacefully.

(2) The exercise of this right serves for citizens' application of the freedom of speech and other constitutional rights and freedoms, exchange of information and opinions and addressing public and other common affairs through the expression of their opinions and positions."

(3) "No prior permission from a state authority is necessary for assembly."

Association of Citizens Act No. 83/1990 Coll.

section 1(1) "Citizens have the right to associate freely."

section 2(1) "Citizens can establish clubs, societies, unions, movements and other civic associations, as well as trade unions, and associate in them."

Act No. 424/1991 Coll. on Association in Political Parties and Political Movements

section 1 (1) "Citizens have the right to associate in political parties and political movements." After 1989, requirements for the right to freedom of assembly, association, speech, thought and religion were among the most requested and most expected. It is therefore natural that they are also included in the Constitution of the SR, as the fundamental conditions and prerequisite for the proper functioning of a democratic society governed by the rule of law, which Slovakia undoubtedly is. These basic political rights and freedoms are strictly observed in the SR and no serious attempts to breach them have been recorded so far. These rights and freedoms are also relevant for the assembly and association of persons belonging to national minorities and are fully applied by them. National minorities in Slovakia have rich political, social, religious and cultural lives, which are developed within numerous and active political parties, churches, cultural organizations, associations and unions. These activities result in the enrichment of the whole society, the mutual recognition of cultures of different nations, tolerance, comprehension and understanding.

Within the framework of the plural political system, along with others, 18 political parties operate in which citizens of the SR affiliated with individual minorities associate. Of these, 3 political parties and movements associate citizens of Hungarian ethnic origin, 14 political parties and movements were established by citizens from the Romany minority and 1 political party associates citizens affiliated with Ruthenians and Ukrainians.

Political parties of national minorities registered by the Ministry of the Interior**Romany:**

1. Party for the Integration of Roma in Slovakia (SIR)
2. Party for the Protection of the Rights of Roma in Slovakia (SOPR)
3. Romany Civic Initiative of the SR (ROISR)
4. Social Democratic Party of Roma in Slovakia (SSDR)
5. Union of the Romany Civic Initiative in the SR (UROI)
6. Romany Congress of the SR
7. Democratic Movement of Roma in the SR (DHR)
8. Party of Roma of Slovakia (SRoS)
9. Romany National Party (RNS)
10. Party of Romany Democrats in the SR (SRD)
11. Work and Security Party
12. Democratic Alliance of Roma in the SR
13. Romany Intelligentsia for Co-existence in the SR (RIS)
14. Romany Christian Democratic Movement in the SR (RKDH)

Hungarian:

1. Hungarian Coalition Party (*Magyar Koalicio Partja*)

2. Hungarian People's Movement for Reconciliation and Prosperity (*Magyar Nepi Mozgalom a Megbekelesert es Joletert*)
3. Hungarian Election Conservative Liberal Civic Party (*Magyar Valasztasi Konzervativ Liberalis Polgari Part*).

Ruthenian-Ukrainian:

1. Podduklianska Democratic Assembly (PDH).

The manifestos of these entities reveal that, besides their basic goals, i.e. participation in the country's political life, particularly in the formation of the legislative body and local government bodies, they also aim to protect the rights and justified interests of the members of each minority.

Article 8

The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organizations and associations.

In Slovakia, rights and freedoms in this area are guaranteed by legislation and applied in practice. No attempts to breach them have been recorded so far, and therefore no problems have been encountered in the sphere of religious life of persons belonging to national minorities. One reason for this is the fact that the organization and institutionalization of religious life falls fully under individual churches and the state does not intervene into them in any way. On the other hand, the state financially supports churches in some issues (e.g. in the area of church education).

Constitution of the SR, Article 24,

(2) "Everyone has the right to freely express his religion or faith on his own or together with others, privately or publicly, by means of divine and religious services, by observing religious rites, or by participating in the teaching of religion."

Constitution of the SR, Article 29,

(1) "The right to freely associate is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to associate with others in unions, societies, or other associations.

(2) Citizens have the right to establish political parties to associate in them..."

Associations and Foundations of National Minorities Registered at the Ministry of the Interior

With regard to unions, societies, clubs, or various civic interest associations, 149 minority associations operated in Slovakia in 1998. Of these, 63 were associations of citizens with a Hungarian ethnic background, 59 Romany, 17 Ruthenian or Ukrainian, 4 German, 2 Croatian, 1 Polish, 1 Bohemian, 1 Moravian and 1 association of citizens of Bulgarian ethnic origin.

Non-governmental Organizations

According to information from the Ministry of the Interior, there are approximately 760 non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Slovakia. This number fluctuates because some of them cease to exist while new NGOs are being established. These organizations carry out a wide range of training, informational, educational and publication activities. They are funded by sponsors and from the state fund PRO SLOVAKIA.

Article 9

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognize that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and Ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.*
- 2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.*
- 3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.*
- 4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.*

The access of persons belonging to national minorities to the media is guaranteed by legislation and applied in practice. It is one of the modern means and guarantees of preserving the cultural identity, language and customs of individual national minorities. In Slovakia, public radio and television provide broadcasts in languages of national minorities. At present, Slovak Radio and Slovak Television broadcast in Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, German and Romany. On the territory of the SR, it is also possible to receive radio and television signals from a number of television and radio stations (both public and private) from neighboring countries. Apart from electronic media, a number of periodicals and non-periodical press are published every year with financial support from the state. Access to foreign literature is not restricted in any way.

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions."

Act No. 268JI993 Coll. on the Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasting,

(2) "Operators are legally obliged: (...)

c) to produce or have produced a significant proportion of broadcast programs such that the cultural identity of the nation, national minorities and ethnic groups are maintained (...)."

Slovak Radio Act No. 270/1993 Coll.

section 6: "Slovak Radio fulfills the following tasks in particular:

...

d) contributes through radio broadcasting to the development of national culture and the cultures of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic, and to the interpreting of the cultural values of other nations."

Slovak Television Act No. 271/1993 Coll.

section 3 (3): "Slovak Television also ensures, through television broadcasting in their mother tongue, the exercise of the interests of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic."

section 6 (j): "Slovak Television fulfills the following tasks:

... contributes through television broadcasting to the development of national culture and the cultures of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic, and to the interpreting of the cultural values of other nations."

Article 10

1. The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavor to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be Informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

This area is more closely governed by the following laws:

- Constitution of the Slovak Republic
- Slovak Radio Act (No. 270/93 Coll.)
- Slovak Television Act (No. 27/93 Coll.)

- Periodical Press and other Means of Mass Information Act (No. 81/66 Coll.)
- Courts and Judges Act (No. 335/91 Coll.)
- Civil Procedure Act (No. 70/92 Coll.)
- Criminal Court Proceedings Act (No. 158/92 Coll.)
- Act on the Organization of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, Proceedings Before it and the Position of its Judges (No. 38/93 Coll.)
- Names and Surnames Act (No. 300/93 Coll.)
- Registers Act (No. 154/94 Coll.)
- Act on Indication of Settlements in the Language of National Minorities (No. 191/94 Coll.)
- Network of Primary and Secondary Schools Act (No. 29/84 Coll.)

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law.

(2) In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,
- c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

(3) The exercise of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against other citizens."

Courts and Judges Act No. 335/1991 Coll.

section 7 (3): "Everyone may act before the court in his own language. The law determines when the costs connected with the services of an interpreter are paid by the state."

Note: Similar legal norms are found in Civil Procedure Act No. 70/1992 Coll., Criminal Court Proceedings Act No. 158/1992 Coll. and Act on the Organization of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic and Proceedings before it and the Position of its Judges No. 38/1993 Coll.

Civil Procedure Act No. 70/1992 Coll.

section 18: "Parties in civil court proceedings have the same standing. They have the right to act before the court in their mother tongue. The court is obliged to provide them with the same opportunities for the exercising of their rights."

Criminal Court Proceedings Act No. 158/1992

section 2 (14): "Everyone is entitled to use his mother tongue before bodies acting in criminal proceedings."

Act on the Organization of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic and Proceedings before it and the Position of Judges No. 38/1993 Coll.

section 23: "Physical persons may use their mother tongue at oral trials or other negotiations.

The costs of interpreting are borne by the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic."

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocols 3, 5 and 8

Article 5 (2): "Everyone who is arrested shall be informed promptly, in a language which he understands, of the reasons for his arrest and of any charge against him."

Article 6 (3): "Everyone charged with a criminal offense has the following minimum rights: a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;

b)..., c)..., d)...

e) to have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

Note: The Constitution of the Slovak Republic states in article 11: "International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms that were ratified by the Slovak Republic and promulgated in a manner determined by law take priority over its own laws, provided that they secure a greater extent of constitutional rights and freedoms."

Use of Languages of Persons Belonging to National Minorities

The protection of national minorities is not concentrated in one legal norm in the SR, but is enacted in the Constitution and approximately 25 further legal norms. Of these, about 12 legal regulations are concerned with the issue of the use of minority languages. However, further work is being done in this area and the Government of the SR is preparing a comprehensive act on the use of languages of persons belonging to national minorities.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavor, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

Constitution of tile SR, Article 11,

"International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms that were ratified by the Slovak Republic and promulgated in a manner determined by law take priority over its own laws, provided that they secure a greater extent of constitutional rights and freedoms."

Registers Act No. 154/1994 Coll.

section 16 "The female surname of a person other than Slovak nationality is written without the grammatical ending of Slovak declination,

- a) if the parents of a female child request so at the registering of her name in the Register of Births in accordance with section 13 paragraph 1, or the adapters do so at the registration of their adoption of the child, in the case of irrevocable adoption,
- b) if a woman requests so at the registration of her marriage in the Marriages Register in accordance with section 14,
- c) if a woman requests so in connection with the registration of a decision to change surname in accordance with a separate law."

section 19 (3) "In the Birth Certificate of a person other than Slovak nationality whom this official statement concerns and whose name is entered in the Register in the Slovak equivalent, the person's name is entered in his language, if he requests so in writing, and a note is made of this circumstance in the Register. All further alterations and confirmations are made out using this form of the name."

section 19 (5) "In the Birth Certificate or Marriage Certificate of a woman whom this concerns, her surname is entered without the grammatical ending of Slovak declination, if she requests so in writing, and a record is made of this circumstance in the Register. All other official statements or confirmations of data entered in the Register are produced with this form of the surname. The written request in the first sentence is placed in the Document Collection."

Names and Surnames Act No. 300/1993 Coll., section 2

(1) "A person born on the territory of the Slovak Republic may, in the manner of and under the conditions set out in section 1, have more than one name, including foreign names; at the most, however, three names. Parents shall provide co-action in the entry of foreign names in the Register."

Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 191/1994 Coll. on the Indication of Settlements in the Language of National Minorities, section 1

(1): "Settlements in which members of a national minority make up at least 20% of the population are indicated in the language of the national minority on separate road signs denoting the beginning and end of the settlement." Registers Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 154/1994 Coll. makes it possible to enter the surname of a female of a nationality other than Slovak without the grammatical ending of Slovak declination into the Register. After the application of this possibility, re-entry of the female surname with the grammatical ending of Slovak declination can be requested. This application is regarded as an application for permission to modify a surname, as regulated by a special law.

Names and Surnames Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 300/1994 Coll. also makes it possible to enter a foreign name, or more names, into the Register. At the same time, this enables the use of a foreign name in its Slovak form on the basis of an announcement to the Register. This announcement is not regarded as an application for permission to modify a surname, as regulated by a special law. Act No. 300/1994 Coll. meets the demands of persons belonging to national minorities by letting them choose again - and enter in the Register - their name in their mother tongue, or foreign language, through which the legal regulation was harmonized with the guaranteed constitutional rights of these citizens. In section 7, the above Act also makes it possible - on the basis of free choice - to use a foreign name in its Slovak form. Section 4 (4) enables the use of a foreign female surname without the grammatical ending of Slovak declination. A return to the original name is, in the sense of the Act, a modification, and is therefore possible.

The basic law regulating the issue of "displaying traditional local names" in minority languages is Act No. 191/1994 Coll.

The Act obligates the relevant local state administration bodies to secure that settlements are indicated in national minority languages on separate road signs. These bodies have fulfilled their task and secured the indication of settlements on road signs in national minority languages.

Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 191/1994 Coll. on the Indication of Settlements in the Language of National Minorities, section 1

(1): "Settlements in which members of a national minority make up at least 20% of the population are indicated in the language of the national minority on separate road signs denoting the beginning and end of the settlement."

Article 12

1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.

2. In this context the Parties shall Inter and provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.

3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

Act No. 5/1999 Coll. amending Act No. 29/1984 Coll. on the Network of Primary and Secondary Schools (the Schools Act) as amended by later regulations, amending State Language of the Slovak Republic Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 270/1995 Coll. and amending Act of the Slovak National Council No. 542/1990 Coll. on State Administration in Education and Self-administration of Schools as amended by later regulations.

Article III, section 11 (2) "School reports for students of primary schools and students of secondary schools are issued in the state language. Students of primary schools and students of secondary schools in which a national minority language is the language of instruction are issued bilingual school reports, in the state language and in the language of the relevant national minority."

Article III, section 11a (1) "Pedagogical documentation at primary and secondary schools is kept in the state language. At schools where a national minority language is the language of instruction, the pedagogical documentation is bilingual, in the state language and in the language of the relevant national minority."

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(2) "In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,
- c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups.

Act No. 29/1984 on the Network of Primary and Secondary Schools (the Schools Act) as amended by later regulations

section 3 (1): "Training and education are carried out in the state language. Citizens of Bohemian, Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) nationality are ensured the right to education in their own language to an extent proportional to the interests of their national development."

Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the State Language of the Slovak Republic No. 270/1995 Coll. as amended by later regulations

section 3 (3) "The following documents are issued in the state language: a) laws, governmental ordinances and other generally binding legal regulations, including regulations of local self-government bodies, decisions and other public deeds, besides school reports issued by schools where a national minority language or a foreign language is the language of

instruction; the procedure for the issuance of such school reports is laid down by a special regulation."

section 4 (3) "All pedagogical documentation is kept in the state language apart from pedagogical documentation kept at schools pursuant to special regulations; the procedure for keeping pedagogical documentation at these schools is laid down by special regulations."

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Decree No. 102/1991 Coll. concerning the completion of studies at secondary schools and the completion of preparation at apprentice schools as amended by later regulations section 10 "At a secondary school with a language of instruction other than Slovak, the school leaving exam is taken a) at a gymnasium, in the language of instruction and literature (oral and written exam), Slovak language and literature (oral and written exam) and an oral exam in two or three subjects of choice, b) at a secondary apprentice school or secondary vocational school, in the language of instruction and literature (oral and written exam), Slovak language and literature (oral and written exam) and special subjects."

Ministry of Education Decree No. 280/1994 Coll. concerning private schools

section 3 (2): "A proposal for the inclusion of a school into the network of schools contains:

- a) the type of school, language of instruction, name and address of the school,
- b) teaching plans and syllabi for individual subjects in all classes, rules for the evaluation and classification of students, graduate profile if the school is not to use pedagogical documentation valid for state schools."

Ministry of Education Decree No. 353/1994 Coll. concerning pre-school facilities as amended by later regulations

section 3 (3) "The founder's proposal for the establishment of a pre-school facility contains:
a) name and address of the pre-school facility, type and language of instruction."

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Decree No. 293/1991 concerning the Schools Inspectorate

section 6 (1) e) "The Schools Inspectorate monitors that the rights and conditions for education in the native language and the official language are ensured..."

The preparation of teachers is carried out in line with Universities Art No. 172/1990 Coll. as amended by later regulations. The training of school and school facility employees is carried out in accordance with:

Ministry of Education Decree No. 42/1996 Coll. concerning teacher training, which lays down the organization, content, scope and forms of teacher training irrespective of the school or school facility in which they work. They all have the same opportunities for training and the acquisition of professional qualifications regardless of the language of instruction at their school.

Ministry of Education Decree No. 41/1996 Coll. concerning the professional and educational qualification of teachers as amended by later regulations, which lays down the conditions for the professional and educational qualification of all teachers regardless of the language of instruction at their school or school facility.

Pursuant to legal regulations, teacher training is carried out, in addition to universities, via the State Pedagogical Institute and methodical centers, at which offices for the mother tongues of national minorities are established.

Constitution of the SR, Article 42,

(1) "Everyone has the right to education. School attendance is compulsory. Its period and age limit will be specified by law.

(2) Citizens have the right to free education at primary and secondary schools and, based on their abilities and society's resources, also at universities.

(3) Schools other than state schools may be established, and instruction in them provided, only under conditions defined by law. Such schools may charge a tuition fee."

The Slovak training and education network, of which schools with minority languages as the language of instruction and where minority languages are taught form a part, includes all levels of education in the mother tongue of minorities: from nursery schools to universities. One of the goals of education of, for instance, Romany children and students is the gradual modification of values within Romany families so that education becomes an accepted value and precondition for resolving social, cultural and economic problems, with support from the Roma themselves.

One of the aims of the Ministry of Education is to stabilize and renew the operation of nursery schools, particularly in settlements with a high concentration of Romany children, with an emphasis on their education in the Slovak language and the creation of conditions for training 5-6 year old children and children with postponed school attendance, using all available forms for their preparation for entry into primary schools.

In line with section 14 (1) of Ministry of Education Decree No. 353/1994 Coll. as amended by Decree No. 81/1997 Coll. concerning pre-school facilities, the monthly benefit for nursery school attendance for children who had reached the age of 5 was abolished. A "Skola dokoran" (School Open-wide) Foundation project, which is being tested at nursery schools in the SR, is aimed at the verification of such methods and organizational forms of work, in which, besides concentration on the child, close co-operation with parents and their direct participation in educational activities at nursery schools are reinforced.

Co-operation between nursery schools and families eliminates the fear of school that some children from the Romany community have. Following the children's move to primary schools, the "Skola dokoran" project also continues at primary schools in the SR, especially in areas with a higher concentration of Romany children and children from a less stimulating environment. The education of Romany students is carried out in normal primary school classes. Students with specific educational needs can, beginning from the 1998/99 school year, attend "specialized classes" in the first and second year of primary school, which focus on the specific educational needs of pupils with an emphasis on the development of their

communication skills and reinforcement of their knowledge of the state language. The State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava became the expert co-ordinator of the education of this group of pupils.

To support the reinforcement of knowledge of the Slovak language - as the state language in the Slovak Republic - the Ministry of Education has passed and secured the publication of a spelling book in the Romany and Slovak languages for the 1st and 2nd year of primary and special schools and a reading book in the Romany-Slovak language for primary school pupils. In 1995, the textbook "Amari abeceda - Nasa abeceda" (Amari Alphabet - Our Alphabet) was approved and published for 3rd and 4th year primary school pupils. Students from the Romany minority who meet the conditions for further study at secondary schools can study at any secondary school in the SR. Conditions were created specially for Romany students to study at the Secondary Pedagogical School in Levoca, Secondary School of Arts in Kosice and Conservatory in Kosice. The Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, started the experimental testing of 3-year Construction Work courses on 1.9.1998. The students - prevailing Roma - acquire a certain level of qualification in carpentry, painting and tinsmithery after each completed year.

The Construction Work courses are being tested at apprentice schools that fall under regional state administration offices in Trnava, Nitra, Bratislava, Banska Bystrica, Kosice and Presov. Students of apprentice schools with a 2-year course of study and with adjusted syllabi are being prepared for those occupations that are required in the labor market of the given region. Another attempt to seek further solutions for an increase in the Romany population's standard of education and its full integration into society is the implementation of a project called "the Educational Center for the Development of the Romany Minority in the Slovak Republic". The expert co-ordination of this project is carried out by the State Vocational Training Institute, which will monitor and evaluate the standard of training and educational activities. At present, this project is in the preparatory stage.

In order to decrease the high number of unqualified teachers in primary schools, the Romany Culture Department of the Nitra Pedagogical University (now called the University of Constantine Philosopher) established a separate department in Spisska Nova Ves in the 1995/96 academic year. Under the co-ordination of the Romany Culture Department, this department secures, *inter alia*, the study of non-teaching subjects "Social and Educational Work" focused on Romany culture and training courses for young Romany women and unemployed Roma.

In 1996, the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Council of Europe, organized an international seminar called "Alternative Educational Process for the Adaptation of Disadvantaged Children and Youth to Family and Social Life" and in 1997 the international conference "Education for Neglected and Socially Disadvantaged Children".

All schools where the language of instruction is a national minority language are staffed with qualified teachers, whose professional growth and qualification is secured by legislation through various forms of training at the level of the State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava and methodical centers in the SR.

Textbooks for all types of primary and secondary schools are purchased from the Ministry of Education budget. No special funds for the needs of schools with a minority language as the language of instruction are excluded. Textbooks and exercise books for schools with a minority language as the language of instruction are continuously approved, published and

distributed to schools. Besides the purchase of new textbooks, the purchase of reprints of textbooks according to the requirements and financial possibilities of the sector is secured with the aim of completing textbook resources. The following funds were allocated for the needs of schools with a minority language as the language of instruction and schools teaching a minority language:

In 1997, SKK25.250.000, of which:

- SKK 24,500,000 for the needs of schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction
- SKK 750,000 for the needs of schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction and schools teaching Ukrainian.

In the same year, SKK 178,750,000 was allocated for schools with Slovak as the language of instruction (SLI), which means an average of SKK 199.58 per student at SLI and SKK 384.62 per student at schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction (HLI). In 1998, funds for SLI schools of SKK 201 million and for HLI schools of SKK 31 million were planned, which amounts to an average of SKK 224.43 per student at SLI and SKK 486.66 per student at HLI.

Article 13

1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognize that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.

2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.

Constitution of the SR, Article 42,

(3) Schools other than state schools may be established, and instruction in them provided, only under conditions defined by law. Such schools may charge a tuition fee."

Government of the Slovak Republic Ordinance No. 113/1991 Coll. on the Provision of Subsidies to Private Schools from the State Budget

section 2 (3) "The amount of subsidies is determined as a percentage of the average non-investment expenditures per student in other schools of a comparable nature or type."

Ministry of Education Decree No. 280/1994 Coll. concerning private schools

section 2 (2) "Schools may be established by a physical or legal person."

section 3 (2): "A proposal for the inclusion of a school into the network of schools contains:

- a) the type of school, language of instruction, name and address of the school,
- g) teaching plans and syllabi for individual subjects in all classes, rules for the evaluation and classification of students, graduate profile if the school is not to use pedagogical documentation valid for state schools."

In line with section 6 (2) and (3) of Budgetary Rules Act No. 303/1995 Coll. of the National Council of the Slovak Republic as amended by later regulations and section 11(2) of Act of

the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 222/1996 Coll. on the Organization of Local State Administration and Amending Certain Laws, the Ministry of Education issued, effective from 1 April 1998:

- Conditions for the Provision of Funds to Private Schools
- Conditions for the Provision of Funds to Church Schools.

In line with valid legal regulations and on the basis of requests from individual founders, the Ministry of Education has gradually included the following private schools for students belonging to national minorities into the network of schools in the SR (data are for the 1998/99 school year): 1 private gymnasium with Hungarian as the language of instruction, 2 private secondary vocational schools under joint administration that include classes with Hungarian as the language of instruction, 3 private secondary apprentice schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction and 2 private secondary vocational schools under joint administration that include classes with Hungarian as the language of instruction, with a total number of 1918 students.

In general, pursuant to the above Conditions for the Provision of Funds to Private Schools, the state participates financially through the budgets of individual regions in the SR. Part V.: "The Ministry of Education shall determine the amount of funds to be provided to a private school on the basis of a percentage of average operational expenses in state schools of a comparable nature and type and the determined methodology for the distribution of state budgetary resources among private schools."

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Decree concerning the Schools Inspectorate

section 6 (1) "The Schools Inspectorate monitors:

f) that the rights and conditions for education in the native language and the official language are ensured."

Article 14

1. The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavor to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language. 3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(2) "In addition to the right to master the state language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are also guaranteed, under conditions defined by law, the following:

- a) right to education in their own language,
- b) right to use their language in official contact,
- c) right to participate in addressing matters concerning national minorities and ethnic groups."

Act No. 29/1984 on the Network of Primary and Secondary Schools (the Schools Act) as amended by later regulations

section 3 (1): "Training and education are carried out in the state language. Citizens of Bohemian, Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) nationality are ensured the right to education in their own language to an extent proportional to the interests of their national development."

State Care of Persons to National Minorities in the Education Sector

The right to education in national minority languages was enacted in the Constitution of the SR and in the Schools Act. Children and students attend schools with a minority language as the language of instruction, schools where the minority language is taught or schools with Slovak as the language of instruction on the basis of the free decision of their parents or legal guardian. These schools are a part of the SR's education system and are financed from the state budget. Besides state schools, the law enables the establishment of private and church schools which are financed from the state budget according to the legal regulations mentioned above.

At present, depending on the specific characteristics of individual minorities in the SR, the state and the intensity of their national awareness, as well as tradition, the education of national minorities takes place at:

- schools with a minority language as the language of instruction, where all subjects are taught in the mother tongue of minorities and the state language is taught as a compulsory subject - schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction, mostly primary schools and gymnasium
- schools with a minority language as the language of instruction, where only some subjects are taught in the mother tongue of minorities and some in the state language - schools with Ukrainian and German as the language of instruction,
- schools where a minority language is taught, where the Mother Tongue and Literature are taught in the mother tongue of minorities on the basis of requirements from parents and all other subjects are taught in the state language - schools with Ukrainian, Ruthenian and German as the language of instruction.

The following national minority languages are taught in the SR in the following types of schools:

1. Hungarian:

- nursery schools (state, church);
- primary schools (state, church);
- secondary schools: gymnasium (state, private, church);
- secondary vocational schools (state, private);
- secondary apprentice schools (state, private);
- special schools - for the physically and mentally disabled (nursery schools, special primary schools, special residential schools, hospital primary schools, assistance schools, residential primary school for the hearing impaired, apprentice schools);
- universities (state) - University of Constantine Philosopher Nitra, Comenius University Bratislava;

2. Ukrainian:

- nursery schools;
- primary schools;
- gymnasium, secondary vocational schools;
- university (Pedagogical University Presov) - all state schools;

3. German:

- primary schools (German as the mother tongue - from the 1993/94 school year);
- university (University of Constantine Philosopher Nitra);

4. Ruthenian:

- primary schools;
- university (the Nationality Studies and Foreign Languages Institute at the Philosophy Department of the Pedagogical University Presov);

5. Romany:

- The Romany language is used in nursery schools and in preparatory primary school classes with a high concentration of Romany pupils as a support language;
- secondary school of arts in Kosice;
- university (Romany Culture Department at the University of Constantine Philosopher Nitre and its separate department in Spisska Nova Ves).

The School Network as of 15.9.1998 for the 1998/99 School Year Processed According to Summary Data from the Institute for Information and Prognosis in Education

The school network processed according to summary data from the Institute for Information and Prognosis in Education as of 15.9.1998 for the 1998/99 school year.

1. NURSERY SCHOOLS (NS)**a) state**

	number of schools	classes	children
with Slovak as the language of instruction	2 912	7 284	156 648
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	275 102	544	9 765
with Ukrainian as the language of instruction under joint administration 2)	14 3	25	393
with German as the language of instruction	1	2	46
TOTAL in the SR	3 307	7 855	166 852

Children in NS by ethnic background:

total number of children in NS:	166 852
of which Slovak citizens	166 727
ethnic origin	Slovak 152 248
	Bohemian, Moravian, 85
	Silesian
	Hungarian 12 887
	Ukrainian 159
	Ruthenian 85
	Polish 12
	German 14
	Romany 1 120
	other 117
foreigners, including Czechs	125

b) private

	number of schools	classes	children
with Slovak as the language of instruction	14	21	447

c) church

	number of schools	classes	children
with Slovak as the language of instruction	5	8	176
with Hungarian as the language of instruction	1	1	29
TOTAL in the SR	6	9	205

2. PRIMARY SCHOOLS (PS)

a) state

	number of schools	classes	pupils
with Slovak as the language of instruction	2 087	25 651	579 609
of which: German as mother tongue	5	30	753
Ukrainian as mother tongue	24	52	761
Ruthenian as mother tongue 3)	4	6	50
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	263 30	2 087	42 488
with Ukrainian as the language of instruction under joint administration 2)	8 0	48	501
with German as the language of instruction	1	4	67
TOTAL in the SR	2 389	27 790	622 665

Pupils in PS by ethnic background:

total number of pupils in PS:	622 665
of which Slovak citizens	622 024
ethnic origin	Slovak 560 756
	Bohemian, Moravian, 1 394
	Silesian
	Hungarian 52 238
	Ukrainian 612
	Ruthenian 375
	Polish 59
	German 88
	Romany 6 098
	other 404
foreigners, including Czechs	641

b) private

	number of schools	classes	pupils
with Slovak as the language of instruction	5	9	96
with Bulgarian as the language of instruction	1	8	101
TOTAL in the SR	6	17	197

c) church

	number of schools	classes	pupils
with Slovak as the language of instruction	79	1 053	23 981
with Hungarian as the language of instruction	10	58	1 034
TOTAL in the SR	89	1 111	25 015

3. SECONDARY SCHOOLS**3.1. Gymnasium (G)****a) state**

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	123	2 075	64 252
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	11 8	148	4 154
with Ukrainian as the language of instruction	1	4	88
TOTAL in the SR	155	2 227	68 494

Students in G by ethnic background:

total number of students in G:	68 494
of which Slovak citizens	68 377
ethnic origin	Slovak 62 561
	Bohemian, Moravian, 251
	Silesian
	Hungarian 5 242
	Ukrainian 130
	Ruthenian 67
	Polish 15
	German 25
	Romany 6
	other 80
foreigners, including Czechs	117

b) private

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	15	94	2 255
with Hungarian as the language of instruction	1	8	196
with Bulgarian as the language of instruction	1	4	30
TOTAL in the SR	17	106	2 481

c) church

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	28	300	9 364
bilingual instruction with English language	3		
with Hungarian as the language of instruction	2	13	330
TOTAL in the SR	33	313	9 694

3.2. Secondary Vocational Schools (SVS)**a) state**

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	295	3 135	92 205
of which: Secondary Schools of Arts (Conservatory for Roma)	1	6	109
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	6 15	140	3 923
TOTAL in the SR	316	3 275	96 128

healthcare schools

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	21	284	8 042
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	3	13	391
with Ukrainian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	1	4	72
TOTAL in the SR	25	301	8 505

Students in SVS by ethnic background:

healthcare

total number of students in SVS:	96 128	8 505
of which Slovak citizens	96 084	8 502
ethnic origin	Slovak	89 257
	Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian	214
	Hungarian	6 295
	Ukrainian	124
	Ruthenian	41
	Polish	8
	German	16
	Romany	84
	other	45
foreigners, including Czechs	44	7

b) private

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	22	163	3 935
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	2	19	416
TOTAL in the SR	24	182	4 351

c) church

	number of schools	classes	students
TOTAL in the SR	4	31	806
healthcare schools 4)	7	50	1 401

3.3. Secondary Apprentice Schools and Apprentices (SAS and A)**a) state**

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	309	4 308	107 042
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	4	55	1 346
	22	292	6 559
TOTAL in the SR	335	4 655	114 947

Students in SAS and A by ethnic background:

total number of students in G:	114 947
of which Slovak citizens	114 908
ethnic origin	105 322
Slovak	
Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian	220
Hungarian	8 942
Ukrainian	142
Ruthenian	47
Polish	6
German	10
Romany	169
other	50
foreigners, including Czechs	39

b) private

	number of schools	classes	students
with Slovak as the language of instruction	4	19	331
with Hungarian as the language of instruction under joint administration 1)	3	47	1 002
	2	18	304
TOTAL in the SR	9	84	1 637

c) church

	number of schools	classes	students
TOTAL in the SR	5	37	923

4. Special Schools with Hungarian as the Language of Instruction

a) 32 special schools 177 classes 1447 pupils

of which: 26 special primary schools

 4 primary schools at hospitals

 4 primary schools for the hearing impaired

 1 assistance school

d) 13 integrated classes can be found at 8 primary and special schools for the mentally disabled, with 110 students (these schools are included under 2a) among primary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction and under 4a) among special primary schools)

e) 2 special secondary schools 6 classes 61 students**Notes:**

¹ schools where classes with Slovak as the language of instruction and classes with Hungarian as the language of instruction are under one principal office

² schools where classes with Slovak as the language of instruction and classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction are under one principal office

³ starting from the 1997/98 school year, Ruthenian Language and Literature was introduced at primary schools on the basis of requests from parents from the Ruthenian national minority

⁴ the secondary healthcare schools fall under the healthcare sector In the 1997/98 school year:

- Ruthenian Language and Literature was introduced at primary schools (years 1-4) on the basis of requests from parents from the Ruthenian national minority
- a class for Romany girls was opened at the Secondary Pedagogical University in Levoca oriented on preparation for work in pre-school facilities
- the new subject "Technical Conversation in the Slovak Language" was introduced at primary and secondary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction, including 8-year gymnasium.

Article 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

Constitution of the SR, Article 30

(1) "Citizens have the right to participate in the administration of public affairs either directly or through the free election of their representatives."

(4) "Citizens have access to elected and other public posts under equal conditions."

All citizens of the SR, including persons belonging to the national minorities, are guaranteed the right to actively participate in the country's political life by the Constitution. For national minorities, this right is also secured through their active work in political parties based on the ethnic principle. 15 members of parliament (10%) and 3 members of the Government of the SR (Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, National Minorities and Regional Development, Minister for the Environment, Minister of Construction and Public Works) are of Hungarian origin. MPs of Hungarian origin are also represented in the leadership of the parliament (Vice-Chairman, the Chairmen of the Committee for Human Rights and Minorities and the Committee for Finance, Budget and Currency, and the Vice-Chairman of the Healthcare Committee). Other MPs are members of further parliamentary committees. Such representation should be seen as a substantial positive step for the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia and an expression of trust in its responsible approach to participation in governing and directing Slovakia.

Representatives of other national minorities are not present in the National Council because their political parties did not manage to attain the prescribed number of votes necessary for entry into the SR's legislative body (5%) in the parliamentary elections. However, national

minorities are represented at the local level as a result of elections to these local administration bodies.

In the 1998 elections to municipal self-government bodies, 227 representatives of the Hungarian national minority acquired the office of mayor - of which 224 were candidates for the Hungarian Coalition Party and 3 were candidates for the Hungarian People's Movement for Reconciliation and Prosperity. 6 elected mayors were candidates for the Romany Civic Initiative in the SR.

3841 members of the Hungarian national minority were elected as members of municipal councils, of which 3773 were candidates for the Hungarian Coalition Party and 68 were candidates for the Hungarian People's Movement for Reconciliation and Prosperity. 86 elected members of municipal councils were candidates from the Romany minority, of which 80 were candidates of the Romany Civic Initiative in the SR, 4 were candidates of the Romany Christian Democratic Movement in the SR and 2 of the Democratic Movement of Roma in the SR.

Further representatives of national minorities have been elected as mayors and municipal council members as candidates of coalitions of various political parties.

Valid legal regulations do not prevent members of other national minorities or ethnic groups from also running for the aforementioned elected posts. It is possible through the presence on the electoral list of any party participating in the elections or through the submission of their own electoral list, providing that their political party has been registered.

At the state administration level, of the 79 heads of district offices, 7 heads are of Hungarian ethnic origin and 1 is of Ruthenian origin.

Members of all 11 national minorities are proportionally represented in the Council of the Government of the SR for Minorities, which is a governmental advisory body. In the cultural sphere, members of national minorities participate in the decision-making process in matters related to them through advisory and executive bodies at the Ministry of Culture.

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law."

Constitution of the SR, Article 35,

(1) "Everyone has the right to a free choice of profession and to training for it, as well as the right to engage in entrepreneurial or other gainful activity."

Act No. 424/1991 Coll. on Association in Political Parties and Political Movements

section 1 (1) "Citizens have the right to associate in political parties and political movements. The exercise of this right serves citizens for their participation in political life, especially in the forming of legislative bodies and local self-government bodies."

Article 16

The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention.

Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Hungary (19.3.1995)

Article 15 2 (d) "... reaffirming their general integration policy, the Contracting Parties shall refrain from policies and practices aimed at the assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation. The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms of those persons, which would be to the detriment of the national minorities..."

In Slovakia, the process of public administration reform has been taking place since 1990 as a part of the launched political and social changes. As of 24.6.1996, changes in the territorial division and integration of local state administration bodies into 8 regional and 79 district offices took place.

Following the elections (September 1998), the National Council approved the Policy Statement of the Government of the SR. Depending on the political and economic situation, the Government will seek to optimally organize public administration so that it secures that the basic needs of citizens are met. It will continue to transfer state powers to lower public administration units, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. According to the Government's Policy Statement, the Ministry of the Interior should submit to the Government and subsequently to the National Council a concept for further steps in the public administration reform in the Slovak Republic by the end of May 1999. At the same time, the Government will assess the need for amendments to the Act on the Territorial and Administrative Division of the SR. Further steps of the reform will take the Convention's provisions into account.

In September 1998, the Government of the SR signed the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities, and the Additional Protocol to the Convention. In February 1999, Slovakia signed the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

Article 17

1. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

2. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organizations, both at the national and international levels.

Constitution of the SR, Article 23,

(1) "Freedom of movement and residence shall be guaranteed."

(4) "Every citizen has the right to freely enter the territory of the Slovak Republic. A citizen must not be forced to leave his homeland and he must not be deported or extradited."

Constitution of the SR, Article 34,

(1) "The comprehensive development of citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, particularly the right to develop their own culture, together with other members of the minority or ethnic group, disseminate and receive information in their mother tongues, associate in minority associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Details shall be laid down by law."

Foundations Act No. 207/1996 Coll.

section 2 (2) "Foundations are legal entities. State bodies may interfere with their status and activities only within the limits specified by law."

section 7 (1) "Foundations can be established by a physical person or legal person."

Non-investment Funds Act No. 147/1997 Coll.

section 3 (1) "Funds can be established by a physical person or legal person."

Act No. 213/1997 Coll. on Non-profit Organizations Providing Generally Beneficial Services

section 5 (1) "Non-profit organizations can be established by a physical person or legal person."

25 foundations established by members of the Hungarian national minority, 3 foundations established by members of the Romany minority and 2 foundations of the Ukrainian and Ruthenian national minorities operate in foundation activities in the Slovak Republic.

In the area of non-investment funds, 14 funds have been set up by members of the Hungarian national minority and 1 fund by members of the Romany minority.

In the sphere of non-profit organizations providing generally beneficial services, 1 non-profit organization has been established by members of the Hungarian national minority and 1 organization operates for members of the Romany minority.

The work of these non-governmental organizations is focused on the protection of their rights in order to maintain their identity and improve their knowledge of their mother tongues, and on the area of education, culture, folk tradition and customs, sports, charity and mutual assistance.

Free and peaceful cross-border contact with persons living in all of the SR's neighboring countries is guaranteed and, in practice, very rich and widely developed. It is applied on economic, social, cultural and educational levels. Personal and family contacts, which are extraordinarily lively, are also of great importance and have a positive impact on Slovakia's bilateral relations with its neighboring countries.

Article 18

1. The Parties shall endeavor to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighboring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.

2. Where relevant, the Parties shall take measures to encourage transfrontier cooperation.

The Slovak Republic has concluded bilateral agreements with its neighbors that include provisions guaranteeing the protection of national minorities and support for transfrontier co-operation.

1/ Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Hungary of 1995 (Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe No. 1201 forms a part of this Treaty)

2/ Treaty between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Republic of Poland on Good Neighborliness, Solidarity and Friendly Co-operation of 1991

3/ Treaty between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on Good Neighborliness and Friendly Co-operation

4/ Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic on Good Neighborliness, Friendly Relations and Co-operation

5/ Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Friendly Relations and Co-operation between the Slovak Republic and the Ukraine

Conclusion

The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities with regard to legal guarantees and, in particular, their application in practice, is of a high standard in the SR and covers the SR's obligations and commitments arising from international norms. In view of the fact that further changes are currently taking place in the SR that also concern national minority issues, the Government is prepared to submit supplementary information to the CE as individual measures under preparation become reality.

The following bodies and institutions of the Slovak Republic have participated in the preparation of this material:

- **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Regional Development**
- **Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic**
- **Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic**
- **Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Addressing the Issues of Persons Requiring Special Assistance**
- **Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Minorities**
- **cultural organizations of national minorities**
- **non-governmental organizations acting in the area of national minority rights in the Slovak Republic**
- **Slovak Academy of Sciences and its Institute of History and Demography**

These bodies and institutions hold the responsibility for the correctness of the included information.