



SIXTH OPINION ON THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	4
PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	6
Priority recommendations	6
Other recommendations	7
Follow-up to these recommendations	7
MONITORING PROCEDURE	8
Follow-up activities and awareness-raising related to the recommendations of the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee	8
Preparation of the state report for the sixth cycle	8
Country visit and adoption of the Sixth Opinion	8
ARTICLE-BY-ARTICLE FINDINGS.....	9
Scope of application (Article 3)	9
Data collection and population census (Article 3)	9
Legal and institutional framework for combatting discrimination and protecting minority rights (Article 4)	11
Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages (Article 5)	15
Promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding (Article 6)	17
Protection from hostility and violence (Article 6)	19
Freedom of expression, freedom of thought and conscience (Article 7)	22
Broadcasting programmes for national minorities (Article 9)	24
Printed and online media for national minorities (Article 9)	27
Use of minority languages with administrative authorities and the judiciary (Article 10)	28
Display of minority language signs and topographical indications (Article 11)	30
Inclusive and intercultural education and knowledge about national minorities (Article 12)	31
Equal access to education – Roma (Article 12)	33
Teaching in and of minority languages (Article 14)	37
Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Article 15)	40
Effective participation in socio-economic life – access of Roma to housing (Article 15)	42
Effective participation in socio-economic life – access of Roma to healthcare (Article 15)	46
Effective access to employment – Roma (Article 15)	48
Cross-border contacts and bilateral co-operation (Articles 17 and 18)	50

1. The Slovak Republic continues to pursue an inclusive approach to the personal scope of application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter “the Framework Convention”) and, during the sixth monitoring cycle, it has extended it to include the Vietnamese and Goral national minorities. This means that in the Slovak Republic, 15 national minorities can have access to the rights enshrined in the Framework Convention. Furthermore, the authorities have taken measures to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual respect, particularly in the fields of education and culture. Most national minorities appreciate the efforts undertaken and feel that they are a part of the Slovak society.
2. The 2021 census showed a decline in the number and proportion of persons affiliating with national minorities, despite the possibility to indicate a dual ethnic affiliation. The Advisory Committee notes that, as a result of lowering the numerical threshold for access to language rights, from 20% to 15%, the number of municipalities where these rights can be enjoyed, increased significantly. As acknowledged by the authorities, there are differences between the official census data and other sources regarding the number of individuals affiliating with the Roma national minority, such as the latest Atlas of Roma Communities in the Slovak Republic. Accurate data is needed to develop and implement the relevant policies at the national, regional and local levels, in particular for those living in Marginalised Roma Communities.
3. Most national minorities appreciate general efforts undertaken by the authorities on protecting and promoting minority rights and feel that they are a part of the Slovak society. However, instances of hate speech, especially online, and other expressions of intolerance persist in Slovak society, especially directed towards the Roma. Furthermore, legislative proposals and amendments to the Criminal Code have raised concerns among persons affiliating with national minorities, in particular relating to the criminalisation of the “questioning or public denial of the settlement of conditions established after the Second World War and its legal basis”.

Promotion of minority cultures and languages

4. Substantial financial support is provided for the national minorities, on an annual basis, through the Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities, whose scope was broadened in 2022, to also include support for the operational cost of periodicals. The Fund was increased to reflect the recognition of the two newly officially recognised national minorities, even though, as of May 2026, the process for including the Goral national minority into the system of support is still to be completed and remains pending. However, distribution of the funds remains subject to significant burdens and delays which particularly impact on the publication of printed media by the national minorities. The Advisory Committee therefore considers it necessary to simplify the existing allocation mechanism and to allow pluriannual activities and projects to be planned and implemented sustainably. More flexibility could be applied to ensure the use of minority languages with administrative authorities and the judiciary in areas inhabited by persons affiliating with national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers.

Antidiscrimination framework and protection from hostility and violence

5. The Slovak Republic has adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework that covers both the public and private sectors, with dedicated institutions tasked with addressing issues faced by persons affiliating with national minorities. Individual complaints are handled by the Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender. While resources allocated to these two independent institutions have increased in recent years, the Advisory Committee notes that they remain insufficient to allow them to effectively implement their mandate.
6. Despite regular pre- and in-service training organised for law enforcement officers and other relevant public authorities, Roma continue to be subject to stereotyping and discrimination in interactions with law enforcement officers and the judiciary. In this regard, the Advisory Committee welcomes the establishment of “Senior Officers for Work in the Communities” to address concerns regarding the under-reporting of crimes as well as “Local Civic and Preventative Services” to support local communities and crime prevention activities. It also recalls that allegations of excessive use of force and ill-treatment by police must be investigated through a complaint mechanism that is impartial, independent, efficient, and effective, particularly in incidents suspected to be racially motivated. Furthermore, all reported cases of hate crime and hate speech should be effectively recorded, promptly and thoroughly investigated by law enforcement and the judiciary and prosecuted and sanctioned when appropriate.

Teaching in and of minority languages

7. The availability and teaching in and of national minority languages in the education system varies greatly, despite the Law on Education guaranteeing children affiliating with national minorities the right to learn and receive instruction in their minority language. There is an extensive network of schools where Hungarian is the main language of instruction as well as bilingual schools which provide for teaching in German, Ruthenian (at the primary school level) and Ukrainian, in addition to Slovak. The provision of languages of the numerically smaller minorities is very limited in the general education system, creating a *de facto* two-tier system. Romani is only taught in a limited number of schools, most of which are private schools. However, at the university level, all national minority languages can be studied.

Effective participation in public affairs

8. Although the Slovak legislative framework guarantees the right of citizens affiliating with national minorities to participate in the decision-making process of matters affecting them, no specific seats are reserved in the parliament or at the local level for national minority representatives. National minority representation therefore depends on a candidate being selected and elected through the mainstream election process. The Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities has essentially an advisory and consultative role, with limited impact in the decision-making process.

Situations of persons affiliating with the Roma

9. The multi-level approach of the National Strategic Framework – Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030, which aims to promote desegregation, deghettoisation, and destigmatisation of individuals affiliating with the Roma, especially those residing in Marginalised Roma Communities, has produced some positive results. However, ongoing projects rely heavily on European Union structural funds and external grants. Significant inequalities persist in areas of education and healthcare and public health.

10. Despite legislative changes that prohibit segregation, eliminate the two-shift operation of primary schools, and lower the minimum age for compulsory preschool education, major inequalities persist in access to inclusive and quality education for Roma pupils and students. This is particularly so for those from Marginalised Roma Communities, who are facing *de facto* segregation and inadequate education opportunities. Roma children are also disproportionately placed in "special schools". Spatial limitations mean that two-shift operation of primary schools has continued in some instances, with detrimental impact on equal access to school services, including school meals.

11. Progress towards the provision of adequate and inclusive housing for Roma is ongoing and many persistent challenges remain, including access to safe clean water and adequate standards of hygiene. This situation is exacerbated by long-standing issues of land ownership in some informal Roma settlements, as a result of complications arising from historical practices of land allocation.

12. The Advisory Committee is pleased to note that the "Healthy Communities" project is running effectively and has a robust structure at the local level. However, the heavy reliance on European Union structural funds remains an ongoing challenge for the sustainability and ongoing presence of health support assistants, Roma health co-ordinators and mediators, recruited to provide support in overcoming obstacles to accessing healthcare rights. No systematic policies and measures have been established to combat unequal access to healthcare, especially for Roma women and for individuals living in settlements located far from urban centres, resulting in discrimination and segregated practices. Legislation that will allow all women who have undergone forced sterilisation to be compensated is still to be enacted, and awareness raising campaigns are needed in this context. While the possibility of adopting "temporary equalising measures" (positive action measures) in the legislation is commendable, many persons affiliating with the Roma national minority, in particular women, continue to experience significant barriers in accessing the labour market. Greater efforts are needed to offer opportunities for professional development and training to support effective and long-term accessibility to and inclusion in the mainstream labour market.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Advisory Committee proposes that the Committee of Ministers make the following recommendations with respect to the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Slovak Republic.

14. The authorities should take the following priority measures to improve further the implementation of the Framework Convention, along with the implementation of all recommendations contained in this Opinion:

Priority recommendations

- 1) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to make full use of the data collected through the latest Atlas of Roma Communities in the Slovak Republic and the Atlas of Gorals in the Slovak Republic, for developing and implementing minority-related policies at the national, regional and local levels [see paragraph 35, Article 3].
- 2) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to provide sufficient human and financial resources to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender of Rights and ensure the timely follow-up to their recommendations relating to national minorities and persons affiliating with them. The authorities should consider strengthening the mandate of these two institutions to provide them with litigation competences in civil, criminal and administrative law proceedings, as well as reinforcing the guarantees of their institutional independence, in accordance with international standards [see paragraph 49, Article 4].
- 3) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to provide the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities with adequate financial, human and material resources, to enable it to process applications and distribute funds in a timely manner. The authorities should consider allowing for long-term, sustainable pluri-annual project funding [see paragraph 59, Article 5].
- 4) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to investigate, through an impartial, independent, efficient and effective complaint mechanism, allegations of excessive use of force and ill-treatment by the police, especially where these are based on racist grounds [see paragraph 85, Article 6].
- 5) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that all cases of hate crime and hate speech reported to law enforcement and the judiciary and other relevant bodies are effectively recorded, promptly and thoroughly investigated, and where appropriate, prosecuted and sanctioned [see paragraph 86, Article 6].
- 6) The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to intensify their efforts to fully implement the Law on Education and urgently eliminate all forms of segregation affecting Roma pupils and students in education. All relevant stakeholders, including those at the local level, should take more resolute actions to include Roma pupils and students into mainstream education. This includes ensuring the implementation of legislation on compulsory preschool education, addressing the inappropriate placement of Roma children in “special schools”, and eliminating the two-shift operation of primary schools, with its detrimental impact on equal access to school meals [see paragraph 154, Article 12].
- 7) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure, in co-operation with authorities at the regional and local levels, that education in and/or of minority languages is available for all persons affiliating with national minorities in areas where they live traditionally or in substantial numbers whenever there is sufficient demand, and to raise awareness about this possibility [see paragraph 166, Article 14].
- 8) The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to adopt, without further delay and after consultation with representatives of all national minorities, legislation specifying the conditions guaranteeing the right of persons affiliating with national minorities to participate effectively in the decision-making process at the national, regional and local levels [see paragraph 175, Article 15].
- 9) The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to address, in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including Roma representatives, the long-standing issue of land ownership of informal Roma settlements and to implement integrated housing policies that promote long-term inclusion of persons living in Marginalised Roma Communities, with adequate living conditions and access to essential services [see paragraph 188, Article 15].
- 10) The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to enact legislation that will allow all women who have undergone forced sterilisation to be compensated without further delay, and to conduct

awareness raising campaigns in this respect. The authorities should support, through long-term and sustainable funding, efforts in addressing practical barriers to healthcare for persons living in Marginalised Roma Communities, particularly women [see paragraph 198, Article 15].

Other recommendations

15. The authorities are invited to take account of the detailed observations and recommendations contained in the present Opinion of the Advisory Committee.

Follow-up to these recommendations

16. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to translate and publish the present opinion into the official and minority languages and disseminate its findings and recommendations widely among all stakeholders.

17. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to organise a follow-up event after the publication of this sixth-cycle Opinion to discuss and identify ways of implementing the recommendations made in this Opinion.

MONITORING PROCEDURE

Follow-up activities and awareness-raising related to the recommendations of the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee

18. A follow-up dialogue on the recommendations of the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee took place on 28 June 2023, after the approval by the Slovak government of the *Report on the progress and results of the fifth monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic* on 24 May 2023.¹ However, contrary to the information provided by the Slovak authorities in their sixth state report,² the Advisory Committee's Opinion and Committee of Ministers' Resolution have not been made available on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (the "Plenipotentiary for National Minorities"), the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.³

Preparation of the state report for the sixth cycle

19. The sixth state report was received on 11 January 2024. Organisations representing and promoting the rights of persons affiliating with to national minorities were consulted in its preparation.⁴

Country visit and adoption of the Sixth Opinion

20. This sixth-cycle Opinion on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Slovak Republic was adopted in accordance with Article 26(1) of the Framework Convention and Rule 25 of Resolution (2019)49 of the Committee of Ministers. The findings are based on information contained in the sixth state report, other written sources, as well as information obtained by the Advisory Committee from governmental and non-governmental sources during its visit to Košice, Prešov, Lomnička, Ždiar and Bratislava from 20 to 24 October 2025.

21. The Advisory Committee expresses its gratitude to the authorities for their excellent co-operation before, during and after the visit, and to the other interlocutors it met during the visit for their valuable contributions. The draft opinion, as approved by the Advisory Committee on 13 February 2026, was transmitted to the Slovak authorities on 17 February 2026 for observations, according to Rule 37 of Resolution (2019)49. The Advisory Committee welcomes the observations received from the Slovak authorities on 20 April 2026.

* * *

22. A number of articles of the Framework Convention are not covered in the present opinion. Based on the information currently at its disposal, the Advisory Committee considers that the implementation of these articles does not give rise to any specific observations. This statement is not to be understood as signalling that adequate measures have now been taken and that efforts in this respect may be diminished or even halted. Rather, the Advisory Committee considers that the obligations of the Framework Convention require a sustained effort by the authorities. The Advisory Committee assesses the situation in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time of monitoring. This Opinion reflects the situation in the country at the time of adoption of the Opinion.

¹ [Report](#) on the progress and results of the fifth monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic.

² [Sixth state report](#), paras. 1-4.

³ [Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities](#); [Ministry of Culture](#); [Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs](#). Despite the existence of dedicated webpages, the vast majority of hyperlinks provided are broken and do not directly provide a possibility to read the Advisory Committee's Opinions. The Committee of Ministers' Resolutions are published and translated on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities in Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romani and German languages and in Slovak on the website of the [Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports](#).

⁴ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 10-13.

ARTICLE-BY-ARTICLE FINDINGS

Scope of application (Article 3)

23. The Slovak Republic's constitutional framework protecting national minorities⁵ is primarily based on Article 34 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic of 1992.⁶ The main legislation governing the protection of persons affiliating with national minorities is Law No. 184/1999 on the Use of Languages of National Minorities ("Law No. 184/1999").⁷ Calls for adopting comprehensive legislation on the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities have not yet materialised and continue to be the subject of discussion (see Article 4).⁸

24. The personal scope of application of the Framework Convention has changed during the sixth monitoring cycle, with the recognition of two additional national minorities. The Slovak government officially recognised the Vietnamese⁹ and the Goral¹⁰ national minorities, on 7 June 2023 and on 29 January 2025, respectively. Consequently, persons affiliating with the Bulgarian, Croat, Czech, German, Goral, Hungarian, Jewish, Moravian, Polish, Roma, Russian, Ruthenian, Serb, Ukrainian and Vietnamese national minorities can have access to the rights enshrined in the Framework Convention.¹¹

25. The Advisory Committee reiterates that "when examining the approaches taken by states parties with regard to the scope of application of the Framework Convention, [it has...] consistently encouraged the authorities to be inclusive and context specific and to consider on an article-by-article basis which rights should be made available to whom. Such an approach not only ensures the most effective implementation of the Framework Convention based on fact rather than status, but it also promotes a societal climate of dialogue and understanding, where cultural diversity is viewed as a source of enrichment rather than division."¹²

26. The Advisory Committee welcomes the level of protection offered by the Slovak legal system for the rights of persons affiliating with the national minorities under Law No. 184/1999. However, it notes that the adoption of comprehensive legislation on minority rights remains pending (see Article 4). The Advisory Committee particularly welcomes the official recognition of both the Vietnamese and Goral national minorities, which will ensure the application of the Framework Convention to persons affiliating with these minorities and thereby enable them to better develop and promote their cultures and traditions.

Recommendation

27. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to continue to pursue an inclusive approach to the Framework Convention's personal scope of application.

Data collection and population census (Article 3)

28. The last population census was held in 2021.¹³ Respondents could indicate up to two "ethnicities" in the questionnaire as well as an additional question relating to the "mother tongue" (*materinský jazyk*).¹⁴ In line with the results of the previous censuses from 2001 and 2011, the overall number and proportion of persons affiliating with national minorities continue to decline while the number of persons declaring a Slovak ethnicity continues to increase.¹⁵

⁵ In the domestic legislation, national minorities are referred to as "national minorities" or "ethnic groups". In the context of this Opinion, the terminology of the Framework Convention and the terminology used at the national level should be understood as having the same meaning.

⁶ [Constitution](#) of the Slovak Republic.

⁷ [Law No. 184/1999](#) on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.

⁸ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 44; ACFC, [Third Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), paras. 31 and 73. ACFC, [Second Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 59.

⁹ The Slovak Spectator, [Vietnamese officially recognised as national minority in the Slovak Republic](#), 7 June 2023. See also [sixth state report](#), para. 12.

¹⁰ Ta3, [Goral become official minority](#), 29 January 2025. See also Matthias Bel Institute, [The Goral community has been recognised. Meet our newest national minority](#).

¹¹ As in previous opinions of the Advisory Committee, the term "Ruthenian(s)" is used in the present Opinion, instead of "Rusyn(s)".

¹² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4, The Framework Convention: a key tool to managing diversity through minority rights](#), adopted on 27 May 2016, para. 7.

¹³ See the result of [2021 Population and Housing Census](#).

¹⁴ [Sixth state report](#), para. 83; ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), paras. 49-61. The [census questionnaire](#) provided the opportunity for respondents to indicate one or two "ethnicity" affiliations: "What is your ethnicity?" "Are you affiliated with another ethnicity?". The census questionnaire also contained the question "What is your mother tongue?". It should be noted that the latter allowed for one answer only, instead of the question formerly used in the 2011 census on "the most frequently used language" (*najčastejšie používaný jazyk*).

¹⁵ See [data](#) of censuses from 1991 onwards.

29. Although the reasons for this decline vary among minorities, depending on their individual circumstances, most interlocutors of the Advisory Committee indicated that this can be attributed to an aging population. Furthermore, representatives of some national minorities have informed the Advisory Committee that the official figures from the 2021 census do not reflect the actual number of persons affiliating with their respective national minorities and that the real numbers are sometimes higher. Some explain this discrepancy by a lack of awareness-raising measures among persons holding dual citizenship¹⁶ and by a lack of clarity in the questionnaire.

30. As also acknowledged by the authorities, the difference between the census data and other estimates of the number of individuals affiliating with national minorities is particularly significant for the Roma. The 2021 census indicates that the Roma national minority comprises 156 164 persons (67 179 persons declaring a Roma affiliation and 88 985 persons declaring a Roma affiliation as another ethnicity). Other sources show that more than 440 000 persons affiliate with this national minority. The most reliable alternative methodology for collecting data on Roma in the Slovak Republic was launched in 2004 and has been compiled in the “Atlas of Roma Communities in the Slovak Republic” (“the Atlas”).¹⁷ The Atlas is a demographic study of the Roma settlements in the Slovak Republic, which, although not relying on self-affiliation, provides a unique and detailed picture of the prevailing conditions and characteristics of most Roma settlements (population size, distribution, living conditions, institutions, cultural patterns and language use among minority groups). The Advisory Committee notes that the data compiled in the Atlas form the basis for the implementation of the European Union (EU) Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021-2027,¹⁸ within the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Plans (see Article 15). In 2018 and 2020, building on the Atlas, the authorities¹⁹ also conducted a sampling survey of more than 1 000 households in 70 municipalities aimed at analysing the income and living conditions of those living in the Marginalised Roma Communities (MRCs).²⁰

31. Representatives of the Goral national minority indicated that they could only declare their affiliation in the 2021 census by writing down expressly the term “Goral” under “other nationality”, compared to other already officially recognised national minorities which were explicitly listed as an option (for being the most numerous ones in the Slovak Republic according to the results of the 2011 census). They regretted that they had not been able to organise a proper awareness-raising campaign about the possibility to indicate multiple “nationalities” and that they had not benefitted from the authorities’ promotional materials about the census targeting persons affiliating with national minorities. Despite these obstacles, 5 273 persons were recorded in the census as affiliating with the Gorals. They expect that in the 2031 census, where the Goral national minority will also be listed, more than 57 000 persons will affiliate with the Goral minority. This expectation is based on the first Atlas of Gorals in the Slovak Republic published by the Matthias Bel Institute in 2025.²¹

32. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “[t]he right to free self-identification also extends to multiple affiliations [...], which] implies that practices by which an individual affiliates with a particular minority should not be seen as exclusive, as he or she may simultaneously identify with other minorities or with the majority. [... Their choice] must not be used as an argument against the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to self-identify freely and to claim minority protection.”²² In each data collection exercise, including in census, the Advisory Committee has emphasised that questions regarding ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations should be open and allow individuals to express multiple affiliations. Importantly, particularly where access to rights is dependent on meeting numerical thresholds, “multiple affiliations must also not only be recorded but also adequately processed, analysed and displayed.”²³ “At the same time, the Advisory Committee has cautioned states parties against exclusively relying on official statistics and figures, as these, for a variety of reasons, may not fully reflect reality. Results

¹⁶ For instance, the representative of the Serb national minority pointed out that while less than 1 900 persons affiliated with the Serb national minority, data from the Ministry of the Interior showed that there were 18 215 Serbs with dual citizenship, with permanent or temporary residence in the Slovak Republic as of 1st January 2023.

¹⁷ According to the [2019 Atlas of Roma communities](#), more than half of the Roma population in the Slovak Republic live in MRCs.

¹⁸ European Commission, [Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic - 2021-2027](#).

¹⁹ A co-operation between the [Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities](#) and the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

²⁰ Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [specialised survey EU-SILC MRC](#). The Advisory Committee notes that an additional question focusing on discrimination against Roma was also asked in this context. According to the Atlas, in 2019, there were 1 052 Roma settlements in 825 municipalities in the Slovak Republic. 288 000 Roma live in settlements or municipalities with a majority Roma population. The term “Marginalised Roma Communities” (*Marginalizované Rómske Komunity*) is a technical term used in policies and administrative concepts at the national and local levels. In the context of this Opinion, the Advisory Committee uses this term under its technical meaning to refer to the territory where persons mostly affiliating with the Roma national minority live in a socially and spatially excluded manner.

²¹ The [Matthias Bel Institute](#) is a think-tank founded in 2014 which has been working with Atlas-style field research since 2016 on different minorities (Ruthenians, Gorals, Vlach Roma, Hungarians), with a special emphasis placed on marginalised, underrepresented and unrecognised minorities.

²² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 13.

²³ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 16.

should be reassessed periodically and analysed flexibly, in close consultation with minority representatives. Authorities should also further avail themselves of other sources of information, including the general labour force and other surveys, as well as independent qualitative and quantitative research available on issues pertaining to the access to rights of persons belonging to national minorities.”²⁴ Declarations of multiple affiliations, not only ethnic but also linguistic, could, if duly counted and published, be a potential asset for reinforcing interethnic dialogue and demonstrating diversity within society.

33. The Advisory Committee takes note of the possibilities offered in the 2021 census to declare a dual ethnic affiliation in the census questionnaire. However, recalling that in the Slovak Republic, the enjoyment of some minority rights is dependent on thresholds and census-based data (see Articles 10 and 11), the Advisory Committee reiterates that in practice, the total number of persons affiliating with a national minority must be determined by adding together the data concerning single and dual nationality entries.²⁵ The use in the 2021 census of a question allowing respondents to indicate only one linguistic affiliation remains a source of concern. As well as not being in conformity with the Framework Convention, it does not allow for collection of accurate data on the actual use of minority languages in the country.

34. The Advisory Committee regrets that the implementation of national policies, particularly with regard to the allocation of the Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities (see Article 5), continues to be driven by an over-reliance on the census results. It welcomes the data collected under the Atlas of Roma Communities in the Slovak Republic. It considers the Atlas data collection model, although not relying on self-affiliation, to be an important tool of reference for the formulation and adaptation of policies at the national, regional and local levels to address the needs and interests of persons living in MRCs.

Recommendations

35. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to make full use of the data collected through the latest Atlas of Roma Communities in the Slovak Republic and the Atlas of Gorals in the Slovak Republic, for developing and implementing minority-related policies at the national, regional and local levels.

36. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to introduce the possibility to indicate both multiple ethnic and linguistic affiliations in the next Population and Housing Census and to launch an awareness raising campaign, in consultation with representatives of the national minorities, to inform the general population about these options.

Legal and institutional framework for combatting discrimination and protecting minority rights (Article 4)

37. The Advisory Committee notes that the general legislative framework for combatting discrimination and protecting minority rights has remained the same since 2022. The Slovak anti-discrimination legal framework is primarily enshrined in Articles 12 and 34 of the Constitution and in Law No. 365/2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination (“the Anti-Discrimination Law”).²⁶ This law prohibits all forms of direct and indirect discrimination, in particular on nationality or ethnic grounds and has a broad scope of application, covering, *inter alia*, employment, social security, health care and education. It also provides for the reversal of the burden of proof in judicial proceedings in such cases and contains a provision entitled “temporary special measures” enabling public administration bodies and other legal entities to adopt “temporary equalising measures”.²⁷ Law No. 245/2008 on Education (“Law on Education”) was amended in 2023 to explicitly introduce a legal definition of segregation in education (see Article 12). This amendment is an important step forward to strengthen the legal framework for inclusive education and ensuring compliance with the constitutional and international obligations of the Slovak Republic in the field of equality and non-discrimination (see Article 12).

²⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 18.

²⁵ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), paras. 49-61. See also European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), 6th evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on the Slovak Republic, [MIN-LANG\(2025\)12](#), adopted on 12 June 2025, para. 10.

²⁶ [Law No. 365/2004](#) on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination, and on amending and supplementing certain other laws (Anti-Discrimination Law). The Advisory Committee notes that the national authorities have also [translated and published](#) this legislation in Hungarian and Romani languages.

²⁷ Law No. 365/2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination, and on amending and supplementing certain other laws (Anti-Discrimination Law), Article 8a. See also ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 63.

38. The Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (“the Council for National Minorities”)²⁸ is composed of representatives of the 15 national minorities, central state administration bodies, state institutions, self-governing associations, and experts on minority issues. Through the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities (see below), the Council for National Minorities is currently implementing the Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups 2021-2025,²⁹ designed to implement minority rights in accordance with international legal and constitutional standards,³⁰ and for co-ordinating the activities of relevant ministries and other entities. In accordance with the objectives set out in this action plan, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities is drafting (as of May 2026), in co-operation with representatives of the national minorities, a Bill for a Law on National Minorities,³¹ which aims to create a comprehensive and coherent legislation to safeguard and protect the rights and status of national minorities (see Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15). The deadline for the preparation of the Bill has been extended until 31 December 2026.

39. The Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities is the dedicated body established as a permanent expert, advisory, co-ordinating, consultative and initiative-taking body of the government for issues relating to national minorities, including the protection of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, their political rights and civil rights, with an emphasis on the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities. It should also be noted that the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities can also investigate alleged violations of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities.³²

40. The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (“the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities”)³³ was established in 2001 as an advisory body to the government to address the concerns of Roma communities and persons affiliating with them and implement systemic measures to improve their inclusion into society. The Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities is advised by the Council of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations,³⁴ which has been tasked to ensure, *inter alia*, the implementation of the National Strategic Framework – Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 (the “Strategy 2030”) (see Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15).³⁵

41. The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (“the Centre for Human Rights”) is an independent institution acting as both the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and the national equality body.³⁶ As an NHRI, its tasks include monitoring and examining the respect of human rights, identifying violations and promoting awareness of the importance of human rights in a democratic society.³⁷ The Centre for Human Rights publishes an annual “Report on Compliance with Human Rights, including the Principle of Equal Treatment”, which includes recommendations to various authorities and institutions. As the national anti-discrimination body (national equality body), it monitors compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, providing legal assistance to victims of discrimination,³⁸ representing them in civil court proceedings or through mediation in anti-discrimination disputes,³⁹ issuing expert opinions on

²⁸ [Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities](#). The Council for National Minorities follows up on the activities of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality. See [The government approved the statute of the Government Council for National Minorities, fulfilling a long-standing demand of national minorities](#), 31 October 2024.

²⁹ See the [Action Plan for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025](#).

³⁰ Primarily the Framework Convention and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

³¹ See [Draft legislative proposal for a Law on National Minorities](#).

³² It should be noted that this possibility to contact the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities does not exclude the possibility of contacting the Office of the Public Defender or the Centre for Human Rights.

³³ See [Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities](#). See also [Statute of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities](#).

³⁴ See [Council of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organisations](#).

³⁵ [Strategy of equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030](#). See also the [Action Plans to the Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 for 2025-2027](#), which includes concrete measures and activities from each priority area, including their financial quantification, which need to be implemented to achieve the set objectives.

³⁶ [Law No. 308/1993](#) on the establishment of the Centre for Human Rights. In March 2023, an amendment to this law was approved, explicitly determining that the Centre for Human Rights prepares and publishes independent reports and recommendations on issues related to discrimination.

³⁷ In March 2014 the Centre for Human Rights was accorded [B status](#) by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

³⁸ In 2024, the Centre for Human Rights dealt with 190 discrimination complaints, of which nine concerned ethnic origin. In 2023, it dealt with 177 discrimination complaints, of which 15 concerned ethnic origin. In 2022, the centre dealt with 122 discrimination complaints, of which nine concerned ethnic origin. See also ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), paras. 76-77.

³⁹ In 2024, the Centre for Human Rights did not provide legal representation or participated in agreements on amicable out-of-court settlements in cases that are falling in the scope of application of the Framework Convention. See the Annual Final Report on the Activities of the Centre for Human Rights for 2024, pp. 23-25.

matters relating to discrimination,⁴⁰ and raising social awareness about the negative consequences of unequal treatment.⁴¹ Its action plan for 2025 included actions and measures to fulfil objectives, some of which are intrinsically connected to the reinforcement of the rights of persons affiliating with the Roma national minority.⁴² Although, according to the authorities, the role of the Centre for Human Rights had been strengthened by increasing its annual budget,⁴³ in its most recent Report on the Rule of Law 2025, the Centre for Human Rights stated that it does not have sufficient resources to fully implement its mandate, despite a gradual increase of its budget.⁴⁴

42. The Public Defender of Rights (“the Public Defender”) was established in 2001⁴⁵ and its role is to address discrimination in the context of complaints alleging violations of fundamental rights and freedoms by public administration bodies. During the sixth monitoring cycle, the Office of the Public Defender of Rights (“the Office”) has seen a steady increase in the number of complaints. In 2024, the number of complaints rose by 7.2% compared to 2023, and during the first three quarters of 2025, it increased by 28.9% compared to the same period of 2024.⁴⁶ However, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Office continues to be understaffed, which poses a serious risk for the effective implementation of its mandate and of the quality of services provided to the public. The Office did not receive an increase in funds in 2024 and although it was able to maintain the same staffing level for 2025, the Public Defender raised a concern that, under the same budget, this might not be possible in the future.⁴⁷

43. During the monitoring visit, the Public Defender reiterated its call for long-term budgetary stability and for the recognition of the specific role of the Public Defender as an independent oversight institution. In addition to examining complaints the Office receives, the Public Defender has also the possibility to open *ex officio* investigations whenever there are reasonable indications that a public administration body has violated a person’s fundamental rights or freedoms.⁴⁸ During the sixth monitoring cycle, this mechanism has been used to examine systemic issues including, *inter alia*, segregation of Roma children in education, the effectiveness of desegregation projects implemented by the Ministry of Education and access to drinking water in MRCs. Each *ex officio* investigation concludes with findings and recommendations addressed to the relevant public authority, which is legally obliged to inform the Public Defender, within 20 days from the delivery of the proposed measures, about its position and on the findings and the actions taken. During the monitoring visit, the Public Defender noted that the parliament and the government do not systematically follow up on these recommendations. However, the Public Defender is not entitled to intervene as a party in litigation.⁴⁹ The institution also contributes to human rights and non-discrimination training through direct educational activities and institutional co-operation with public authorities, academia and civil society.

⁴⁰ The Centre for Human Rights issued 40 expert opinions assessing possible breaches of anti-discrimination legislation. One of these opinions was an assessment of the intention to adopt a temporary compensatory measure to mitigate the disadvantage of Roma pupils in education in the Romani language at a Roma national primary school in 2024. Another opinion was published on the segregation of Roma children in education. See the Annual Final Report on the Activities of the Centre for Human Rights for 2024, pp. 15-23.

⁴¹ Law No. 365/2004, Article 2(2)a.

⁴² See [Centre for Human Rights Action Plan for 2025](#). See also Annual Final Report on the Activities of the Centre for Human Rights for 2024, p. 26.

⁴³ The [website](#) of the Centre for Human Rights refers to 21 staff members working in Bratislava (head office) and in its three regional offices (Banská Bystrica, Košice and Žilina). According to the authorities, its budget has increased from €565 000 in 2018 to €870 000 in 2022. See [sixth state report](#), para. 101.

⁴⁴ See [Report on the Rule of Law 2025 – the Slovak Republic](#), p. 5.

⁴⁵ [Law No. 564/2001](#) on the Public Defender of Rights.

⁴⁶ Information collected during the monitoring visit in the Slovak Republic (20-24 October 2025). See also the [Report on the activities of the Public Defender of Rights for 2024](#), p.190. It should be noted that the Office of the Public Defender data collection system is based on legal issues than on ethnicity, language or religion. In practice, the Public Defender found 146 violations of fundamental rights in 2024. While it receives sporadic complaints on issues that are minority-related, such as questions about the use of the Hungarian language, the Public Defender also addresses issues related to the segregation of Roma children in education or the over-representation of Roma pupils in “special education” (see pp. 129-133 of the report). Other discrimination complaints may be channelled to the Centre for Human Rights, which functions as the national equality body with dedicated anti-discrimination assistance.

⁴⁷ According to the authorities, the position of the Public Defender was strengthened by an increase in the budget of approximately €240 000 in 2023 and the recruitment of six additional staff members. See [sixth state report](#), para. 17. However, the Public Defender informed the Advisory Committee that this increase in the budget and in human resources, which did not reflect the salary indexation, corresponded to an extension of the mandate of the Public Defender, with the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), for which its Office performs a co-ordinating role. This increase applied exclusively to the new NPM mandate and did not strengthen the capacity for the Public Defender’s broader, pre-existing functions.

⁴⁸ Law No. 564/2001, Article 13(1). This *ex officio* competence allows the Public Defender to act in the absence of an individual complaint, particularly where systemic or structural human rights concerns are identified through monitoring, public reports or media information.

⁴⁹ The Advisory Committee notes that an amendment to the Constitutional Court Law, adopted by the National Council in October 2025, introduces a new competence for the Public Defender to refer cases to the Constitutional Court in an accelerated procedure during a declared state of emergency, or in situations where emergency measures may disproportionately affect fundamental rights.

44. In addition to these institutions, free legal aid in anti-discrimination cases continues to be available through the Centre for Legal Aid (*Centrum právnej pomoci*), financed by the Ministry of Justice. It provides eligible applicants with comprehensive legal aid, for example in the form of legal advice or free representation before a court.⁵⁰ According to the authorities, the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities initiated the expansion of the activities of the Centre for Legal Aid to include the need to provide information on free legal aid for persons affiliating with national minorities in their language, or the need to provide translations of the documents into the languages of national minorities and to increase the language competence of the centre's employees.⁵¹

45. The Advisory Committee reiterates that all states parties are encouraged “to adopt a clear legislative framework related to the protection of national minorities which should, apart from raising awareness of the authorities’ commitment towards the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, entail specific provisions aimed at promoting effective equality. [...] The principle of equality does not presuppose identical treatment of and approaches to all languages and situations.”⁵² “Persons belonging to national minorities must have access to information, where possible in their own language, about their rights, the work of the anti-discrimination institutions and the remedies against any form of discrimination available to them, including indirect forms of discrimination, as well as cases of multiple discrimination.”⁵³

46. The Advisory Committee notes that the Slovak Republic has adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination legal framework which is applicable to both the private and public sectors. It particularly welcomes that this legislation contains a provision enabling public administration bodies and other legal entities to adopt positive measures aimed at addressing disadvantages experienced by persons affiliating with certain groups on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, affiliation with a national minority or an ethnic group. The Advisory Committee further welcomes the fact that in all cases of discrimination, the burden of proof is reversed, and praises the permanence of the free legal aid mechanism provided in anti-discrimination cases by the Centre for Legal Aid.

47. The Advisory Committee also welcomes the existence of several institutions tasked with addressing issues faced by persons affiliating with national minorities. While the Council for National Minorities and the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities do not respond directly to individual complaints,⁵⁴ they form part of an institutional framework that is fundamentally aimed at combatting discrimination. In this context, the Advisory Committee welcomes that, in 2024, the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities was granted new competences, which have enhanced the operational effectiveness of its activities and of its office.⁵⁵ Individual complaints are handled by the Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender. These two bodies⁵⁶ provide reliable information on the protection of fundamental rights and the effectiveness of the principle of equality in the country. However, as already stressed in its Fifth Opinion,⁵⁷ the Advisory Committee deeply regrets that the Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender do not enjoy the necessary respect and authority among politicians, parliamentarians, as well as public officials at national, regional and local levels. In this regard, establishing a formal and transparent system for monitoring the implementation of the human rights recommendations issued by these two bodies is needed, as it would help to ensure greater accountability, particularly with respect to recommendations requiring systemic reforms.

48. The Advisory Committee also regrets that the Public Defender does not have litigation competences and that the litigation powers of the Centre for Human Rights are limited to civil proceedings. The Advisory Committee considers that participation of these specialised bodies in court cases on discrimination would contribute to ensuring that relevant standards are duly taken into account. While resources allocated to the Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender have increased in recent

⁵⁰ See the [webpage](#) about the Centre for Legal Aid. See also [Law No. 327/2005](#) on Providing Legal Aid to Persons in Material Need, Articles 6 and 6a.

⁵¹ [Sixth state report](#), para. 103.

⁵² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3, The Language Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities under the Framework Convention](#), adopted on 24 May 2012, para. 27.

⁵³ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 28.

⁵⁴ The Advisory Committee understands that the possibility given to file a complaint about an alleged violation of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities is not to be considered as an individual complaint but rather as a mechanism to draw the attention of the Commission to an administrative offence, which does not preclude the possibility to seek redress before the Public Defender or the Centre for Human Rights.

⁵⁵ See [The powers of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities will be expanded](#), 2 April 2024. See also [At the first meeting of the Council for National Minorities, Robert Fico highlighted the contribution of national minority cultures to the Slovak Republic](#), 29 January 2025.

⁵⁶ UN, [Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions](#) (Paris Principles), 1993. The authorities can also draw inspiration from ECRI, [General Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level](#), 2017; Venice Commission, [Principles on the protection and promotion of the ombudsman institution \(“the Venice principles”\)](#), 2019; Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, [Recommendation on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions](#), 2021.

⁵⁷ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 84.

years, the Advisory Committee notes that they remain insufficient to allow these two bodies to effectively implement their mandates, considering the steady increase in the number of complaints, the expansion of their competences and rising fixed costs.

Recommendation

49. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to provide sufficient human and financial resources to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender of Rights and ensure the timely follow-up to their recommendations relating to national minorities and persons affiliating with them. The authorities should consider strengthening the mandate of these two institutions to provide them with litigation competences in civil, criminal and administrative law proceedings, as well as reinforcing the guarantees of their institutional independence, in accordance with international standards.

Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages (Article 5)

50. Law No. 138/2017 on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities (“Law No. 138/2017”) remains the main legislative source for the preservation and promotion of cultural activities of national minorities in the Slovak Republic.⁵⁸ The Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities (“the Fund”)⁵⁹ is an independent public institution whose mission is to support and promote the cultural and scientific activities of national minorities.⁶⁰ According to the authorities, this legislation was amended in 2022 to provide the Fund with “sufficient financial capacities to cover staff and material capacities for the complete and systematic fulfilment of all missions of the Fund”.⁶¹ In 2023, the Ministry of Culture’s contribution to the Fund from the state budget was €8.7 million.⁶² The Ministry of Culture informed the Advisory Committee that the contribution had been increased in 2025 following the recognition of the Vietnamese national minority and will be increased again in 2026 following the recognition of the Goral national minority.⁶³ In the sixth state report, the authorities stressed that recent simplifications of administrative procedures have significantly reduced the number of documents required from applicants.⁶⁴ However, the distribution of funds unfortunately continues to follow an annual project based system in line with the legislation.⁶⁵ Representatives of the Fund indicated that it is considering the possibility of introducing multi-annual financing, which would be conditional on the recipients fulfilling legal and contractual obligations.

51. During the sixth monitoring cycle, the Hungarian social and cultural association Csemadok⁶⁶ was recognised by law as having an important social significance and role in contributing to “maintaining and developing the national identity, culture and belonging of Hungarians living in the territory of the Slovak Republic and defending their social interests”.⁶⁷ The Ministry of Culture provides Csemadok with financial support of €300 000 annually to organise cultural and educational activities.

52. As part of the Slovak National Museum (SNM), the museums of national minorities⁶⁸ continue to play an important role in preserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of national minorities in

⁵⁸ [Law No. 138/2017](#) on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities.

⁵⁹ [Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities](#). For a detailed presentation of the Fund and the methodology used for the allocation of funding, see ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 103.

⁶⁰ The Fund ensures, *inter alia*, the development of cultural and educational activities in the fields of intercultural dialogue and national minorities. It supports theatre, music, dance, visual and audiovisual arts, the development of literary publishing activities, as well as education and training in the area of national minority rights.

⁶¹ The Advisory Committee notes that the [sixth state report](#) (para. 23) indicates that this amendment decreased the percentage dedicated to support activities (from 95% to 94%) to increase the percentage used for its own operations (from 5% to 6%, amounting for an increase of €98 000). This amendment was made to increase the salaries of employees by 10% from July 2022 and ensure additional premises and material capacities of the Fund. During the monitoring visit (20-24 October 2025), the director of the Fund mentioned that 8% of its budget was used for its own operations.

⁶² See [Annual Report on the Culture of National Minorities 2023](#). The Advisory Committee further notes that in addition to state funding, authorities at the regional and local levels provide additional fundings in a total amount of €3 242 297 and €1 599 437, respectively. Additionally, data about external sponsors/grants provided from the Slovak Republic (for a total amount of €677 096) and abroad (for a total amount of €3 359 497) are also collected.

⁶³ Ministry of Culture, [The contribution to the Fund for the Support of Culture of National Minorities will be increased](#). [Law No. 252/2024](#) amended the provision of Section 7(4)a of the Law on the Fund, with an entry into force on 8 October 2024.

⁶⁴ [Sixth state report](#), para. 25. The state report indicates that the reduction of the administrative burden was made possible by the creation of public administration information systems (OverSi portal).

⁶⁵ See for instance the [structure of support activities](#) of the Fund for 2025. According to the director of the Fund, more than 2 600 applications were received in 2025.

⁶⁶ See [Csemadok](#).

⁶⁷ [Law No. 182/2022](#) on financial support for the Hungarian Social and Cultural Association in the Slovak Republic – Csemadok.

⁶⁸ For example the [Museum of Jewish Culture](#), the [Museum of Culture of the Carpathian Germans](#), the [Museum of Hungarian Culture](#) in Bratislava, the [Museum of Croatian Culture](#) in Bratislava, the [Museum of Ukrainian Culture](#) in Svidník, the [Museum of Rusyn Culture](#) in Prešov, the [Museum of Culture of Czechs](#) and the [Museum of Roma Culture](#) both in Martin.

the country. Their scientific research is carried out in co-operation with the Slovak National Archives and relevant institutions in other states.

53. The Strategy 2030, adopted in April 2021, constitutes the basis for planning inclusive policies for the Roma. It outlines measures to preserve and promote the Roma culture, in particular in the context of the implementation of particular aspects on education and combatting antigypsyism (“anti-Roma racism”, “Boj s protirómskym rasizmom”, according to the wording of the Strategy 2030) (see Articles 6 and 12). In the ongoing action plans for the years 2025-2027, several bodies and governmental entities, in particular the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, acting as the national point of contact, are implementing projects supporting scientific, educational, cultural and research activities. Additionally, a specific subsidy mechanism for Roma cultural activities is provided through the Support of Social and Cultural Needs and for the Resolution of Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Community Scheme.⁶⁹

54. During the Advisory Committee's monitoring visit, interlocutors from most national minorities expressed satisfaction with the state support for their minority cultural activities. They welcomed the increase of the dedicated budget, especially following the official recognition of the Vietnamese and Goral national minorities during the sixth monitoring cycle. However, they also highlighted continuing shortcomings and issues regarding the implementation of the Law on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities, particularly the heavy administrative burden associated with applying for the annual grants and delays in the distribution of the funds.⁷⁰ At the time of the monitoring visit in October 2025, some representatives of the national minorities explained that they had only “just received” their funding for 2025, forcing them to pre-finance their ongoing annual activities. This is particularly problematic for the publication of national minority magazines or brochures, which they described as putting them in a condition of “eternal debt” to their publishers. Several interlocutors of the Advisory Committee further raised the fact that most operational costs for their activities and associations would not be supported without the involvement of “kin states”.⁷¹

55. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “the creation of suitable conditions for persons belonging to minority groups to preserve and develop their cultures and to assert their respective identities is [...] considered essential for an integrated society.”⁷² Budgets allocated on an annual basis and/or through competitive general grants do not allow all national minorities to have access to funds, run their cultural activities on a regular and sustainable basis or to draw up long-term plans. “When specific institutions exist for channelling [allocation of public support to national minorities’ cultural initiatives], persons belonging to national minorities should be adequately represented and should be able to take part in the corresponding decision-making.”⁷³ “Availability of financial resources for bodies involved in minority protection is essential to enable them to carry out their mission.”⁷⁴

56. The Advisory Committee welcomes the activities carried out by the Fund and the recent legislative amendment strengthening its role. It further welcomes the increase of the budget allocated to the Fund in 2025 following the official recognition of the Vietnamese national minority and the envisaged increase after the recognition of the Goral national minority. However, it notes that organisations representing the Vietnamese national minority were not yet eligible to submit projects and activities to the Fund in 2025. Similarly, despite the official recognition of the Goral national minority in 2025, organisations representing this national minority were also unable to apply for grants or receive financial subsidies in 2025. It is the understanding of the Advisory Committee that the Goral national minority will not benefit from such support of the Fund until 2027, following the necessary amendment of the legislation.⁷⁵ More generally, the Advisory Committee regrets that the distribution of funds remains based on annual project

⁶⁹ See [Call for Subsidy Applications for the Support of Social and Cultural Needs and for the Resolution of Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Community for 2025](#). See also [sixth state report](#), para. 28. The subsidy (€ 550 000) can be provided to civic associations, foundations, non-profit organisations providing generally beneficial services and other third sector organisations; to municipalities and higher territorial units, registered social enterprises, etc. The minimum subsidy amount is €5 000. The maximum subsidy amount is €20 000.

⁷⁰ Representatives of the Fund informed the Advisory Committee that, as regards to the provision of financial resources, the law does not establish specific deadlines for their disbursement. In this context, the existing timeframe for the disbursement of the Fund results from the procedural actions of the Fund and the fulfilment of several legal and contractual conditions by the beneficiaries, such as absence of bankruptcy, fulfilment of tax obligations, prohibition of illegal employment, which are necessary prerequisites.

⁷¹ See Annual Report on the Culture of National Minorities 2023. The Advisory Committee notes that the German national minority receives about 64% of its funding through sponsors/grants located abroad (€230 000). The Hungarian national minority receives about 27% of its funding through sponsors/grants located abroad (€2 849 872).

⁷² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 25.

⁷³ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 on the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs](#), adopted on 27 February 2008, para. 66.

⁷⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 138.

⁷⁵ It should be noted that for the Goral national minority to receive funding from the Fund, it is necessary to amend Law No. 138/2017, considering that the law explicitly lists which national minorities have “expert councils” established within the fund, as well as to determine the percentage distribution of financial resources among them.

submissions. Despite the simplification of administrative procedures in recent years, significant bureaucratic hurdles and limited human resources⁷⁶ prevent minority organisations from using the allocated funding from the beginning of the year. The Advisory Committee considers that the current allocation mechanism could be simplified to allow for pluri-annual activities and projects to be planned and implemented sustainably. This issue is particularly urgent with regard to the publication of national minority magazines and brochures (see Article 9).

57. The Advisory Committee notes the authorities continued support for museums of national minorities as full components of the SNM. Such institutions are important for promoting intercultural understanding and increasing recognition of national minorities as an integral and valuable part of society. As a consequence, they require sustainable and ongoing financial support for developing and maintaining their collection.

58. The Advisory Committee also commends the progress made, since the adoption of the Strategy 2030, in raising awareness and promoting the cultures and traditions of the Roma. Additionally, it welcomes the Social and Cultural Needs and Solutions to Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Community Scheme, as a useful additional tool to promote the Roma culture.⁷⁷ In this context, the Advisory Committee reminds the authorities that sufficient funding at all levels needs to be allocated to support other projects and programmes aimed at preserving and promoting the Roma cultures throughout the year.

Recommendations

59. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to provide the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities with adequate financial, human and material resources, to enable it to process applications and distribute funds in a timely manner. The authorities should consider allowing for long-term, sustainable pluri-annual project funding.

60. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to strengthen the Support of Social and Cultural Needs and for the Resolution of Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Communities Scheme.

61. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue and expand their support to national minority museums and to promote the knowledge of national minorities and their positive contribution to Slovak society to the general public.

Promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding (Article 6)

62. During the sixth monitoring cycle, the Slovak authorities have adopted several key framework documents in order to promote intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding in society. In January 2021, the authorities adopted the “concept for combatting radicalisation and extremism by 2024”,⁷⁸ which aimed to promote respect for universal values and prevent the emergence of prejudices, stereotypes, hate speech, and national, racial, ethnic, religious or other forms of intolerance (see Article 6 below). In the field of education, the authorities adopted the “strategy for an inclusive approach in education”, regarded as essential for establishing the strategic public policies needed to achieve a more inclusive education system by 2030.⁷⁹ In 2022, the National Council also adopted the working definition of antigypsyism developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).⁸⁰

63. The implementation of the Strategy 2030 is co-ordinated by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. Each of the five priority areas identified in this strategy (education, employment, health, housing and combating anti-Roma racism and promoting participation) aims to improve equality and inclusion of the Roma. The Strategy 2030 highlights that racism and prejudice against the Roma persist in the Slovak Republic, where antigypsyism attitudes have been among the highest recorded in the EU and have worsened over time. In this context, it seeks to eliminate anti-Roma racism, promote anti-discrimination and participation, and increase protection for the most vulnerable groups and individuals, with a particular emphasis placed on the protection of Roma women.

64. The Action Plan for Combatting anti-Roma racism and promoting participation 2025-2027 builds on existing awareness-raising activities and training and provides for the dissemination of information and

⁷⁶ According to the information received from the authorities during the monitoring visit (October 2025) and available [online](#), the Secretariat of the Fund is composed of only six persons responsible for co-ordinating more than 2 400 cultural activity projects.

⁷⁷ See [Social and Cultural Needs and Solutions to Extremely Unfavourable Situations of the Roma Community Scheme](#). The Advisory Committee, however, regrets that the available financial resources have dropped from €650 000 to €550 000 during the sixth monitoring cycle.

⁷⁸ See [Concept for combatting radicalisation and extremism by 2024](#).

⁷⁹ See [Strategy for an inclusive approach in education](#) and the [Second Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education 2025-2027](#).

⁸⁰ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 137-139.

background materials for better enforcement of the law. According to the Action Plan, data obtained from the regions in the period 2022-2024 have served as a basis to produce materials to support victims of discrimination in exercising their legal rights. Measures have been taken to raise awareness of minority issues among young people, with particular emphasis on promoting critical thinking. This includes the creation of a modular textbook, the use of modern interactive teaching methods, and training for journalism students and media professionals to accurately portraying minorities.

65. The Ministry of Justice has launched a subsidy scheme for the promotion, support and protection of human rights and freedoms and for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and other manifestations of intolerance. The grant scheme supported projects focused on the prevention of extremism, projects aimed at preventing discrimination, and projects focused on education and multi-institutional co-operation in the field of assistance to victims of crime.⁸¹ In 2022, projects focused, for example, on research on the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of quarantine measures on Roma settlements, prevention of hate speech in the school environment, increasing the literacy rate among Roma women experiencing generational poverty and preventing xenophobia, racism and hatred. In 2023, projects aimed for instance at presenting positive examples and role models of persons affiliating with the Roma national minority and developing tools to fight prejudice and discrimination.⁸²

66. The Plenipotentiary for National Minorities continues to regularly publish public statements on International Roma Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day and Roma Holocaust Memorial Day.⁸³ Furthermore, many stakeholders – including authorities at the highest level – continue to support the Roma Spirit Award,⁸⁴ which recognises individuals, organisations and companies dedicated to the promotion of the rights of persons affiliating with the Roma and their inclusion in social, economic and cultural life.

67. Furthermore, one of the *raisons d'être* of the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities (see Article 5)⁸⁵ is to promote intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding in society. According to the Annual Report on the Culture of National Minorities 2023, more than 10 000 cultural activities were organised by national minority organisations. Since 2023, the Centre for Human Rights has annually organised the Rule of Law Festival. The festival consists of a series of public discussions on topics related to legal certainty and human rights, minorities and the rule of law, media freedom and the protection of journalists. Mainstream public media also continue to play an important role, through their programming, in raising awareness about minority cultures and in promoting intercultural dialogue (see Article 9). The 2024 Law on Slovak Television and Radio (Law No. 157/2024) establishes a duty to promote inclusion, diversity and tolerance in broadcast content in its definition of *Slovenská televízia a rozhlas'* working mission (STVR).

68. Most interlocutors reported an overall climate of respect as regards intercultural relations. Several representatives of national minorities highlighted joint cultural and educational activities involving different national minorities, as well as persons from the majority population, as positive examples of mutual interaction and contributions to a more tolerant society. For example, representatives of the Goral national minority reported joint events with persons affiliating with the Polish and Ruthenian national minorities.⁸⁶ However, this general positive assessment must be sharply contrasted with the systemic discrimination faced by persons affiliating with the Roma in most areas of life and widespread negative prejudices against this national minority⁸⁷ (see Articles 6, 12 and 15). Roma youth and women, as being in the most vulnerable situation, are particularly exposed to multiple forms of discrimination.⁸⁸

69. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “the promotion of tolerance and openness towards diversity in society is essential not only for the development and implementation of successful integration strategies but is also a central precondition for persons belonging to national minorities to self-identify as such without hesitation and proactively claim the rights contained in the Framework Convention.”⁸⁹ “Effective measures must be taken to promote mutual respect, understanding and co-operation among

⁸¹ Each year, approximately €770 000 are allocated from the state budget to the subsidy scheme.

⁸² [Sixth state report](#), paras. 109-110.

⁸³ See [International Roma Day](#); [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#); [Porajmos-80th anniversary of the Roma Holocaust](#).

⁸⁴ See [Roma Spirit](#).

⁸⁵ See Fund for the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities. See also the Annual Report on the Culture of National Minorities 2023.

⁸⁶ Information received from representatives of the Goral national minority during the monitoring visit (October 2025).

⁸⁷ See [Prejudices Still Win: A Third of People in the Slovak Republic View Roma Negatively](#), 13 February 2025. Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Roma in the Slovak Republic still face obstacles in protecting their rights](#).

⁸⁸ See Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Roma youth are the most vulnerable group exposed to multiple discrimination](#); Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Roma in the Slovak Republic still face obstacles in protecting their rights](#); Commissioner for Human Rights, [Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic](#), 3 February 2025; see also [2025 Slovak Republic Country Report on Non-discrimination](#), p. 6.

⁸⁹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 53.

all persons irrespective of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identities.”⁹⁰ “It is essential that all segments of society, majorities and minorities alike, are addressed in order for integration strategies to effectively facilitate the formation of societal structures where diversity and respect for difference are acknowledged and encouraged as normal, through recognition, mutual accommodation and active engagement on all sides.”⁹¹ “Article 6(1) explicitly refers to education, culture and the media as particular fields of importance to the objective of promoting tolerance and intercultural dialogue.”⁹²

70. The Advisory Committee welcomes the various measures undertaken by the authorities to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual respect, particularly in the fields of education, culture and media, through dedicated and targeted strategies that address the needs and interests of persons, who, for various reasons, may find themselves in vulnerable situations. It notes that efforts have increased to ensure minorities and persons affiliating with them are more fairly portrayed in mainstream media, thereby promoting mutual respect, combatting xenophobia and avoiding stereotypes, although the above-mentioned strategies and plans do not specifically adopt an intersectional approach. At the political level, clear and unambiguous support has been given to persons affiliating with national minorities.⁹³ However, the Roma national minority and other groups in vulnerable situations continue to experience negative prejudices, which are widely disseminated on social networks.

Recommendation

71. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue their efforts in promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding, especially through education, cultural activities, and the media. The authorities should consult with representatives of national minorities on any legislative initiatives that may affect inter-ethnic relations and the enjoyment of minority rights.

Protection from hostility and violence (Article 6)

72. The Slovak Republic has developed a legal framework for addressing hate speech and hate crime, particularly based on the grounds of “race”, nation, nationality, ethnic group, real or perceived origin, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs or religious beliefs, in conformity with the EU standards.⁹⁴ Such special motives are considered as aggravating circumstances. Hate crimes are exclusively handled by the Office of the Special Prosecutor and tried by the Specialised Criminal Court.⁹⁵ Victims of hate crime have the status of particularly vulnerable victims and are therefore entitled to specialised help and support (psychological counselling, legal aid, and secure housing if necessary). However, while new measures were reportedly under preparation, in early 2026, existing legislation remained inadequate to address online hate speech.⁹⁶

73. In January 2021, the authorities adopted the “concept for combatting radicalisation and extremism by 2024”,⁹⁷ a conceptual framework document which included, *inter alia*, activities to address negative stereotypes about minorities and to raise awareness of groups targeted by radicalism and extremism. The Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism, and Other Forms of Intolerance⁹⁸ continues to work as a government advisory body and serves as a platform for co-ordinating activities, defining priorities and directions in the creation of public policies aimed at preventing and eliminating racism, xenophobia and extremism.

74. According to the Slovak Republic’s contribution to the OSCE ODIHR hate crime database, in 2024, the law enforcement authorities recorded 15 cases of hate crimes, of which five were prosecuted, resulting in four convictions. Compared to previous years, these data show a significant drop.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 51.

⁹¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 54.

⁹² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 59.

⁹³ See [At the first meeting of the Council for National Minorities, Robert Fico highlighted the contribution of national minority cultures to the Slovak Republic](#), 29 January 2025.

⁹⁴ Article 140a) of the Criminal Code. Article 424(a) of the Criminal Code makes segregation and all other forms of generalised or systematic discrimination a criminal offence. It should be noted that hate crimes fall within the group of “extremism offences”, as the term “hate crimes” itself does not exist in the domestic legislation.

⁹⁵ The Prosecutor’s Office and the analytical centre of the Ministry of Justice use separate electronic systems that can also flag up special motives.

⁹⁶ See [We are preparing a law against the spread of hate on the Internet inspired by Germany and Austria](#), 15 May 2025.

⁹⁷ See [Concept for combatting radicalisation and extremism by 2024](#). In May 2025, the authorities approved the [Concept of Preventing and Combating Radicalisation and Extremism until 2028](#).

⁹⁸ The [role](#) of the committee secretariat is performed by the Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic.

⁹⁹ In 2023, data reveal that there were 46 cases recorded by the police, with five cases resulting in sentencing. In 2022, figures showed 28 cases recorded by the police, with 16 individuals prosecuted and 12 convictions. The Advisory Committee notes that figures to be found on the OSCE ODIHR database do not match the information communicated by the authorities in their [sixth state report](#) (Table No. 4: Statistics of legally concluded proceedings for hate crimes according to the number of identified accused, p. 33) or statistics to be found on the Ministry of the Interior [website](#).

Ministry of the Interior conducted a survey on perceptions of safety in the Slovak Republic as part of efforts to counter radicalisation and extremism by 2024. The survey included a question on hate crimes and found that 8% of respondents had been a victim of or directly knew someone who was victimised by a hate crime (for example a physical assault).¹⁰⁰ The survey has since then been expanded to include questions on online hate crimes and cyber harassment, reflecting the evolving nature of hate-motivated offences.

75. Law enforcement officers and service providers receive training in recognising and addressing the specific needs of hate crime victims. Furthermore, civil society organisations often collaborate with public institutions to provide culturally sensitive and community based support, especially for victims from minorities or with marginalised backgrounds. In this context, the ODIHR's Training Against Hate Crime for Law Enforcement (TAHCLE) programme has been implemented since 2017 and the Prosecutors and Hate Crime Training (PAHCT) programme since 2018. In 2023, ODIHR delivered online training sessions for employees of crime victim information offices, focusing on the sensitive and respectful treatment of hate crime victims, with particular attention to the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as those living in MRCs. Prosecutors from the Office of the Special Prosecutor's Office have been trained on criminal acts of hate crime and extremism by the Judicial Academy of the Slovak Republic.¹⁰¹

76. The national authorities further indicated that the Control Department of the Presidium of the Police Force and the Prevention and Support Activities Unit organises lectures, training and social networking for students of the police schools and Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava in order to prevent anti-Roma attitudes, stereotyping, police misconduct and any other forms of discrimination.¹⁰² Furthermore, according to the authorities, where there are suspicions of misconduct or failure by police officers in carrying out their duties in relation to persons affiliating with national minorities, each case is investigated, and if excessive or disproportionate use of force by police officers is identified, measures are taken against the responsible police officers, which can include criminal penalties.¹⁰³

77. The position of "senior officer for work in the communities"¹⁰⁴ has been established to address concerns about under-reporting of crimes. Its primary purpose is to create, maintain, strengthen and support mutual relations between the police force and the Roma. Over 300 positions have been established, mainly in the Košice, Prešov, Banská Bystrica and Nitra districts. In addition, several municipalities and towns have established "Local Civic and Preventive Services (MOaPS)" to "strengthen local activism, support community development and prevention activities, such as reducing the commission of anti-social activities, maintaining public order and standard environmental quality". About 1 400 persons had been recruited by municipalities to MOaPs, 93% of whom affiliate with the Roma national minority by late 2025.¹⁰⁵

78. Most representatives of national minorities indicated to the Advisory Committee that there had been no increase in hate crime against persons affiliating with national minorities. Overall, the authorities have shown support for national minorities. Representatives of national minorities expressed concerns to the Advisory Committee regarding a proposed amendment to the Slovak Criminal Code that would reduce penalties for extremist offences, abolish certain offences related to extremist material, and weaken the criminal-law protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular safeguards against manifestations of hatred, discrimination, and violence motivated by racial, national, ethnic, or religious grounds. Furthermore, some interlocutors reminded the Advisory Committee that hate speech, especially online, and other expressions of intolerance continue to persist in Slovak society, specifically targeting persons affiliating with the Roma national minority.¹⁰⁶ Many Roma, who have been victims of hate crime and hate speech, and more generally of discrimination (see Article 4), remain highly reluctant to approach the police, for fear that their rights and concerns will not be adequately considered and protected.¹⁰⁷ This mistrust has also been exacerbated by repeated examples of the excessive use of

¹⁰⁰ The Ministry of the Interior plans to repeat the survey annually.

¹⁰¹ OSCE ODIHR, Hate crim Report, [National frameworks to address hate crime in the Slovak Republic](#).

¹⁰² See [National statement of the Slovak Republic to the proposed Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic](#), 2025, 3 February 2025.

¹⁰³ [Sixth state report](#), para. 127.

¹⁰⁴ See [The work of police specialists for community work](#).

¹⁰⁵ See [The call for support for local civic and preventive services has already been published](#), 3 July 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Discrimination against Roma and persistent anti-Roma racism in society are also highlighted by the specialised survey EU-SILC_MRC.

¹⁰⁷ See Centre for Civil and Human Rights, Minority Rights Group Europe, EPEKA Slovenia. [Equality and justice on the sidelines: Comparative report on discrimination against Roma and their access to justice in the Slovak Republic and Slovenia](#), November 2022, pp. 12-15.

force and of racist motives by police forces themselves in the past.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, during the monitoring visit, interlocutors, while praising the positive impact of the MOaPS,¹⁰⁹ criticised the difficult contractual conditions of those employed in these positions, noting the lack of (or very limited) prospects for career advancement and the absence of any long-term pathway to the police force.

79. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “minorities cannot thrive in a society in which diversity is not tolerated or even serves as a pretext for hate crimes and discrimination.”¹¹⁰ “Ethnically based violence must be recognised as an especially nefarious form of violence that concerns and threatens society as a whole and must thus be resolutely opposed and prevented.”¹¹¹

80. Taking into account the relevant Council of Europe recommendations that offer guidance on combatting hate crime and hate speech,¹¹² the Advisory Committee notes that the legislative framework developed in the Slovak Republic is comprehensive and continues to evolve. It emphasises that maintaining a robust legal framework to prevent and effectively sanction all forms of hate crime and ethnically motivated violence is essential and notes with concern trends that may lead to a weakening of the Criminal Code in this respect. However, as important challenges remain in addressing intersectional issues, the Advisory Committee is also concerned by the potential negative consequences of the change in the Constitution adopted in September 2025 for the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities, with the introduction of an explicit “national identity” clause.¹¹³ The evolving nature of hate speech, in particular in the context of online platforms and social media needs to be better reflected in the legislative framework.

81. Although the Advisory Committee welcomes the adoption by the authorities of a “concept for combatting radicalisation and extremism by 2024”, the Advisory Committee nevertheless reminds that the Action Plan to Prevent All Forms of Discrimination 2016-2019 and the Action Plan to Prevent and Eliminate All Forms of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance 2016-2018 were not updated and that the EU Strategy for combatting antisemitism and fostering Jewish life 2021-2030 is not reflected in any strategic document. The Advisory Committee further notes that there is still a limited public awareness of the anti-discrimination legislative framework and access to free legal aid, particularly among persons affiliating with the Roma national minority. The Advisory Committee is also of the view that the work of the Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism, and Other Forms of Intolerance could be made more visible.

82. The Advisory Committee takes note of the data shared by the authorities with the OSCE ODIHR hate crime database and welcomes that such data are collected collaboratively by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor's Office. However, despite the expansion of the protected grounds for hate crime in the legislation, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of recorded hate crimes compared to previous years. Taking into account the survey conducted by the Ministry of the Interior, the Advisory Committee considers it very likely that only a small proportion of hate speech and hate crime is being recorded in the official statistics. This may indicate a lack of awareness among victims regarding available legal remedies, a lack of trust in the authorities' willingness or ability to investigate such cases effectively or even fear of repercussions.

83. The Advisory Committee welcomes the organisation of regular pre- and in-service training for law enforcement officers and other relevant public authorities. However, these training programmes could be intensified, considering the conclusions reached by several dedicated international bodies¹¹⁴ and relevant NGOs on the ongoing excessive use of force and of racist motives by police forces, shortcomings in the investigation procedures by the Office of the Inspection Service, and also the lack of adequate response to discrimination cases in general by law enforcement officers and the

¹⁰⁸ See also the [written submission](#) from the Centre for Civil and Human Rights “Poradňa” and the European Roma Rights Centre to the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights about the [R.R. and R.D. group of cases](#). Romea.cz, [Slovakia: Roma allege police targeted them with rubber bullets, surround police station with dogs, police fire warning shots to disperse them](#), 29 June 2025.

¹⁰⁹ Previously called the “Local Civil Order Service”, also unofficially called “Roma civil patrols”. See ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 134.

¹¹⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 55.

¹¹¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 56. See also OSCE, High Commissioner on National Minorities, [Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies](#), 2006.

¹¹² See Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combatting hate crime; Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)16](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combatting hate speech.

¹¹³ See in this context the Venice Commission [urgent Opinion](#) on the draft amendments to the constitution issued on 24 September 2025.

¹¹⁴ In the framework of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against the Slovak Republic, see, in addition to the [R.R. and R.D. group of cases](#), the recent judgment [Bystrý v. the Slovak Republic](#) of 26 June 2025. See also the United Nations (UN) Committee against Torture, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Slovak Republic](#) of 7 June 2023, para. 15 and the [Report](#) of the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of 12 July 2024 on the Slovak Republic.

judiciary.¹¹⁵ In this context, the Advisory Committee is of the view that it is essential to increase the number of “senior officer for work in the communities” positions and to provide MOaPS staff members with long-term contracts, opportunities to attend in-service training and the possibility of joining the police force.

84. While persons affiliating with most national minorities do not report experiencing significant levels of hate speech, the widespread and deeply rooted negative attitudes and prejudices against persons affiliating with the Roma national minority are of particular concern to the Advisory Committee.¹¹⁶ This hostility among the majority population makes social inclusion difficult, as the Roma are vulnerable to discrimination in various domains, ranging from employment to housing, health care and education (see Articles 4, 12 and 15).¹¹⁷ Roma youth and women continue to be especially at risk of multiple and intersecting forms of gender based and racial discrimination.

Recommendations

85. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to investigate, through an impartial, independent, efficient and effective complaint mechanism, allegations of excessive use of force and ill-treatment by the police, especially where these are based on racist grounds.

86. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that all cases of hate crime and hate speech reported to law enforcement and the judiciary and other relevant bodies are effectively recorded, promptly and thoroughly investigated, and where appropriate, prosecuted and sanctioned.

87. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to increase the number of “senior officer for work in the communities” positions and to offer long-term contracts to Local Civic and Preventive Services’ staff members.

88. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to organise pre- and in-service training for law enforcement officers, investigatory bodies, prosecutors, representatives of the judiciary and other relevant service providers in close co-operation with persons affiliating with national minorities, in particular the Roma national minority and to raise awareness of hate crime and hate speech, as well as of racism and prejudice.

Freedom of expression, freedom of thought and conscience (Article 7)

89. On 11 December 2025, the parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, including an amendment to the section on incitement to war, crimes against humanity, acts of terror and extremism, criminalising any person who “publicly denies” or “calls into question” the “settlement of conditions” established after the Second World War, making such speech punishable by up to six months imprisonment.¹¹⁸ This new criminal offence is largely understood as referring to the 1945 regulation on confiscation of property, including land, targeting persons affiliating with the Hungarian and German minorities (the so-called “Beneš Decrees”¹¹⁹).¹²⁰ The Ministry of Justice indicated to the Advisory Committee that this new legislation must be read in the light of the provisions of Article 26(4) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, which is also the main source for punishing oral and written expression which deny and/or approve of the Holocaust, crimes of political regimes and crimes against humanity, defamation of a nation, race and belief, incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred,

¹¹⁵ See Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Analysis of obstacles of insufficient implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in relation to Roma](#), 2025.

¹¹⁶ Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [A third of respondents \(33%\) openly expressed negative attitudes towards Roma](#). See also Centre for Human Rights, [Hate Speech on Political Facebook Profiles](#), 2023 and DigiQ (2025), [Results of Social Media Monitoring in the Slovak Republic 2023-2024](#).

¹¹⁷ See also in this context the results of a study published in 2022 by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Community on [Stereotypes and attitudes towards Roma in local politics](#). See [sixth state report](#), para. 144.

¹¹⁸ [Law No. 416/2025](#) amending Law No. 300/2005 on the Criminal Code, as amended, and amending certain Laws.

¹¹⁹ The “Beneš decrees” is a shorthand term for all post-war laws from the period of 1945-1948. In its [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 126, the Advisory Committee invited “the authorities to enter into dialogue with representatives of the national minorities concerned about any possible negative effects on current interethnic relations of the 1945 regulation on confiscation of property”.

¹²⁰ ECtHR, [Bosits v. the Slovak Republic](#), 19 May 2020. See also the [letter](#) sent by the Hungarian Alliance to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues on 25 November 2025; Federal Union of EN, [FUEN calls on the EU to act over systematic ethnic-based land confiscations in the Slovak Republic](#); EURAC, [Why the Beneš decrees still matter for the Hungarian minority in Slovakia](#), 6 February 2026; Euronews, [UE - Slovaquie : le Parlement européen débat des décrets Beneš ce mercredi](#), 11 February 2026. See Felvidek-ma, [When the silence ends: why was it the right decision to make the Hungarian voice heard in Bratislava?](#), 17 December 2025; The Slovak Spectator, [Slovakia's Beneš Decrees law sparks protest and criticism from Hungary](#), 30 December 2025; EUObserver, [Why is Brussels ignoring Fico's ethnic land seizures in Slovakia?](#), 7 January 2026. Hungary Today, [Demonstration in Budapest against Slovakia's Anti-Free Speech Law](#), 5 January 2026, 5 January 2026.

expressions of sympathy for movements aimed at suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms, or defamation.

90. On 12 December 2025, the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities publicly criticised the legislative procedure in the amendment and drew attention to the fact that he was not consulted. The Plenipotentiary for National Minorities also warned about the consequences of this legislation, which, according to him, raise serious questions around minority rights, freedom of speech and historical dialogue.¹²¹ On 18 December 2025, Hungarian members of the Council for National Minorities called on the President of the Republic to exercise his veto right, arguing that the amendment is incompatible with democratic values and restricts the freedom of thought and expression and stating that this amendment is a “direct intimidation and silencing of the Hungarian national minority living in the Slovak Republic”.¹²² On 21 January 2026, the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities adopted an official appeal addressed to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, expressing concern that the amendment criminalises discussion of post-war historical issues, restricts freedom of expression and academic debate, and was adopted without sufficient consultation with national minority communities. Representatives of the Council informed the Advisory Committee of their concerns that such legislation would have a detrimental effect on intercultural dialogue, mutual respect for historical experiences, and the rights of national minority communities in the Slovak Republic. Several public protests have taken place since the adoption of the new provisions of the Criminal Code.¹²³ The controversial amendments to the Criminal Code, including the amendment that criminalises any opposition to the Beneš Decrees, were referred to the Constitutional Court in January 2026. On 11 February 2026, the Constitutional Court suspended part of the amendments (on limiting the use of testimony from co-operating defendants),¹²⁴ whereas other amendments remain in force while the Constitutional Court continues its review.

91. In early 2026, three academics deliberately launched a public petition challenging these so-called “Beneš Decrees” as a test-case by reporting themselves to the police. They claimed that the amendment effectively suppresses the freedom of expression and prevent any kind of criticism, academic or legal debate on alleged discriminatory practises based on the ongoing legal effects of these historical laws. The police refused to open criminal proceedings against them, on the basis that the amended Criminal Code provision was too vague to clearly define what conduct should be punishable and that the freedom of expression shall prevail. The police further acknowledged that the petition’s statements were based on “known historical facts,” which weakened the basis for prosecution.¹²⁵

92. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “any measures taken by the authorities to restrict the freedom of assembly or the freedom of expression, which necessarily includes the freedom to express criticism of the government or diverging opinions, can have a direct, negative impact on the enjoyment of rights contained in the Framework Convention as they are likely to deter persons belonging to national minorities, like other members of society, from exercising their rights and to create an intimidating environment that is not conducive to the implementation of minority rights and human rights generally.”¹²⁶ The Advisory Committee recalls that freedom to express opinions, including by persons affiliating with national minorities, on historical developments must be possible in a democratic society and that the “upheavals of European history have shown that the protection of national minorities is essential to stability, democratic security and peace in this continent”.¹²⁷

93. In this context, the Advisory Committee remains generally concerned by legislative initiatives intending to restrict minority rights. It is of the view that the 2025 amendment to the Criminal Code that makes publicly questioning or denying the so-called “Beneš Decrees” a criminal offence represents a troubling expansion of criminal law into the realm of historical debates and political speech. It is also concerned that this law was prepared and adopted without any consultation with or participation of the Plenipotentiary or representatives of the national minorities concerned. The Advisory Committee is

¹²¹ See Felvidek-ma, [Ákos Horony: I have to make an exception this time](#), 12 December 2025.

¹²² See Felvidek-ma, [Hungarian council members ask the president to withdraw the amendment to the law affecting the Beneš decrees](#), 18 December 2025. See also Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, [Slovak Criminal Code Changes Threaten Free Speech](#).

¹²³ See Felvidek-ma, [When the silence ends: why was it the right decision to make the Hungarian voice heard in Bratislava?](#), 17 December 2025; The Slovak Spectator, [Slovakia's Beneš Decrees law sparks protest and criticism from Hungary](#), 30 December 2025; EUObserver, [Why is Brussels ignoring Fico's ethnic land seizures in Slovakia?](#), 7 January 2026; Hungary Today, [Demonstration in Budapest against Slovakia's Anti-Free Speech Law](#), 5 January 2026.

¹²⁴ See the [Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic](#), 11 February 2026.

¹²⁵ See Magyar Jelen, [Nothing Came of Challenging the Beneš Decrees: Police Dropped the Case](#), 7 March 2026. See also Ta3, [They turned themselves in to test the section on Beneš's decrees. The police refused to prosecute](#), 7 March 2026.

¹²⁶ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 68.

¹²⁷ [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), Preamble.

deeply concerned by the negative effects of these developments on inter-ethnic relations (see Article 6).

Recommendation

94. The Advisory Committee requests the authorities to review the Law No. 416/2025 amending Law No. 300/2005 on the Criminal Code without delay, in close consultation with the relevant institutions and representatives of the national minorities most affected, in order to ensure that the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities, in particular the freedom of expression, can be fully enjoyed.

Broadcasting programmes for national minorities (Article 9)

95. In 2024, *Slovenská televízia a rozhlas* (STVR) succeeded RTVS as the public service broadcaster. The 2024 Law on Slovak Television and Radio (Law No. 157/2024) outlines a duty to promote inclusion, diversity and tolerance as part of STVR's mission.¹²⁸ Under the legislation, STVR needs to broadcast at least 500 hours of national minority television programming per year.¹²⁹ In 2024, 513 hours of minority television broadcasting were aired on STVR, which represents a significant increase compared to the 360-hour obligation in 2023 and the 240-hour obligation in 2022.¹³⁰ While the allocation of broadcasting hours for individual national minorities was based on the results of the 2021 census, the editorial departments within STVR doubled this for numerically smaller minorities.¹³¹

96. In accordance with Law No. 270/1995, television programming in minority languages must also either provide subtitles in Slovak or a broadcast in Slovak.¹³² The authorities report that, before its cessation, RTVS broadcast minority television content on *Dvojka*, *Trojka* and its news channel, with Hungarian and Romani as the most represented minority languages.¹³³ STVR produces minority magazine programmes for radio and television. Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Polish and Ukrainian have been allocated between two and eight hours of broadcast time per year.¹³⁴ During the visit, a representative of STVR reported to the Advisory Committee that an allocation of two hours per year was considered to be good practice, as otherwise numerically smaller minorities would be allocated less airtime. During the sixth monitoring cycle, co-operation was established with contracted external suppliers of ready-made Hungarian and Romani content and RTVS adopted plans to implement this model to procure content in Ruthenian and Ukrainian.¹³⁵ The project to establish a Roma Media House in Banská Bystrica, which was one of the measures to be implemented in the context of the 2025-2027 Action plans to the Strategy 2030, has been abandoned by a Government Resolution in December 2025.¹³⁶

97. Among the national minorities, Hungarians and Roma are the most represented under the category "entities operating electronic media and publishing multimedia carriers".¹³⁷ In 2023, a total of €1 511 348 (€886 940 and €341 591 for Hungarian and Roma media, respectively) was allocated for such entities in the state budget. Hungarian entities received an additional €552 490 through foreign sponsorship and grants.¹³⁸

98. Article 6 of the Bill for a Law on National Minorities, in preparation (as of May 2026) by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, will address public media, private media and support measures. The Press Agency of the Slovak Republic, established under Law No. 385/2008, is required to identify and report information concerning national and ethnic minorities and their cultures.¹³⁹ The Strategy 2030 (see Articles 4 and 5) contains a Vision of Roma Culture, Language and Identity Support,

¹²⁸ [Law No. 157/2024](#), Article 3. This law amended [Law No. 350/1996](#), [Law No. 357/2015](#) and [Law No. 264/2022](#). It repealed [Law No. 532/2010](#).

¹²⁹ [Law No. 157/2024](#), Article 5h.

¹³⁰ The initial 240-hour quota was introduced by an amendment to the Act on RTVS (Law No. 532/2010), which entered force in August 2022. In 2021, 231 hours were broadcast on RTVS. ECRML, MIN-LANG(2025)12, para. 37; [Sixth state report](#), paras. 154-156.

¹³¹ [Sixth state report](#), para. 29.

¹³² [Law No. 264/2022](#) and [Law No. 270/1995](#), Article 5(1).

¹³³ With approximately 134 and 57 hours in 2022, respectively. See [sixth state report](#), para. 154.

¹³⁴ ECRML, MIN-LANG(2025)12, para. 37.

¹³⁵ See Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, [Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021 – 2022](#), pp. 42-46.

¹³⁶ See [Government Resolution No. 638](#) of 17 December 2025, Activity 3.5.3 of the Action Plans to the Strategy 2030 for the period 2025–2027, on the "Establishment and operation of the Roma Media House as a tool to improve the media image of Roma".

¹³⁷ Ministry of Culture, [Annual Statement on the Culture of Minorities for the year 2023](#), Figure 6.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ [Law No. 385/2008](#), para. 3.

committing the authorities to develop media for the Roma national minority, including an obligation to increase the quality of content.¹⁴⁰

99. In their sixth state report, the authorities reported that Law No. 264/2022 has negatively affected national minority broadcasting, particularly private broadcasting, licensed to provide a television programme service exclusively in one or more EU languages other than the official language of the Slovak Republic, under the legislation in force until 31 July 2022. Following the amendment to the Law on the State Language, these television broadcasters are required to provide a Slovak-language version of their broadcasts, which they do primarily by use of subtitles. The authorities report that Law No. 264/2022 makes it difficult for the public service broadcaster to obtain or change broadcasting frequency.¹⁴¹

100. Minority broadcasting is more widespread on radio than television, and the authorities report that almost 5 200 hours of minority radio programming was broadcast by RTVS in 2022, with nearly 85% of these hours allocated to Hungarian.¹⁴² Private and regional radio stations contribute significantly to national minority representation. *Rádio Roma* provides broadcasting in the Romani language and, in addition to focussing on Roma events, culture and projects also aims to produce content for the Jewish national minority. Based in Banská Bystrica, the organisation aims to expand its network coverage through acquiring broadcast frequencies in Bratislava and Košice. *Rusyn FM* provides radio programming in the Ruthenian language. *Rádio Patria* constitutes an organisational unit and a programme service of STVR, with editorial departments in Bratislava and Košice, providing broadcasting for Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities.

101. The Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025 outlined numerous proposed activities. Two of these activities focused on media policy, aiming to raise awareness of national minority cultural contributions to Slovak society and to support development of minority media.¹⁴³

102. Reports suggest that minority media content, particularly television content, frequently presents national minority cultures as being different from the Slovak majority population, rather than as an integral part of Slovak society and culture.¹⁴⁴ Interlocutors of the Advisory Committee noted that STVR, and previously RTVS, often purchase content produced by television channels in other countries for minority broadcasting. However, representatives of the Serb national minority reported that STVR does not purchase content produced in Serbia and does not produce a dedicated magazine programme for the Serb national minority.¹⁴⁵ Ruthenian representatives expressed their concerns over the decision to end production of entertainment programmes for their national minority. Ruthenian private radio in the Slovak Republic has successfully secured content produced externally for use by Ruthenian minorities in Poland, Serbia, Ukraine and the USA.¹⁴⁶ While the number of hours allocated to minority language television broadcasting has overall increased substantially over the sixth monitoring cycle, Ruthenian representatives reported that broadcast time allocated to Ruthenian has fallen, as STVR has also allocated broadcasting slots to newly recognised national minorities.

103. Concerns have been raised around the Roma Media House project in Banská Bystrica, its transparency, its relevance to Roma needs, its deliverability and its location.¹⁴⁷ The project was criticised in a Mission Report following a visit to the Slovak Republic by the European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT). This report found that the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities "minimised the pressing needs for housing, health services and employment opportunities for the Roma communities in order to justify the need for the media house", and found the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities' claims regarding the Media House's benefits "unconvincing".¹⁴⁸ The Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities denied that EU funds had been allocated

¹⁴⁰ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 117-118.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, paras. 159-160.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, paras. 155-156.

¹⁴³ [Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025](#), Section 5, Items 8-9.

¹⁴⁴ ECRML, MIN-LANG(2025)12, para. 38.

¹⁴⁵ It should be noted that, according to the authorities, STVR, and previously RTVS, has neither purchased nor currently purchases content from foreign television channels. Furthermore, while STVR does not acquire programming from Serbia, it produced and broadcast four half-hour Serbian-language magazine programmes in 2025.

¹⁴⁶ Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021-2022, p. 47.

¹⁴⁷ For a critical assessment of the Roma Media House project see [Roma Project - rroma.org](#).

¹⁴⁸ EU, Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT), [Mission Report](#), section 9.

for the Roma Media House, and expressed fundamental disagreement with the findings of the CONT mission.¹⁴⁹

104. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “the right to receive and impart information and ideas in a minority language, as stipulated in Article 9 of the Framework Convention, depends on effective opportunities for access to the media. Furthermore, the possibility to receive and impart information in a language one can fully understand and communicate in, is a precondition for equal and effective participation in public, economic, social, and cultural life.”¹⁵⁰ The Advisory Committee also reiterates that “the availability of print, broadcast and electronic media in minority languages has very specific emblematic value for national minorities, in particular for the numerically smaller ones. Through them, persons belonging to national minorities not only gain access to information, but minority language media also raise the visibility and prestige of the minority language as an active tool of communication.”¹⁵¹ The Advisory Committee reiterates that public sector media “must guarantee an adequate presence of persons belonging to minorities and their languages, including numerically smaller minorities.”¹⁵² The Advisory Committee also notes its established position that “special attention should be paid to the needs of numerically smaller minorities or particularly vulnerable groups such as Roma communities that usually have very limited access to media in their own languages and suffer from a lack of qualified journalists.”¹⁵³ Regarding private sector media, the Advisory Committee stresses that “given the competitiveness of the private media sector, the authorities should consider the creation of incentives for private and community media providers, for instance through funding and allocation of frequencies.”¹⁵⁴

105. It is the understanding of the Advisory Committee that the legal definition of national minority broadcast television content encompasses both content in minority languages and Slovak programming about national minorities.¹⁵⁵ The Advisory Committee notes that minority television broadcasting, especially for numerically smaller national minorities, is often short and irregular, transmitted outside primetime viewing hours and often includes reruns, therefore limiting the appeal of such programming to viewers, and their ability to access it. The Advisory Committee considers the annual broadcast time allocated for Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Polish and Ukrainian to be insufficient. Furthermore, the requirement for subtitling, or parallel broadcasting, in Slovak prevents live broadcasting in minority languages. The Advisory Committee notes that steps have been taken to establish partnerships between STVR and external content creators in order to resolve reported capacity constraints, which require targeted investment over a long-term basis. Such initiatives would need to be developed further, so that this model is applied to the procurement of content in Ruthenian and Ukrainian.

106. The Advisory Committee welcomes positive reports of collaboration between the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities and national minority broadcasting offices to ensure online visibility for minority media. However, the existing approach is not systematic and negatively impacts the visibility and accessibility of national minority media content. The Advisory Committee also notes the apparent disparity between social media visibility of media content in different minority languages, with efforts seemingly limited largely to Hungarian. The Advisory Committee welcomes the provisions for radio broadcasting in minority languages. With the decision to recognise the Vietnamese and Goral communities as national minorities under the scope of the Framework Convention, the Advisory Committee hopes that measures will be implemented to increase their access to media throughout the country.

107. While the Advisory Committee welcomes in principle the effort of the authorities to strengthen Romani media representation through the dedicated Roma Media House, it is concerned by the controversy surrounding the project and its relevance to the needs of persons affiliating with the Roma.

Recommendations

108. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to resolve issues resulting from the requirement for subtitling in Slovak or parallel Slovak broadcasting of programmes broadcast initially in national minority languages, in co-operation with representatives of national minorities.

109. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to increase the number and the duration of programmes broadcast for persons affiliating with national minorities on television channels, including

¹⁴⁹ See the [statement](#) published by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities in response to the CONT Mission report.

¹⁵⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 40.

¹⁵¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 69.

¹⁵² ACFC [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 41.

¹⁵³ ACFC [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 42.

¹⁵⁴ ACFC [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 45.

¹⁵⁵ ECRML, [MIN-LANG\(2025\)12](#), para. 37, footnote No. 31.

through dedicated digital platforms, in particular for numerically smaller national minorities, in co-operation with their representatives, including the newly recognised national minorities.

110. The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to consider implementing a systematic approach to publicising minority content on social media platforms, encompassing a wider range of minority languages, to ensure visibility of minority media.

Printed and online media for national minorities (Article 9)

111. Article 34 of the Constitution guarantees the right to disseminate and receive information in the languages of national minorities. Neither Law No. 265/2022 on Publishers of Publications and on the Register in the Field of Media and Audiovisual Media and on the amendment and supplementation of certain acts (the 'Publications Act'), adopted in August 2022, nor the Act on the State Language restricts the publication of periodical or non-periodical publications in the languages of national minorities, although Slovak language legislation continues to establish Slovak as the primary state language in several areas of public communication. Since 2022, the scope of the Fund has been broadened to include support for the operational costs of periodicals (see Article 5).¹⁵⁶ Under the Strategy 2030, the authorities committed to ensure support for regular publication of Roma periodicals, both for adults and children, and to improve the quality of publications through targeting content at specific groups and collecting readers' feedback.¹⁵⁷ Most national minorities have their own print media, producing content aimed at national minority audiences. It is the Advisory Committee's understanding that there is only one daily printed newspaper published in a minority language (*Új Szó*, a Hungarian-language newspaper).¹⁵⁸ In addition to the Fund, minority language publications have received support from municipal authorities, such as Košice and Prešov.¹⁵⁹ Minority print media have also accessed cultural funds established by national governments of "kin-states" or foreign sponsorship or grant funds. In 2024, the state budget allocated €636 122 for national minority periodical publications and €496 264 for national minority non-periodical publications.¹⁶⁰

112. Minority representatives expressed frustration with existing bureaucratic procedures in applying for financial support from the Fund for the publication of their printed media, as well as the overall delays in the distribution of the allocations granted. This causes significant administrative and financial difficulties for minority organisations and publishing houses seeking to create print media in minority languages and for national minority audiences. Minority representatives reported that funding is mainly allocated on a short-term basis, placing a significant administrative burden on minority media outlets, which must reapply for funding annually, thus denying these outlets a secure long-term basis on which they can develop (see Article 5).

113. The Advisory Committee reiterates that states are encouraged to support printed media in minority languages to ensure development of minority print media and culture, including for numerically smaller minorities where such periodicals would not be financially viable without state support. "The Advisory Committee has repeatedly observed that minority communities consider their minority language print media as an important means to preserve and develop their specific culture and language within mainstream society. The Advisory Committee has therefore emphasised the need to uphold support for such editions which, due to their small size, are often not commercially viable".¹⁶¹

114. The Advisory Committee notes that existing legislation allows for the dissemination and receipt of information in the languages of national minorities. In this context, it welcomes the broadened scope of the Fund since 2022 to include support for the operational costs of periodicals.¹⁶² It also welcomes the specific emphasis that the Strategy 2030 places on ensuring support for regular and high-quality publication of periodicals for the Roma. However, the Advisory Committee believes it is necessary to simplify the application procedures to the Fund and to create provisions for long-term funding awards, thereby ensuring the sustainable development of minority language media in the Slovak Republic (see Article 5). Furthermore, it is essential that the state authorities are proactive in offering the opportunity

¹⁵⁶ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 166.

¹⁵⁷ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 117-119.

¹⁵⁸ Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021-2022, pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁹ See [Kassai Figyelő](#) (Košice); [Romano nevo l'il](#) (Prešov).

¹⁶⁰ See respectively for 2021: periodical: €588 596, non-periodical: €501 589; for 2022: periodical: €667 604, non-periodical: €452 873; for 2023: periodical: €645 741, non-periodical: €413 190; for 2024: periodical: €636 122, non-periodical: €496 264. For instance, Hungarian periodicals receive financial support from the Hungarian Fund Bethlen Gábor (*Bethlen Gábor Alap*), the periodical [Kárpátok](#) receives financial support from Germany and the Polish periodical [Monitor Polonijny](#) from the Polish authorities.

¹⁶¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 47.

¹⁶² ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 166.

for all national minorities, including numerically smaller ones, to have printed or online media in their respective languages in order to preserve and develop their cultures and languages.

Recommendation

115. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to provide long-term, sustainable pluri-annual project funding for national minority magazines and other printed and online media, and to work to promote the development and circulation of print and online media for all national minorities, including the numerically smaller ones, in co-operation with their representatives.

Use of minority languages with administrative authorities and the judiciary (Article 10)

116. Use of minority languages is regulated by the Law on the State Language ("Law No. 250/1995") and Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities ("Law No. 184/1999").¹⁶³ In conformity with the principle of equal treatment, discrimination is prohibited also on the ground of language under Law No. 365/2004.¹⁶⁴ Law No. 184/1999 states that the Slovak authorities must maintain a list of municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic affiliating with a national minority make up at least 15% of the population.¹⁶⁵ Following the reduction of the threshold from 20% to 15%,¹⁶⁶ the Slovak government adopted in January 2023 a new Regulation No. 35/2023 issuing a list of municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic affiliating with a national minority make up at least 15% of the population. According to information provided in the sixth state report, 125 new municipalities were added to the previously list, reaching 763 municipalities overall.¹⁶⁷ As of 2026, only persons affiliating with the German, Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities meet the 15% threshold required for their languages to be officially recognised in at least one municipality.

117. The Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025 included "systematic solutions" relating to administrative use of German, Hungarian, Romani, Ruthenian and Ukrainian. Existing legislation allows for a limited degree of discretion for administrative use of minority languages in municipalities where the respective minorities do not meet the 15% threshold. In addition to allowing the use of Czech, Law No. 184/1999 states that a minority language may be used in oral communication with municipal officials if the officials consent.

118. The right to use minority languages with the judiciary is covered by legislation,¹⁶⁸ with the Civil Procedure Law (Law No. 160/2015), the Code of Administrative Procedure (Law No. 162/2015) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Law No 301/2005) all making provision for interpretation to be provided, at the state's expense, in court proceedings, including in minority languages.¹⁶⁹

119. Relevant administrative bodies collaborate with the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities to implement the provisions of Law No. 184/1999.¹⁷⁰ The Plenipotentiary for National Minorities has produced "methodological guidelines" for relevant state bodies.¹⁷¹ During the sixth monitoring cycle, the authorities adopted the Report on the Use of National Minority Languages in the Territory of the Slovak Republic for the period 2021-2022. As a result, the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities has indicated to the Advisory Committee that they will update the "methodological guidelines" and draft a proposal for a financial support mechanism for expenses incurred in applying the provisions of Law No. 184/1999. In collaboration with the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, the Ministry of the Interior issues bilingual registry documents (birth, marriage and death certificates) in minority languages and in Slovak. During the sixth monitoring cycle, steps were taken to digitise the activities of registry offices, taking into account the need to issue bilingual documents in minority languages.¹⁷²

¹⁶³ Law No. 270/1995; Law No. 184/1999. Translations of the legislation concerning the minority rights are [available](#) in the German, Hungarian, Romani, Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages. For Law No. 184/1999, see in particular Articles 2, 3, 5 and 7.

¹⁶⁴ [Law No. 365/2004](#) on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination, and on amending and supplementing certain other laws (Anti-Discrimination Law).

¹⁶⁵ Law No. 184/1999, Article 2(2). See also Law No. 270/1995, Article 3(4).

¹⁶⁶ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 175.

¹⁶⁷ [Sixth state report](#), para. 84.

¹⁶⁸ Law No. 184/1999, Article 5(1).

¹⁶⁹ [Law No. 160/2015](#), Article 155; [Law No. 162/2015](#), Article 54; [Law No. 300/2005](#). For more information, see ECRML, MIN-LANG(2025)12.

¹⁷⁰ [Sixth state report](#), para. 166.

¹⁷¹ See [Methodological Guidance to the Act; Methodological Guidelines for Ensuring Language Competence Training Aimed at Maintaining and Improving the Level of Proficiency in the Language of National Minorities for a Group of Civil Servants Performing Civil Service in Municipalities Defined in a Special Regulation; Methodological Guidelines for Ensuring the Fulfilment of Tasks Arising from Law No. 184/1999 in the Conditions of Higher Territorial Units \(Self-Governing Regions\); Methodological Guidance of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic on Financial Security](#). The specific methodological guidelines for Law No. 184/1999 are [available](#) in Slovak, Hungarian, Romani, Ukrainian, German and Ruthenian at the website of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities.

¹⁷² [Sixth state report](#), paras. 163, 164 and 166.

120. Representatives of the Czech national minority voiced satisfaction with existing arrangements for use of Czech with administrative authorities. However, representatives of the Ruthenian national minority raised several issues with the existing provisions for administrative use of Ruthenian, including in municipalities where speakers of Ruthenian constitute 15% or more of the local population (such as the lack of Ruthenian language competence by civil servants or the lack of issuance of documents also in Ruthenian). They praised the work of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, which produced translations of basic administrative documents for use in municipalities where the 15% threshold is met.

121. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities conducted a survey among 757 state entities, including 637 municipal authorities regarding the application of Law No. 184/1999. This survey demonstrated an overall improvement in the use of minority languages in those municipalities where Hungarian, Romani or Ruthenian meet the threshold. Despite this, 12% of bodies which responded to the survey questionnaire reported that conditions for use of minority languages in official communication were “problematic”, and 28% “partially problematic”.¹⁷³

122. The Ministry of Justice has taken steps to support availability of information in minority languages for the victims of crimes, by developing resources on victims’ rights in Hungarian, both online and in printed leaflets.¹⁷⁴ Minority languages are sometimes used in criminal and civil proceedings but rarely in administrative proceedings.¹⁷⁵ The Hungarian language is, by a considerable margin, the most widely used minority language in the Slovak judicial system. The overall trend in terms of judicial use of Hungarian between 2019 and 2022 appeared to be broadly stable.¹⁷⁶ Survey data collected by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities suggest very limited administrative use of minority languages other than Hungarian.¹⁷⁷

123. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “language rights are effective only if they can be fully enjoyed in the public sphere.”¹⁷⁸ Minority language rights in Article 10 can be enjoyed in areas inhabited by persons affiliating with national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers they so request. This means that Article 10 applies also to areas “where only a relatively small percentage of persons belonging to national minorities reside, provided that persons belonging to national minorities traditionally inhabit the areas concerned, that there is a request by these persons, and that such a request corresponds to a real need.”¹⁷⁹ This means that states should regularly and carefully assess such demand. Where access to language rights is conditional upon meeting numerical thresholds, those thresholds “must not constitute an undue obstacle to the official use of certain minority languages in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities either traditionally or in substantial numbers”¹⁸⁰ and should apply those thresholds flexibly. “The Advisory Committee has consistently encouraged the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that minority language rights in the judicial system are fully safeguarded, including as regards investigative and pre-trial stages. In addition, the Advisory Committee has welcomed the guarantee of the right to interpretation into a minority language not only in the context of criminal proceedings, but also in that of civil and administrative proceedings.”¹⁸¹

124. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the 15% threshold outlined by Laws No. 250/1995 and No. 184/1999 represents an obstacle to the use of minority languages with administrative authorities. In practice, in addition to the limited exemptions applying to Czech, five minority languages only (German, Hungarian, Romani, Ruthenian and Ukrainian) are used, sometimes in a sporadic manner, in a limited number of municipalities where they meet the 15% threshold. Speakers of other minority

¹⁷³ See Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities (Bratislava, 2023). ‘Report on the Status and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities 2021-2022’, section 5.4 (pp. 88-91). See also Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, [meeting with the State Secretary of MIRRI and the Plenipotentiary for the Development of Artificial Intelligence](#), 25 August 2025.

¹⁷⁴ [Sixth state report](#), para. 167.

¹⁷⁵ ECRML, sixth state periodical report ([MIN-LANG \(2024\) PR 2](#)), p. 16, table 8 and table 9 and additional information collected during the monitoring visit in the Slovak Republic (20-24 October 2025).

¹⁷⁶ In 2024, interpretation into Hungarian was provided in 374 and 486 cases for civil proceedings and criminal proceedings respectively, as the Advisory Committee was informed during its monitoring visit (20-24 October 2025).

¹⁷⁷ The most recent survey data of which the Advisory Committee is aware, and which was shared during its monitoring visit (20-24 October 2025), covers the 2021-2022 period. In this period, 873 written submissions in a minority language were recorded across 102 municipalities, of which 872 were in Hungarian and one was in Ruthenian. In the 2021-2022 period, 703 requests were made for the issuing of bilingual forms in Hungarian and Slovak, while four requests were made for bilingual forms in Ruthenian and Slovak. No requests were reported for bilingual forms in German, Romani or Ukrainian in this period, while municipalities issued bilingual forms in 648 cases. For the 2021-2022 period, it was reported that, in municipalities where persons affiliating with the Hungarian national minority constitute at least 15% of the population, 70.4% of municipal employees were proficient in both spoken and written Hungarian.

¹⁷⁸ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 51.

¹⁷⁹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 56.

¹⁸⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 57.

¹⁸¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 59.

languages have no legal right to use their languages in administrative proceedings. While the Advisory Committee notes with approval the clear effort of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities to develop effective guidelines, it is concerned that issues remain in terms of their effective implementation at the local level by municipal authorities. The administrative use of minority languages not meeting the 15% threshold in oral communication represents a technical possibility, but not an enforceable legal right. It is unclear to the Advisory Committee if the provisions outlined by Law No. 184/1999 are being effectively implemented in the field of administrative of Romani in municipalities where Romani speakers meet the threshold. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that digitalisation could help addressing existing issues, for instance, through the translation of documents and forms and their publication online in all the municipalities where the conditions under Article 10(2) are met. Given the numerical size of the Roma national minority, it also notes that the Romani language is significantly under-represented in judicial proceedings.¹⁸²

Recommendation

125. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to ensure that persons affiliating with national minorities, including numerically smaller ones, can use their languages in an effective and sustainable manner with administrative authorities and the judiciary. The authorities should take a more flexible approach in guaranteeing the right to use minority languages in areas traditionally inhabited by national minorities or where they are present in substantial numbers.

Display of minority language signs and topographical indications (Article 11)

126. The use of bilingual information on road signs, as well as destination and other geographical names is based on Law No. 184/1999 as amended, in municipalities where persons affiliating with a certain national minority make up at least 15% of the population (see Article 10).¹⁸³ Law No. 184/1999 and Law No. 513/2009 also make provision for the display of destinations in railway stations in the relevant minority languages.¹⁸⁴ The Advisory Committee understands that, at the time of adoption of this Opinion, there were 137 railway stations and stops on the Slovak railways network equipped with bilingual signs, of which 125 have names in Hungarian, 10 in Ruthenian and one sign in German.¹⁸⁵

127. During the sixth monitoring cycle, the Office of the National Council for the Protection of National Minorities, which provides methodological assistance and guidance in this field, called on the Ministry of Transport and the Slovak Road Administration to comply with Law No. 184/1999 when preparing the technical conditions governing the display of traffic signs, resulting in the adoption of Regulation No. 35/2023. According to the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, the use of traffic signs in minority languages has proven to be complex and, in some respects, ambiguous, but several suggestions have now been enacted by the Slovak Road Administration, such as allowing the use of the Cyrillic alphabet for the Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages and a wider interpretation of the term "municipality" to include extra-urban areas. In its report on the status and rights of persons affiliating with national minorities for the period 2023-2024, the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities pointed out examples where the Slovak Road Administration rejected requests for the installation of bilingual signs, basing their decision on the requirement to simplify texts and on budgetary considerations. However, the report also pointed out that "in recent months, partly as a result of [...] consultations [initiated by the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities], some positions have been reconsidered and there has been greater openness in assessing applications for bilingual signage."¹⁸⁶ The Plenipotentiary for National Minorities expressed its satisfaction that "concrete initiatives are emerging in practice aimed at expanding the use of bilingual road signs, considering that such initiatives demonstrate the natural interest of local and regional communities in strengthening the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Slovak Republic."¹⁸⁷

128. The Advisory Committee reiterates the importance that the use of minority languages in place names and topographical signs has for the acceptance of diversity amongst the population, and for demonstrating that the diverse character of a specific region, historically and at present, is acknowledged and valued. The Advisory Committee considers that multilingual cultural and tourist

¹⁸² In 2024, Romani translation and interpreting services were used in ten cases for criminal proceedings.

¹⁸³ Law No. 184/1999, Article 4(3) and (7). The list of these municipalities is given in [Regulation No. 35/2023](#), which reflects the 2021 census results. See also [Decree No. 30/2020](#) on Traffic Signs, Article 5(1)1. ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 175.

¹⁸⁴ The labelling of railway stations and stops with signs in minority languages falls within the competence of the Slovak Railways, in accordance with [Law No. 513/2009](#), Article 34(6)(h) and Law No. 184/1999, Article 2(1).

¹⁸⁵ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 176-178, as well as additional updated information provided by the authorities.

¹⁸⁶ See Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, [Report on the status and rights of members of national minorities for the period 2023–2024](#), p.100.

¹⁸⁷ See Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, [information on the issue of bilingual road signs](#), 29 October 2025. See also Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, [examples of good practice in the field of bilingualism](#), 27 May 2025.

signage offers considerable potential for the use of topographical names in minority languages, as it uses these languages and toponyms in a field (heritage preservation) that is appreciated across all parts of society, raises awareness of the cultural contributions made by national minorities and persons affiliating with them also has a practical function. It reiterates that “bilingualism in signposts should be promoted as it conveys the message that a given territory is shared in harmony by various population groups.”¹⁸⁸

129. The Advisory Committee notes that during the sixth monitoring cycle, regulations aimed at ensuring the effective use of minority language in signs and topographical indications have been adopted. The proactive initiatives undertaken by the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities towards municipalities, public services and private companies, as well as the adoption by the Slovak Road Administration of technical conditions governing the display of traffic signs in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 184/1999, have led to an increase in the number of signs and topographical indications displayed in minority languages.

130. However, while appreciating the lowering of the threshold from 20% to 15% and noting that topographical signs are generally displayed in the municipalities reaching it, the Advisory Committee considers that such a threshold continues to constitute a significant obstacle especially for numerically smaller minorities. In practice, place names are only displayed in Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and German and appear mainly on signs marking the entrance and exit of a municipality. Many localities do not have a distinct historical Romani form of the place name. As for the Slovak railways network, bilingual signposts and place names only exist in Hungarian and Ruthenian (with two additional single-language designations in Ukrainian and German) in a limited number of stations. The Advisory Committee sees the need for a more flexible approach at the local and regional levels, in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity, when needs and interests have been expressed to display signs and topographical indications in minority languages, especially in municipalities where the respective national minority met the threshold in the past but no longer reached it in the 2021 census.

Recommendation

131. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to actively support the practical implementation of the right to display signs and topographical indications in minority languages and to take a more flexible approach when applying the threshold set in the legislation in areas traditionally and currently inhabited by substantial numbers of persons affiliating with a national minority.

Inclusive and intercultural education and knowledge about national minorities (Article 12)

132. The Slovak authorities recognise the importance of intercultural education and support its promotion. In the mainstream curriculum, minority related content is included in the history teaching programme (*Dejepis*)¹⁸⁹ and during civic education classes (*Občianska náuka*), where national minorities are placed within a contemporary social-legal context. Furthermore, Slovak literature and culture classes occasionally refer to authors affiliating with national minorities and regional traditions, although this is not systematic and depends on the teacher's choice. Some schools carry out projects on national minority histories and heritage, multicultural traditions, co-operate with museums and/or organise visits to historical sites. The former Slovak State Pedagogical Institute, which was integrated in 2022 into the National Institute for Education and Youth (NIVaM), had also produced learning materials about national minorities for teachers.¹⁹⁰

133. In 2021, the authorities developed a Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education and have, since December 2024, implemented their Second Action Plan for the Years 2025-2027. The Ministry of Education provides pre- and in- service training for teaching and professional staff who work with pupils affiliating with national minorities, as well as for pupils coming from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Education programmes comprise, inter alia, several measures aimed at supporting the use of the Romani language and culture in the teaching process, the organisation of summer schools and annual competitions for national minority schools.¹⁹¹ The Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National

¹⁸⁸ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 3 \(2012\)](#), para. 67.

¹⁸⁹ References to the national minorities can, for instance, be found in the teaching of the medieval and early modern settlement history (arrival of Hungarians, Germans, Ruthenians, Jews, Roma); the 19th – 20th century nationalism and state formation, with a special emphasis placed on relations among Slovaks, Hungarians, Czechs, Germans, and Jews; the World War II, under which Holocaust education is compulsory; the Communist period, referring to deportations, assimilation policies, and cultural suppression of minorities and the post-1989 transition, with references to the development of minority rights, language laws, decentralisation, and education rights.

¹⁹⁰ See for instance the [Národnostné menšiny – zoznámme sa](#) booklet, with short historical highlights of national minorities. However, it should be noted that this publication has been subject to some controversy. See SK Spravy, [Controversial teaching aid Let's meet, national minorities](#), 5 August 2024. See also the publication of [fairy tales](#) in Slovak and Romani languages by NYVaM.

¹⁹¹ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 184 and 188-189.

Minorities continues to support teaching activities about the life and histories of national minorities in the Slovak Republic, at the primary school and secondary school levels, as well as research on the histories and ethnology of national minorities by higher education institutes (see Article 5).

134. In the context of the Strategy 2030, the National Institute for Education and Youth (NIVaM) analysed existing educational documents containing information on the Roma national minority and use this analysis to ensure the provision of accurate and comprehensive materials, including their integration into newly developed textbooks for history, civic education, geography, and ethics.¹⁹²

135. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “[c]urricula and educational materials [...] must aim to value diversity, nurture respect for difference, and seek to develop analytical and critical thinking skills. [They] are therefore key to raising awareness of national minorities and persons belonging to them.”¹⁹³ “Minority cultures, histories, languages, religions and identities should be present across a wide range of subjects – literature, the arts, sciences and geography, for example – and at all educational levels.”¹⁹⁴ “The Advisory Committee has welcomed instances where parts of a curriculum reserved for teaching about particular localities, especially their history, are also used for teaching about national minorities living there. It has also encouraged authorities to provide guidance to teachers on how to make use of such reserved parts of curricula or how they should fill in open parts of a curriculum. Likewise, age-appropriate teaching about the histories of national minorities should be included at all levels of the education system.”¹⁹⁵

136. The Advisory Committee notes that educational materials used in mainstream education provide only limited opportunities to reflect on the historical presence, and contributions of national minorities and persons affiliating with them. Generally, the representation of the Hungarian national minority in learning materials is more extensive than that of other national minorities. The latter varies widely, most often depending on the length of their historical presence in the territory but also their current size. Their portrayal is also often linked to traumatic experiences in the past (such as the Holocaust for the Jewish and Roma national minorities or the Czechoslovak identity debate for the Czech national minority) rather than on their historical and contemporary contribution to the Slovak cultural richness, shared heritage and everyday co-existence. The Advisory Committee further notes that the Roma national minority is often portrayed primarily as a group affected by poverty, segregation and social exclusion, rather than a historical community with a rich and continuous presence on Slovak territory. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the renewed Roma political activism, cultural revival and contributions to public life could, for example, be highlighted more effectively. The Advisory Committee stresses in this context the content of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation (2020)2 on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials, which provides a useful tool to refer to Roma history in educational materials in the Slovak Republic.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, it recalls the work carried out by the Council of Europe Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, which provides data through general and thematic reports, offers a platform for knowledge exchange and factual discussion, and promotes the sharing of good practices and successful models on history teaching.¹⁹⁷

Recommendation

137. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to continue their efforts to promote intercultural education in mainstream education and to ensure that information about minority cultures, histories and languages, including those of the numerically smaller ones, are systematically included in school curricula and educational materials in a multi-perspective manner in close consultation with representatives of the national minorities. Such content should reflect both historical developments affecting national minorities and persons affiliating with them as well as their contemporary presence and contributions to the Slovak society.

Equal access to education – Roma (Article 12)

138. Under the Slovak legislation, all children have the right to education.¹⁹⁸ However, the Slovak Republic is the only country in the EU against which the European Commission has filed a complaint

¹⁹² NIVaM, [Analysis of textbooks with the approval and recommendation clause of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic - history, geography, civics, ethics](#), 2024.

¹⁹³ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 on Education under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), adopted on 31 May 2024, revising and replacing Thematic Commentary No. 1 on Education (2006), paras. 25.

¹⁹⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 27.

¹⁹⁵ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 38.

¹⁹⁶ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2020\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.

¹⁹⁷ See [Slovak Republic - Observatory on History Teaching in Europe](#).

¹⁹⁸ Constitution of the Slovak Republic, Article 42(1).

with the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) due to long-term non-compliance with the EU Racial Equality Directive, on the grounds that it is not effectively addressing the issue of segregation of Roma children within both mainstream and “special education”.¹⁹⁹ Through its Recovery and Resilience Plan, the EU identified issues relating to segregation in education and school desegregation as being of particular importance.²⁰⁰ In this context, in May 2023, the Slovak authorities adopted two new laws,²⁰¹ introducing, *inter alia*, a legal definition of segregation.²⁰² In 2024, the prohibition of segregation in education was incorporated into the Law on Education,²⁰³ making schools responsible for integrating the standards of the Ministry of Education into their internal regulations and for developing plans and procedures for their implementation by September 2025.²⁰⁴ Various support measures provided for in the legislation are being implemented in this context.²⁰⁵

139. The global objective of the Strategy 2030 under the priority area of education aims to ensure equal access of Roma to quality education in mainstream education from birth to employment, with an emphasis on desegregation and establishing measures to ensure inclusion at all levels of education. Activities have included the creation of indicators and objectives, and the identification (and allocation of) funding (see Article 4).²⁰⁶ These measures should also be read in conjunction with the Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education, approved in 2021, and its Second Action Plan for the Years 2025-2027, approved in December 2024. This latest action plan contains measures to support inclusive education, desegregation and destigmatisation as well as training programmes for pedagogical and other professionals working in education.²⁰⁷

140. The segregation of Roma children is also the subject of various cases before domestic courts.²⁰⁸ On 15 December 2022 and 12 July 2023,²⁰⁹ the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic ruled in two of such cases that the Slovak Republic violated the principle of equal treatment by failing to take sufficient

¹⁹⁹ In 2015, the European Commission sent a formal notice to the Slovak authorities, and in 2019 it opened infringement proceedings, considering that, despite the introduction of a series of legislative reforms and the adoption of several strategies and action plans to support the inclusion of Roma children in education, the reforms adopted so far were insufficient. In April 2023, the European Commission [decided](#) to refer the Slovak Republic to the CJEU. See also ERRC, [The Slovak Republic in the dock: Advocate General finds systematic and persistent failures to end school segregation](#), 5 August 2025.

²⁰⁰ [The Slovak Republic's recovery and resilience plan - European Commission. Sixth state report](#), paras. 192-211.

²⁰¹ [Law No. 181/2023](#) and [Law No. 182/2023](#), amending [Law No. 245/2008](#) on Education.

²⁰² The new provision, contained in [Article 2\(ah\)](#) of the Law on Education, defines segregation as follows: “Segregation in education and training refers to any action or failure to act that contradicts the principle of equal treatment according to specific regulations and results in, or could result in, spatial, organisational, physical, or social exclusion or separation of a group of children, students, listeners, or participants in education and training without a reason that stems from this law.” During its monitoring visit, the Advisory Committee was informed by the Public Defender that the reference to “specific regulations” directly relates to the Anti-Discrimination Law (Law No. 365/2004), thus establishing a clear link between the general principle of equal treatment and its application in the education sector. The Centre for Human Rights, while welcoming the adoption of this definition drew attention to some fundamental shortcomings and gaps it contains, with the risk that it can negatively affect and limit the assessment and resolution of cases of segregation in education. See also Article 424(a) of the Criminal Code, which makes segregation and all other forms of generalised or systematic discrimination a criminal offence.

²⁰³ [Law No. 290/2024](#). See also the Law on Education, Article 145(1): “The rights established by this Law are equally guaranteed to every applicant, child, pupil and listener in accordance with the principle of equal treatment in education established by a special regulation.” When complying with the prohibition of segregation in education, a school or school facility shall proceed according to the standards issued and published on the website of the Ministry of Education. These standards are binding for the development of school regulations.

²⁰⁴ See [standards for compliance with the prohibition of segregation 2024](#), also available at Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth, [Standards for compliance with the prohibition of segregation](#).

²⁰⁵ Law on Education, Article 145a. These measures are gradually established between 1 September 2023 and 1 September 2026 and aim at, *inter alia*, increasing school attendance and reducing school drop-out; providing courses in the school's language of instruction; improving the conditions of education and training of pupils living in MRCs; providing teaching assistants in the classroom; ensuring the adjustment of school premises and the removal of physical barriers.

²⁰⁶ The action plan in the education priority area follows the global objective with six sub-objectives, namely: to improve the school results of children and pupils living in MRCs from early care to employment; to increase the number and quality of pedagogical, professional and support staff in the education of children and pupils living in MRCs; To ensure a sufficient capacity in kindergartens and primary schools with the presence of children and pupils living in MRCs; to systematically prevent, mitigate and eliminate segregation in the educational process at all levels of the educational system; to increase the inclusiveness of schools through systemic and methodical support for the individualisation of the educational process; to develop the Roma identity and support the exercise of the rights of Roma as a national minority, with a special focus on language rights.

²⁰⁷ For example, the Ministry of Education participates in the [INSCHOOL project](#), which focuses on supporting the social inclusion of Roma through supporting inclusive educational policies and practices in selected schools, the [Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation project](#) which aims to create opportunities to raise awareness of Roma and non-Roma pupils about the Romani language, culture and history and to establish the conditions for the teaching of the Romani language in primary schools on a more significant scale, and the project [Together with Roma we will achieve more](#), which aims to develop teaching materials, publications and methodologies for the Romani language, culture and history; support intercultural and inclusive education in schools with pupils from Roma communities and to further develop the knowledge and understanding of teaching and professional staff and school management on Roma issues.

²⁰⁸ Regional Court of Prešov, judgment of April 22, 2024. Centre for Human Rights, [Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic in 2024](#), pp. 70-74.

²⁰⁹ Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, [decision No. 5Cdo/102/2020](#) of 15 December 2022 and [decision No. 5Cdo/220/2022](#) of 12 July 2023.

preventive measures to protect Roma children against discrimination based on their ethnic affiliation.²¹⁰ The Supreme Court, taking into account the best interest of the child and the general interest of the entire society, reached the conclusion that the state, in co-operation with the municipality concerned, must take effective measures in order to prevent segregation. On 27 February 2025, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered a landmark judgment holding that the Slovak Republic had violated the prohibition of discrimination in the case of a Roma pupil who had been placed in a special class for children with “mild intellectual disabilities”.²¹¹ The ECtHR held that in a situation where a *prima facie* case of discrimination existed, the state had failed to demonstrate that it had provided the necessary safeguards to prevent misdiagnosis and misplacement of Roma pupils.²¹² The ECtHR observed that, in practice, when Roma children are enrolled in the “special education” system in the Slovak Republic, a number of interrelated factors come into play, including their socio-economic situations. The ECtHR also stressed that, in the context of the right to education of groups that have historically faced discrimination, particularly where its structural consequences persist, states must adopt positive measures, such as providing assistance to help pupils overcome difficulties in following the school curriculum.

141. Since May 2024, the Commissioner for Children, a body established by law with a view to covering the full scope of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has conducted extensive field monitoring in ten municipalities with a high proportion of MRCs. The monitoring highlighted significant deficiencies in the provision of quality education, school attendance, access to clean drinking water, healthcare and overall living conditions.²¹³

142. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities regularly publishes analyses and studies on the measures adopted, such as on the impacts of the two-shift school system,²¹⁴ and on the lack of measures to increase school attendance (published in 2022).²¹⁵ Other studies have considered the implementation of inclusive education tools in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, the development of public transportation of pupils by bus, and kindergarten capacity in municipalities with MRCs.²¹⁶

143. In its annual reports “on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment”, the Centre for Human Rights continues to identify important shortcomings and violations of human rights in the context of the right to education of Roma children. In its report from 2024, it identified this issue as a “systemic problem reflecting broader social structures of exclusion and discrimination”.²¹⁷

144. The Public Defender also monitors the implementation and practical enforcement of the new provisions of the Law on Education. It considers that segregation of Roma children in education remains a persistent challenge and disproportionately affects children living in MRCs more than Roma children from “integrated households”.²¹⁸ The Public Defender, who is, in early 2026, conducting an *ex-officio* monitoring of two national desegregation projects implemented by the Ministry of Education,²¹⁹ stressed to the Advisory Committee that the over-representation of Roma children in segregated educational settings not only violates their fundamental right to education but also perpetuates the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

145. Statistical data suggest that only limited progress has been made over the last two decades in improving the level of attendance of Roma children at preschool level and in reducing school

²¹⁰ In its decision, the court stated that the construction of a new building in the Podšadek campus increased the capacity of the primary school (in order to improve the accessibility of the school closest to the children’s place of residence), but at the same time, Roma children were in fact separated from the majority community. The court stated that its conclusion is not affected by the lack of intention to purposefully discriminate against Roma children or by the existence of a legitimate goal to ensure access to education for children closest to their place of residence. According to the court, the construction of a new building is an unreasonable and inappropriate means of achieving the goal of the spatial proximity to the school, as it disadvantages the persons concerned by *de facto* segregating them.

²¹¹ ECtHR, [Salay v. the Slovak Republic](#), 27 February 2025.

²¹² It should be noted that in its judgment, the ECtHR also relied on findings of the Public Defender, in the context of a written third-party submission provided in March 2024.

²¹³ See Office of the Commissioner for Children, [the Office of the Commissioner for children warns of alarming results of monitoring in-communities with MRCs](#), 20 January 2025.

²¹⁴ Two-shift operations are a long-standing practise in the Slovak educational system. Under this system, one group of pupils attends school in the morning and the remaining pupils attend classes in the afternoon. See [Analysis of the existence and functioning of two-shift operations and capacities of elementary schools in the 2021 school year](#), 2022.

²¹⁵ The analysis addressed the impact of frequent student absences on their academic results and further employment on the labour market. See [Analysis of absences and measures to reduce absences from compulsory school attendance](#), 2022.

²¹⁶ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 48-51 and 208-209. Other analysis can be found in the following [webpage](#). These studies and surveys were carried out by taking into account the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019.

²¹⁷ See Centre for Human Rights, [Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic in 2024](#), pp. 62-81.

²¹⁸ In the context of the EU-SILC_MRC data, “integrated households” specifically denotes Roma families who live integrated with the majority of the population, not in segregated settlements, unlike those living in MRCs.

²¹⁹ Namely the “[Support for Educational Opportunities](#)” and “[Opportunity for All](#)” projects. These projects aim to reduce the overrepresentation of Roma pupils in “special education” and pilot measures to eliminate racial segregation.

absenteeism, two problems that particularly affect the Roma minority and hamper their equal access to education. Following the amendment on the Law on Education introducing compulsory preschool education for all children from the age of three, from 2025 onwards, a €6 263 520 grant scheme has been created for the years 2023-2026 to support such services and activities in MRCs and in other communities experiencing multi-generational poverty.²²⁰ Furthermore, the programme “support for pre-primary education of children from MRC II”, co-funded by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) aims to adapt kindergartens for Roma children with support from Roma parental assistants, tailored activities for children, and develop co-operation between the community and social-work organisations.²²¹ The aim of these legislative changes and programmes is to recruit early care assistants to work with families and prepare children to enter formal pre-primary education.²²²

146. Another important challenge is the elimination of the two-shift operation of primary schools.²²³ As part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic,²²⁴ the expansion of the spatial capacity of primary schools in districts without optimal access to education appears essential to eliminate this practice. It is commonly accepted that the afternoon shift has been established to educate pupils from MRCs, thereby deepening the segregation of Roma children, who receive a lower quality education.²²⁵ From 24 February 2023 onwards, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities has been co-operating with the Ministry of Education as an intermediary/provider of technical support. The Office is assessing compliance with the so-called “3D Principles” (principles of desegregation, destigmatisation and deghettoisation) of this programme. In 2024, Law No. 290/2024 amended the Law on Education, adding a new section according to which “a primary school does not have the capacity to accept children if, for spatial reasons, school education cannot be provided for all pupils in the morning hours.”²²⁶

147. According to data gathered in the context of EU-SILC_MRC, there is a clear trend of increased segregation within mainstream education among children living in MRCs.²²⁷ Thus, 47% of pupils, aged 6 to 15 years, from MRCs, who are in mainstream education, attend classes comprised entirely of Roma students. An additional 23% of pupils are in classes where Roma students constitute the majority. Among Roma pupils from integrated households, 24% attend classes composed exclusively of Roma pupils and 23% of Roma pupils from integrated households are enrolled in classes where Roma pupils form the majority. At the secondary school level, an existing practice is to establish external branches of vocational schools that are already part of the official secondary education system in places close to segregated Roma communities.²²⁸ As well as sustaining the spatial and ethnic segregation, such schools offer courses/programmes with very low employability prospects, which often perpetuate gender stereotypes and stereotypes about the Roma and are generally of very poor quality (the so-called “F-branches”).²²⁹ Difficulties in ensuring that Roma have equal access to education are also reported in higher secondary education, as well as at the university level, with only a small number of Roma students being enrolled in universities.²³⁰

148. One of the most pressing issues is the undue placing of a high proportion of Roma children in so-called “special schools” designed for “mentally disabled children”. In the sixth state report,²³¹ the authorities stress that the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Patho-psychology is revising and finalising standards for the diagnosis of cognitive abilities in order to obtain a more objective psychodiagnosis. However, as stressed by the Public Defender in its third-party submission to the ECtHR *Salay v. the Slovak Republic* case in March 2024, Roma children account for up to 63% of pupils enrolled in these schools and 16.1% of Roma children received “special education” on account of a

²²⁰ See [Grant scheme to support early care and intervention](#).

²²¹ See European Social Fund Plus, [Transforming early education for MRCs in the Slovak Republic](#).

²²² [Sixth state report](#), paras. 53-55 and 206-207. The scheme replaced the [National Project Support for Pre-Primary Education of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities II](#) (“PRIM II”), which was implemented by the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Roma Communities in the period from November 2020 to October 2023. The aim of the project was to get as many children as possible from Roma communities into kindergartens and to introduce support measures to ensure rapid inclusion of children from Roma communities into mixed collectives of kindergartens. Approximately 11 000 children across 133 kindergartens were involved in the project.

²²³ See Amnesty International, ERRC, [separate and unequal: school segregation persists for Roma in the Slovak Republic](#), 2025.

²²⁴ See European Commission, [The Slovak Republic's recovery and resilience plan](#), Investment 2 (Completion of school infrastructure), Component 7 (Education for the 21st Century). Primary schools with two-shift operation can apply for structural funding. The aim of the call is to expand the capacity of primary schools through new buildings, extensions, superstructures and reconstructions of existing buildings. By the end of 2026, two-shift operation should be eliminated from at least 35 primary schools.

²²⁵ See the [letter](#) sent in December 2023 by the Centre for Human Rights to the European Commission.

²²⁶ Law No. 290/2024, Article 20(7).

²²⁷ See also The Guardian, [Segregated classrooms are not a thing of the past – look at what is happening to Roma children in the Slovak Republic](#), 29 May 2025.

²²⁸ See also Musilova M., [The right to education of Roma girls in the Slovak Republic: does the “practical woman” education program violate the right to education of Roma girls in the Slovak Republic as it is protected by international Human Rights Law?](#), 2021.

²²⁹ 2025 Slovak Republic Country Report on Non-discrimination, p. 57. See also Ministry of Education, [Methodological guide – desegregation in upbringing and education](#), p. 44.

²³⁰ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 210.

²³¹ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 36-38.

diagnosed “mild intellectual disabilities”. Furthermore, according to the EU-SILC_MRC data, in “special education” settings for children from MRCs, 63% of children aged 6 to 15 years are educated in classes with only Roma classmates. Of the children from integrated households, 15% attend special primary schools with only Roma classmates and 30% attend primary schools where the majority of classmates are Roma. In *Salay v. the Slovak Republic*,²³² the ECtHR indicated that many reports and available data confirmed that “special education” in the Slovak Republic constituted an inferior standard of education and that there was persistent, widespread and systematic over-representation of Roma pupils in “special education” classes. It established that placing children in “special education” was indicative of a general policy or measure exerting a disproportionately prejudicial effect on the Roma, who are a particularly vulnerable group. The Public Defender considers that incorrect diagnoses of Roma children and their placement in “special education” designed for pupils and students with “mild intellectual disabilities” severely restricts their future opportunities, leading to generational disadvantages. This systemic failure to ensure equal access to education perpetuates poverty and marginalisation for entire generations of Roma communities.²³³

149. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “ensuring access of all persons belonging to national minorities to quality education means that states need to act resolutely to, *inter alia*, ensure that all children are duly enrolled in schools and to monitor school attainments, including absenteeism and drop-out rates, literacy, completion of studies, grades, gender disparities, access to higher educational levels and subsequently access to employment.”²³⁴ “Efforts to ensure equal opportunities are also supported through efforts to ensure the integration of society as a whole through the education system, in particular through ensuring [that] schools are welcoming environments for all [...]”²³⁵ Roma pupils should not be separated from other non-Roma students in a discriminatory manner and any segregation based on ethnic affiliation must be avoided. Segregated education, often of a lower standard than that offered to other students, represents one of the most extreme manifestations of the precarious position of Roma parents and pupils.

150. The Advisory Committee notes the authorities’ awareness of persistent segregation practices towards Roma pupils within the education system and welcomes their willingness to address them. However, despite the adoption of new legislative measures, the on-going implementation of the Strategy 2030, relevant court decisions, studies and analyses, monitoring visits and recommendations made by numerous national and international bodies, all of which point to a systemic problem, segregation in mainstream education persists, with only very limited progress achieved since the adoption of the Advisory Committee’s First Opinion in 2000.²³⁶ During its monitoring visit in October 2025, the Advisory Committee observed for example that, despite being legally prohibited, two-shift operation in primary schools continues. The Advisory Committee also finds it alarming that even where Roma children attend mainstream primary and secondary schools, various forms of segregation and isolation remain. Such schools are generally reported to be of significantly lower quality and perpetuate the worrying social isolation of Roma children from their peers in the majority population.

151. Similarly, the Advisory Committee remains deeply concerned about the over-representation of Roma children in special classes and schools for pupils with “mild intellectual disabilities”, depriving them of their right to receive quality education. Despite legal changes and activities, the enrolment rate at the preschool and upper secondary school levels remains disproportionately low among Roma pupils compared to the general population.²³⁷ The low levels of educational achievement continue to reduce their prospects of access to the labour market (see Article 15). It is therefore essential to continue to closely monitor attendance,²³⁸ drop-out rates, educational outcomes across different schools and educational pathways such as access to higher education, apprenticeships or employment and to further develop and expand the scope of the existing programmes, which require long-term and secured national funding to provide sustainable and tangible results.²³⁹

152. The Advisory Committee acknowledges that meeting the needs of these pupils requires flexibility and differentiated solutions adapted to local contexts. In this regard, the principles of desegregation, deghettoisation and destigmatisation must be applied in a tailor-made manner to address different and

²³² ECtHR, *Salay v. the Slovak Republic*, paras. 45, 81 and 86.

²³³ Information received from the Public Defender during the monitoring visit (October 2025).

²³⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 50.

²³⁵ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 51.

²³⁶ ACFC, [First Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#).

²³⁷ For data regarding the enrolment rate at the preschool level, see Mária Hušlová Orságová, Katarína Vančíková, & Marián Trnka, [The nature of learning tasks from perspective of children from MRCs](#), 2024, p. 19: “While the overall enrolment rate for children aged 3-5 years was 75% in the 2018/19 school year, it was only 32% in the MRCs setting.” For data regarding the enrolment rate at the primary school level, see Alexandre Rutigliano, [Inclusion of Roma Students in Europe: A literature review and examples of policy initiatives](#), OECD Education Working Paper No. 228.

²³⁸ See [Alarming Report on the Situation of Roma Children in the Slovak Republic – Eurochild](#).

²³⁹ See [Education and Training Monitor 2025](#). See also The Guardian, [‘Roma only’: the school caught up in a Slovakian national scandal](#), 28 September 2023.

unique needs and challenges, with measures that are locally relevant and impactful. The role of regional and local authorities is key in this matter as they are often closest to individuals and communities, and can assist with providing transportation, mediation, school supplies and meals. They in turn must be assisted in fulfilling this role by the national authorities. The Advisory Committee was particularly alarmed and concerned during its visit by the absence of daily school hot meals for many Roma pupils attending classes as a result of the two-shift system and spatial limitations.²⁴⁰

153. The Advisory Committee further underlines that access to quality education for Roma pupils, who often do not speak the language of instruction at home, may require additional teachers with at least some Romani language skills so that they can facilitate understanding for pupils if necessary (see Article 14). The Advisory Committee is of the view that the on-going infringement proceedings at the EU level, combined with the available funding allocated by the Recovery and Resilience Plan, should be understood as an opportunity to adopt good practices in all these aspects and to progressively allocate earmarked and long-term funding in the ordinary state budget to fulfil that aim.

Recommendations

154. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to intensify their efforts to fully implement the Law on Education and urgently eliminate all forms of segregation affecting Roma pupils and students in education. All relevant stakeholders, including those at the local level, should take more resolute actions to include Roma pupils and students into mainstream education. This includes ensuring the implementation of legislation on compulsory preschool education, addressing the inappropriate placement of Roma children in “special schools”, and eliminating the two-shift operation of primary schools, with its detrimental impact on equal access to school meals.

155. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to implement and monitor the strategies, action plans and activities to ensure, in close co-operation with representatives of the Roma national minority, effective access to quality inclusive education for all pupils and students affiliating with the Roma national minority, and to further develop and expand the scope of existing programmes established at the national, regional and local levels to ensure higher school enrolment and school attainment and to reduce school absenteeism and early drop-out at all levels of education. Based on collection of gender disaggregated data, special attention should be given to possible disadvantages experienced by girls.

Teaching in and of minority languages (Article 14)

156. Article 34 of the Constitution allows for the provision of national minority education. The main legislative provisions are found in Law No. 596/2003 on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government (“Law No. 596/2003”),²⁴¹ Law No. 597/2003 as amended on the Financing of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities (“Law No. 597/2003”)²⁴² and the Law on Education. The Law on Education guarantees the right for children affiliating with national minorities to learn and to receive instruction in their minority language, as well as to learn Slovak in order to acquire an adequate command of the official language.²⁴³ Law No. 270/1995 on the State Language (“Law No. 270/1995”), as amended, guarantees the right to instruction in/of minority languages while providing for mandatory teaching of the Slovak language in all primary and secondary schools. It further protects the right for persons affiliating with national minorities to use learning materials in minority languages.²⁴⁴

157. The Ministry of Education has established a National Minority and Inclusive Education Section, with the Department of National Minority Education Development placing a specific emphasis on the needs of persons affiliating with national minorities.²⁴⁵ In 2022 and 2023, the Ministry of Education approved the National Education Programmes for primary education and lower secondary education,

²⁴⁰ The ministry of health acknowledged the deeply negative consequences of this double-shift school operation, noting that so-called ‘dry’ meal packages received by some pupils are not appropriate from the perspective of adequate energy intake and their physiological healthy development. The ministry also noted that from a health perspective, double-shift operation disrupts the natural psychological concentration curve and leads to inappropriate eating habits, which may negatively affect the physiological healthy development of the child.

²⁴¹ [Law No. 596/2003](#). From 1 January 2022, an amendment to this law established regional school authorities as local state administration bodies in education. This amendment creates the conditions for the establishment of national minority schools and facilities in cases where the municipalities do not, or cannot, create the conditions for this. See [sixth state report](#), para. 200.

²⁴² [Law No. 597/2003](#). This law was amended by Law No. 290/2024. The intention of this law is to strengthen the rights of children affiliating with national minorities to education in their language and also takes steps towards strengthening the Romani language culture, and identity within the education system.

²⁴³ Law on Education, Article 12.

²⁴⁴ Law No. 270/1995, Articles 4(1) and 4(4).

²⁴⁵ [Sixth state report](#), para. 203.

as well as educational standards for the teaching of several national minority languages and literature at the primary education and lower secondary education levels.²⁴⁶ The National Programme of Education Development (*Učiace sa Slovensko*) has identified the creation and accessibility of minority-language learning materials to support both minority language schooling and teaching of Slovak as a second language for diverse learners as a priority.²⁴⁷

158. The availability of teaching in and/or of the national minority languages in the education system varies greatly. This includes, on the one hand, a large network of schools where Hungarian is the main language of instruction, some bilingual schools with the teaching in Slovak/German, Slovak/Ruthenian (at primary school level) and Slovak/Ukrainian,²⁴⁸ and on the other hand, a reduced presence or even the absence of teaching of languages of numerically smaller national minorities, despite the guarantees offered under the legislation and the adoption of educational standards.²⁴⁹ This asymmetry in the general access to education in national minority languages creates *de facto* a two-tier system in the country, which is only partially compensated by available provision in private schools,²⁵⁰ or sometimes through Sunday schools.²⁵¹

159. Apart from Hungarian, and to a lesser extent Romani (see Article 12), there is no teaching in or of minority languages in vocational education. At the university level, there are dozens of accredited study programmes funded the state budget and taught in a minority language.²⁵² Overall, all national minority languages can be studied at university level, at the Universities of Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Prešov, Ružomberok and Trnava. University education in Hungarian is also organised at the University of Komárno. The University of Prešov has a range of different departments (the Institutes for German Studies, Hungarian Studies, Russian Studies, Ukrainian Studies, Ruthenian Studies and Romani Studies) which provide initial teacher education. Further training for teachers in and of minority languages is also provided through NIVaM.

160. The Ministry of Education funds several projects for minority language education and has annual calls for development projects that support teaching in minority languages.²⁵³ Regarding the amendments adopted in 2024 and 2025 to Law No. 597/2003 and Law No. 245/2008 respectively, the Ministry of Education considers that the right of persons affiliating with the Roma national minority to education in the Romani language has been answered from a legal point of view, with a definition of national minority education in the Law on Education.²⁵⁴ However, during the period of review, personnel, material, technical and other limitations made it impossible from a practical point of view to establish a school in which Romani would be used as the language of instruction throughout the institution, with only a small number of primary and secondary schools (mostly private) providing its teaching. The primary goals of this legislation are therefore to eliminate inequalities in the application of the fundamental right to education in the Romani language, to improve educational attainment and to eliminate the two-shift operation by increasing spatial capacities of schools.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 181. See also [State Educational Program for Basic Education \(2023\)](#) and Ministry of Education, [Educational standards for teaching Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian and Polish language and literature](#).

²⁴⁷ Ministry of Education, [National Programme for the Development of Education, Proposal for Public discussion](#), p. 32. It should be noted that the Ministry of Education approved [Directive No. 33/2020](#) on teaching aids and [Directive No. 1/2022](#) on educational publications for the purposes of assessing the translation of an educational publication into the national minority language. In 2022, €11.5 million from the state budget and €7.6 million from the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan budget were invested in textbooks, workbooks and teaching texts. See [sixth state report](#), para. 191.

²⁴⁸ In 2022, the Ministry of Education issued basic recommendations for teachers and pupils on how to deal with the arrival of large numbers of children from Ukraine as a result of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine (there are almost 10 000 students from Ukraine in the Slovak education system in early 2026). In this context, several measures, including the creation of a [website](#), were taken and publications adopted that supported the development of education in/of Ukrainian. [Sixth state report](#), para. 222.

²⁴⁹ The Advisory Committee has not been made aware of any other particular recent changes in the situation regarding the teaching in and of minority languages at preschool, primary, secondary and university levels since the publication of the [sixth evaluation report](#) of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of the Slovak Republic and therefore refers to this report for a detailed description of the situation of each minority languages in this regard.

²⁵⁰ For instance, for the teaching of Bulgarian, Croatian (at the secondary school level) and Russian (at the primary school level and at the secondary level as a foreign language).

²⁵¹ For instance, for the teaching of Polish.

²⁵² [Sixth state report](#), para. 190.

²⁵³ Small [grants](#) (up to €10 000 in 2025) are available to schools providing teaching in national minority languages to modernise materials, to provide digital and audiovisual resources and to fund cultural activities. Furthermore, one of the objectives of the national project Equal Opportunities in Education and Training (ROPIV) (2023-2026) is to develop the Roma national identity by creating conditions for education in the mother tongue and the development of scientific and research capacities. See [sixth state report](#), para. 221.

²⁵⁴ See Law No. 290/2024 and [Law No. 323/2025](#). The new legislation allows for the establishment of schools and classes in which the language and literature of a national minority are taught as a subject, with the option (not the obligation) of using them as a language of instruction in other subjects. This legislation creates space for a more flexible inclusion of Romani in school curricula.

161. The Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities continues to support the creation of learning materials and other educational resources, as well as the training of pedagogical and professional staff in national minority schools. The Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan for 2025-2027 include several actions, *inter alia*, to “increase the number and quality of pedagogical, professional and support staff in the education of children and pupils from the MRC.”

162. Interlocutors of the Advisory Committee pointed out during the monitoring visit that substantial efforts still need to be made in the creation and distribution of learning materials in minority languages, as well as for setting classes in/of minority languages in mainstream education. For instance, the latest course book certified by the Ministry of Education for the Ruthenian language dates back to 2006. It was reprinted at the national minority’s own cost in 2015 but does not align with the new curriculum starting in 2026. Representatives of several national minorities further pointed out the limited number of schools where their minority language is taught, especially at the secondary level, including as a result of the lack of minority language-speaking teachers, thus preventing pupils and students from acquiring sufficient linguistic competences. They expressed concerns about the lack of initiatives of regional and local authorities in organising minority language education.²⁵⁵ Interlocutors of the Advisory Committee regretted that, although Romani is a first language for up to 70% of persons affiliating with the Roma, it is taught only in a very small number of schools. According to the Centre for Human Rights, whilst acknowledging that the aims of the Ministry of Education are commendable,²⁵⁶ the new regulation following the adoption of Law No. 290/2024 is likely to increase indirect discrimination and may lead to the creation of a parallel education system for Roma pupils.²⁵⁷

163. The Advisory Committee reiterates that the authorities “have the obligation to adopt a clear legal framework that ensures that minority language education is and remains effectively available and to remove all undue obstacles hampering access to such education [...]”.²⁵⁸ “[W]hen establishing minority language education, “sufficient demand” should be the main criterion applied by the authorities. Despite this requirement implying action from persons affiliating with minorities themselves, authorities cannot take a passive approach. On the contrary, they have an important role in stimulating the demand for minority language education and in fact a duty to do so.”²⁵⁹ The Advisory Committee further stresses that “minority language education can take different forms depending on the specific context of each language and education system, as well as the needs and interests of persons affiliating with each national minority. These can include teaching of the minority language as a subject, teaching in the minority language or the use of different bilingual and multilingual approaches involving the entire population of a state or part of a state.”²⁶⁰ Furthermore, “in order to develop sufficient competences in minority languages for minority pupils and students, an adequate number of hours of teaching of the minority language is required.”²⁶¹ Continuity of learning a minority language at all levels, from preschool to university, is of equal importance. The Advisory Committee also reiterates that “the availability of qualified teachers for teaching of or teaching in minority languages requires the promotion of pre-service and in-service training of minority language teachers [...]. To adequately train teachers, university courses, study programmes and research [...] should be made available and provided with adequate support.”²⁶²

164. The Advisory Committee notes that schools have a certain discretion in setting classes in/of minority languages and that some schools prefer to promote other activities during the allocated time slots. The Advisory Committee regrets that the teaching of minority languages is in competition with other elective subjects. As regards Romani, noting the risk of contributing unintentionally to the segregation of Roma children, the Advisory Committee considers that, in order to reach the objectives set in the recently amended Law on Education, a degree of flexibility is required with differentiated solution adapted to local contexts, which align with the principles of desegregation, deghettoisation and destigmatisation.²⁶³

165. The Advisory Committee also stresses that it is essential to develop an appropriate methodology for teaching the official language as second language from preschool level onwards to ensure that persons affiliating with national minorities gain full proficiency in Slovak. The Advisory Committee

²⁵⁵ For instance, representatives of the Ruthenian national minority indicated that they are struggling with the region of Prešov to establish a secondary school offering classes in and/or of Ruthenian.

²⁵⁶ [Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic in 2024](#), pp.66-70.

²⁵⁷ In this regard, the Centre for Human Rights makes reference to the pilot project of a minority school in the municipality of Rakúsy, with teaching in Romani. Concern over the establishment of this school was expressed by several international and Slovak organisations in a [joint position](#) on national education and the rights of national minorities in Slovakia.

²⁵⁸ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 89.

²⁵⁹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 95.

²⁶⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 99.

²⁶¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 120.

²⁶² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 1 \(2024\)](#), para. 114.

²⁶³ Amnesty International, ERRC, [separate and unequal: school segregation persists for Roma in the Slovak Republic](#), 2025.

underlines that in order to develop minority language competences as an added value for their speakers, there must be continuity in access to teaching and learning of and in minority languages at all levels of the education system, from preschool to higher education. In this context, it is especially important to take measures to promote the recruitment of adequately trained teaching staff, including in smaller towns and villages in regions where historical linguistic minorities traditionally live or where they live in substantial numbers, and to develop learning materials.²⁶⁴

Recommendations

166. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure, in co-operation with authorities at the regional and local levels, that education in and/or of minority languages is available for all persons affiliating with national minorities in areas where they live traditionally or in substantial numbers whenever there is sufficient demand, and to raise awareness about this possibility. Continuity in teaching between educational levels from preschool to secondary education should be ensured, including for persons affiliating with numerically smaller national minorities, through the recruitment and training of teachers and the production of updated educational materials in line with the state curriculum.

167. The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to expand opportunities for education in Romani at all educational levels, whenever there is sufficient demand, and to raise awareness about this possibility, in accordance with the objectives set in the Law on Education and adapted to local contexts, which align with the principles of desegregation, deghettoisation and destigmatisation.

Effective participation in public affairs and decision-making processes (Article 15)

168. Article 34 of the Constitution explicitly guarantees that “citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups shall, under the conditions laid down by a law, also be guaranteed [...] the right to participate in the decision making in matters affecting the national minorities and ethnic groups.” Persons affiliating with national minorities have the same voting and electoral rights as the majority population and no specific seats are reserved for national minorities groups in parliament. National minority representation in parliament thus depends on the selection and elections of candidates of mainstream and minority-focused political parties.²⁶⁵

169. The main bodies representing persons affiliating with national minorities are the Council for National Minorities and its Chamber for National Minorities, and the Council of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations (see Article 4), composed of representatives of national minorities and central authorities. These bodies act as advisory, co-ordinating and consultative bodies, providing minority perspectives to government processes and legislative proposals. The Plenipotentiary for National Minorities and the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities provide structural support and co-ordinate activities.²⁶⁶ Particularly, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, in co-operation with representatives of the national minorities, is preparing (in early 2026) a Bill for a Law on National Minorities in which Article 3 will address the issue of minority participation in the decision-making process at the national, regional and local levels.

170. In the Slovak Republic, there is a high degree of decentralisation in the distribution of powers between the national, regional and local authorities.²⁶⁷ This has important implications for the protection of national minority rights. The degree of involvement of minority representatives in the decision-making processes varies greatly, depending on the region, its status, demographic composition and historical traditions. Persons affiliating with national minorities can participate through elected municipal representatives or councils, influencing decisions that directly affect local communities, especially in municipalities with significant minority populations. Local councillors and mayors are elected directly by residents of each municipality (*obec*) every four years, and regional councillors and regional presidents (*župans*) are elected directly by voters in each region. Elections are open to all eligible citizens, and candidates can run via political parties or as independents.²⁶⁸ Individuals affiliating with national

²⁶⁴ [Ministry of Education supports innovations in teacher training for minority schools](#), 28 May 2024.

²⁶⁵ A 5% threshold for gaining access to the parliament is applied for all political parties, whether there are mainstream or minority-only parties. Political parties formed specifically around national minority interests failed to achieve the 5 % threshold in the 2023 election and therefore did not win seats in the parliament. However, mainstream political parties sometimes include minority candidates on their lists, which is the typical route to parliamentary representation for persons affiliating with national minorities. In practice, several members of parliament affiliate with a national minority.

²⁶⁶ For instance, in 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities published the results of a study carried out by an external organisation on the [stereotypes and attitudes towards Roma in local politics](#). The study focused on identifying and comparing different forms of stereotypical judgements about Roma in measures in local politics in selected municipalities with Roma communities. See [Sixth state report](#), para. 144.

²⁶⁷ [Law No. 302/2001](#) on Self-Governing of Upper-tier Territorial Units, which creates eight self-governing regions.

²⁶⁸ See [Carta -Monitor, Monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government - Slovak Republic](#).

minorities participate in these elections on the same legal basis as other citizens, and there are no separate reserved seats. Several persons affiliating with national minorities, in particular from the Hungarian minority in the southern part of the Slovak Republic, have stood as municipal councillors and mayors, particularly in areas where they constitute a significant part of the population. During the sixth monitoring cycle, there was an increase in the number of persons affiliating with the Roma being elected and taking part in decision-making on local development, education, cultural support, local services, and use of minority languages. In regions with significant minority populations, particularly in the southern regions with a large Hungarian minority population or eastern regions with substantial Ruthenian and Ukrainian populations, minority candidates have been elected as councillors.²⁶⁹

171. Several interlocutors from national minorities stressed that they respect the work carried out by the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities and the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. However, they also suggested that the advisory, co-ordinating and consultative nature of their role might be insufficient to have a significant impact on the adoption of legislation directly relevant for national minorities.

172. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “the degree of participation of persons belonging to national minorities in all spheres of life can be considered as one of the indicators of the level of pluralism and democracy of a society.”²⁷⁰ “Bearing in mind that State Parties are sovereign to decide on their electoral systems, the Advisory Committee has highlighted that it is important to provide opportunities for minority concerns to be included on the public agenda. This may be achieved either through the presence of minority representatives in elected bodies and/or through the inclusion of their concerns in the agenda of elected bodies.”²⁷¹ “Effective participation includes a wide range of possible forms, such as an exchange of information, dialogue, informal and formal consultation and participation in decision-making. It can be ensured through different channels, ranging from consultative mechanisms to special parliamentary arrangements. Particular attention should be paid to equal participation of women and men belonging to national minorities.”²⁷² “Whatever the mechanisms chosen, persons belonging to national minorities should be given real opportunities to influence decision-making, the outcome of which should adequately reflect their needs. According to the Advisory Committee, mere consultation is, as such, not a sufficient means to be considered effective participation.”²⁷³ “It is important to ensure that consultative bodies have a clear legal status, that the obligation to consult them is entrenched in law and that their involvement in decision-making processes is of a regular and permanent nature. While there are various models as regards the functioning of such structures, it is important to ensure that relevant regulations are detailed enough to provide for efficient and consistent consultation.”²⁷⁴

173. The Advisory Committee notes that the legal framework guarantees the right of citizens affiliating with national minorities to participate in the decision-making process. However, the domestic legislation lacks specific tools to enable this participation, despite a constitutional obligation for specific legislation to that effect. Consequently, while the main political parties representing the Hungarian minority held 20 seats in the parliament as a result of the 2006 elections,²⁷⁵ 14 seats in 2010, 13 seats in 2012, 11 seats in 2016, they did not pass the 5% threshold in 2020 elections. However, one member of parliament affiliating with the Hungarian national minority was elected on a mainstream political party list. Similarly, in the 2023 elections, the Hungarian minority held no seats despite comprising 8% of the population. Individuals affiliating with numerically smaller national minorities can be elected as part of a mainstream party but are not in a position to specifically represent their needs and interests.

174. During its monitoring visit, the Advisory Committee met with six members of parliament affiliating with the Roma national minority. While it is commendable that this national minority, which is one of the two largest in the Slovak Republic, is represented by several members of parliament from different mainstream political parties, this does not guarantee that the needs and interests of persons affiliating with the Roma, as well as their views and concerns are heard. National minorities, including numerically smaller ones, tend to have stronger representation at the municipal/local level than at the national or regional levels because local elections reflect local demographic realities more directly and smaller electoral areas make it easier for minority candidates to win. The Advisory Committee notes that the number of mayors affiliating with the Roma national minority continues to increase, reflecting a stronger participation of persons affiliating with the Roma in the political life.

²⁶⁹ See [OSW, Centre for Eastern Studies](#). Regional councils have powers over secondary education, regional roads, transport, healthcare infrastructure and some cultural funding.

²⁷⁰ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 8.

²⁷¹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 81.

²⁷² ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 70.

²⁷³ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 71.

²⁷⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 107.

²⁷⁵ ACFC, [Third Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 183.

Recommendation

175. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to adopt, without further delay and after consultation with representatives of all national minorities, legislation specifying the conditions guaranteeing the right of persons affiliating with national minorities to participate effectively in the decision-making process at the national, regional and local levels.

Effective participation in socio-economic life – access of Roma to housing (Article 15)

176. In the Slovak Republic, there is no constitutional right to adequate housing.²⁷⁶ Discrimination in access to state-supported and municipality-supported rental housing is prohibited on any grounds.²⁷⁷ The Ministry of Transport is the central authority responsible for the development and implementation of the state housing policy Housing Policy,²⁷⁸ which includes for instance a mechanism of economic support for the development of housing, differentiated according to a local context.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Ministry of Transport, in co-operation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, has developed several recommendations for municipalities for the selection of tenants and the allocation of rental apartments intended for social housing.²⁸⁰

177. Additionally, the Strategy 2030²⁸¹ and its Action Plan on Housing aim at eliminating inequalities for those living in MRCs (vis-à-vis the majority population) and combatting discrimination of Roma in accessing housing, including through de-segregation measures. Several projects have been carried out during the sixth monitoring cycle to achieve better living conditions for those living in MRCs, such as the National Project Support for Land Settlement in Municipalities with MRCs,²⁸² the National Project Assistance to Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities in Land Settlement under Dwellings,²⁸³ the Housing and Empowerment for Roma (HERO) Pilot Project,²⁸⁴ and the Inclusive Neighbourhoods Projects.²⁸⁵ The Strategy 2030 and its associated action plan also aim to reduce “illegal” Roma settlements, with a particular focus on solving the unsettled issue of land ownership, either by allowing Roma to legalise the land on which their houses were built or by municipalities acquiring ownership to improve housing conditions. In 2022, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities participated in the preparation of legislation amending Law No. 330/1991 on land arrangements, land ownership arrangements, land offices, land fund and land communities.²⁸⁶ In 2024, several calls for applications for the provision of non-refundable financial contributions were announced by the authorities.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁶ The Slovak Republic opted out of the provision on the right to housing in the [Revised European Social Charter](#).

²⁷⁷ See, however, some exceptions, as explained in 2025 Slovak Republic Country Report on Non-discrimination, p. 66.

²⁷⁸ See [Housing Policy of the Slovak Republic until 2030](#).

²⁷⁹ It consists in a combination of subsidies under [Law No. 443/2010](#) on Subsidies for Housing Development and Social Housing and a preferential loan from the [State Housing Development Fund](#). In 2022, the Ministry of Transport provided subsidies (€15 365 720 in total) for the procurement of 673 rental apartments intended for social housing in 37 municipalities. It also provided subsidies (€1 309 540 in total) for the procurement of technical equipment for 649 apartments in 35 municipalities. See [sixth state report](#), paras. 71-75.

²⁸⁰ [Sixth state report](#), para. 82. The aim of the publication is to offer municipalities guidance on how to approach the development of local housing policy and how to specify appropriate criteria and procedures for the allocation of rental apartments intended for social housing.

²⁸¹ The Strategy 2030 should also be read in conjunction with the [National Concept for Preventing and Ending Homelessness 2023-2030](#), which underlines that “large group of those who meet the characteristics of homeless people in the Slovak Republic are inhabitants of MRCs”, as well as the [Law No. 222/2022](#) on state support for rental housing and on amendments to certain laws, which aims to create an environment that allows the construction of state-supported rental housing with regulated rents and a guarantee of long-term leases. Although not specific to the Roma, this broader policy could indirectly help disadvantaged households if implemented in areas with significant Roma populations.

²⁸² See [National Project Support for Land Settlement in Municipalities with MRCs](#), whose primary goal was to obtain a legal title to the land under the dwelling and for the municipality to be able to implement measures in the settlement that would contribute to the improvement of hygiene standards of MRCs. See [sixth state report](#), paras. 77-78.

²⁸³ See [National Project Assistance to Municipalities with Marginalized Roma Communities in Land Settlement under Dwellings](#), which provided training to internal personnel project capacities and district offices to speed up and streamline the process of simple land arrangements. See [sixth state report](#), para. 79.

²⁸⁴ See CEB, [European Parliament, European Commission and CEB launch pilot project to support affordable housing for Roma in Slovak Republic](#). The HERO project tests a social investment model to help Roma households access micro-loans, develop financial literacy, construction skills training, and employment support — all tied to self-build or improved housing solutions. The aim is to combine housing access with economic empowerment, making decent housing financially and socially sustainable.

²⁸⁵ See FMO, [Inclusive neighbourhoods](#). These initiatives support the creation of functional, integrated neighbourhoods for Roma, focusing on better access to decent housing and ownership and on ways to reduce disparities in housing ownership and community inclusion.

²⁸⁶ [Law No. 330/1991](#) on land arrangements, land ownership arrangements, land offices, land fund and land communities. See [sixth state report](#), para. 76.

²⁸⁷ See for instance [Support for the settlement of legal entitlements to land in municipalities where MRCs are present through simplified procedures of legalising titles to land and dwellings](#).

178. Under the EU Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021-2027,²⁸⁸ a specific goal is the promotion of socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups, including persons with special needs, through integrated actions including housing and social services.²⁸⁹

179. The authorities develop their policies based on data provided by the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities and data collected through the EU-SILC_MRC survey. These databases provide both a broad overview of housing conditions at the community level, as well as detailed insights on individual households.²⁹⁰ Data collection to map the sociographic context of Roma communities was conducted in 2024,²⁹¹ which will be used to update the information collected for the 2019 Atlas of Roma Communities, as the Advisory Committee was informed during its monitoring visit.

180. Only a few cases alleging discrimination of persons affiliating with the Roma have been finalised through national courts.²⁹² In a decision of 17 September 2025, the district court in Prešov prohibited the local authorities of a municipality from demolishing the dwelling of a Roma family, even though it was built on someone else's land (see below). In its reasoning, the court emphasised that even dwellings built illegally can be considered a "home" under the Constitution and international standards and conventions if people have lived there for a long time and conduct their family and private lives there.²⁹³

181. In 2025, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights published a memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic, in which it recommended that "the Slovak authorities adopt urgent, targeted measures to address the situation of marginalised Roma communities living in inadequate conditions to prevent further deterioration of their already critical human rights situation. Special attention should be given to the needs of the most vulnerable, such as women, children, individuals with disabilities, and older people."²⁹⁴

182. The report on the activities of the Public Defender for 2024 stresses that for the Public Defender, improving conditions in the area of housing and in the area of infrastructure and ensuring access to basic needs are elements which are parts of a comprehensive solution to the problem of segregation.²⁹⁵ In its Action Plan for 2025, the Centre for Human Rights engaged in "supporting municipalities in applying the principle of equality in the provision of municipal rental housing", as well as to "monitor discriminatory practices in the provision of housing and accommodation services."²⁹⁶ In 2024, the Centre for Human Rights published a research report on the availability of rental housing,²⁹⁷ in which it underlines the existence of barriers in the private real estate market, with persistent discrimination of Roma households, including in rural areas where inclusive policies have yet been adopted. Its findings and recommendations were presented in co-operation with Amnesty International in October 2024, which also published a comprehensive research report on the right to housing in the Slovak Republic in which it documented serious cases of discrimination of persons affiliating with the Roma.²⁹⁸ In 2021, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) also raised concerns about the risk of forced evictions, the absence of sewage systems in many segregated settlements, resulting in significant health risks, as well as the difficulty in accessing safe and affordable rentals and housing benefits.²⁹⁹

183. The 2025 civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation in the Slovak Republic ("the 2025 civil society monitoring report")³⁰⁰ estimated that approximately 56 000 Roma individuals live in settlements outside

²⁸⁸ European Commission, Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic - 2021-2027.

²⁸⁹ The programme defines key activities related to housing policy, such as self-help construction of dwellings and other improved forms of housing, civil and technical infrastructure in municipalities with MRCs, access to drinking water and support for the construction of a sewage network. €907 million were allocated from the total funds to address the most serious challenges of MRCs. See [sixth state report](#), paras. 80 and 87-89. In terms of project supporting the social inclusion of MRCs, see also the [National Project Development Teams I](#), which included soft activities in the areas of education, employment, housing and combatting racism against Roma, as well as hard activities related to infrastructure investments.

²⁹⁰ See 2019 Atlas of Roma communities and EU-SILC_MRC. Data collected provide information on, *inter alia*, the infrastructure of municipalities and Roma settlements, the availability of social and health services, the political and civic participation of Roma, economic activities, and school infrastructure.

²⁹¹ See [Sociographic mapping of Roma communities 2025](#).

²⁹² See [2024 Slovak Republic Country Report on Non-discrimination](#), p. 63, Decision of the Regional Court Košice II of 28 June 2023, No. 9Co/21/2022 and Decision of the District Court Košice II, No. 15C/190/2014-650, 21 January 2022.

²⁹³ See Denník N, [Court bans demolition of a house in a Roma settlement in Torysa, even though it is located on someone else's land without a permit](#), 7 November 2025.

²⁹⁴ See Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic, para. 35.

²⁹⁵ See [Report on the activities of the Public Defender of Rights for 2024](#), p. 131.

²⁹⁶ See Centre for Human Rights, [Action Plan for 2025](#), pp. 6 and 9.

²⁹⁷ See Centre for Human Rights, [Availability of public rental housing](#), 2024.

²⁹⁸ See Amnesty International, [Unattainable right to housing](#), 2024, pp. 55-68.

²⁹⁹ See European Roma Rights Centre, [Written comments - Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, to the General Assembly in 2021 and to the Human Rights Council in 2021](#), 2021, p.2.

³⁰⁰ See Publication Office of the EU – 2025 [civil society monitoring report](#), pp. 32-34 and 43-46.

municipalities, while 151 000 reside on their peripheries, i.e. in areas with significantly limited access to basic infrastructure, healthcare services, educational institutions, and employment opportunities, hereby increasing their social exclusion and economic marginalisation. Moreover, 87% of households in the MRCs were at risk of poverty and 52% faced severe material deprivation.³⁰¹ This report regrets, *inter alia*, the low level of interest of municipalities in engaging in the preparation of rental housing projects that would reduce segregation. While noting that there has been some progress in the areas of “simple land consolidation”,³⁰² in other projects to regularise land within MRC settlements by 2030, as well as in the improvement of the quality of housing in MRCs,³⁰³ the report also highlights the difficulty of achieving significant positive results, considering the limited financial resources allocated,³⁰⁴ and the limited number of municipalities involved (30 municipalities). Additionally, the report identified that many Roma families are exposed to environmental dangers as their settlements are often located in flood zones, near slopes prone to landslides, or in areas with higher soil, water, and air contamination, these factors having a significant impact on the health of residents and the safety of their housing. Lack of digital access is also another aspect that is addressed in the report, as it is considered as essential for education, employment, and social integration and reduces their chances of economic and social inclusion.

184. Interlocutors affiliating with the Roma national minority stressed the importance of investing in housing as a priority, which according to them, constitutes the basis for empowerment (better hygiene and health, and leverage for finding a job).

185. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “substandard housing conditions, often coupled with the physical/spatial separation of persons belonging to certain national minorities, in particular Roma [...], considerably affect their ability to participate in socio-economic life and can result in their further poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. This is frequently made more acute by the lack of legal provisions securing their residency rights and by their vulnerability to forced evictions, including as a consequence of processes of property restitution.”³⁰⁵ “State parties must take effective measures to put an end to discriminatory practices which lead to segregation and marginalisation of persons belonging to certain national minorities. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring full respect for the human rights of persons belonging to national minorities in housing matters.”³⁰⁶ “Moreover, State Parties should develop comprehensive sectoral policies to address problems of substandard housing and lack of access to basic infrastructure, which affect persons belonging to certain minorities. State Parties should also promote their equal access to adequate housing, in particular by improved access to subsidised housing.”³⁰⁷ “In doing so, the authorities should provide for adequate participation of the persons concerned in decision-making on housing and related programmes designed to improve their socio-economic situation, in order to ensure that the needs of these persons are adequately catered for. Such policies should be adequately funded. It is equally important for State Parties to ensure that local authorities comply with existing antidiscrimination legislation in housing matters as measures which perpetuate segregation are often taken locally.”³⁰⁸

186. The Advisory Committee notes that the authorities continue to make efforts to address poor housing conditions and lack of infrastructure in MRCs, through its Strategy 2030, which identified housing as a core priority, through action plans funded by national and EU sources, local infrastructure projects for social housing, programmes and targeted projects (improving access to housing and housing conditions) that link housing with financial and social empowerment. The Advisory Committee also notes positively the engagement of civil society to secure land tenure and foster social inclusion.³⁰⁹ However, ongoing projects rely heavily on EU structural funds and external grants, which can undermine the authorities’ ownership of the implementation process and hamper the effectiveness and long-term impact of this work.³¹⁰ Furthermore, implementation challenges remain, and progress toward equitable, safe, and inclusive housing for Roma is ongoing rather than complete. The housing of the Roma living in MRCs are with a much lower standard of infrastructure and provision of services,

³⁰¹ See Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Decent housing is not a gift, but the result of collective efforts](#), 4 June 2025.

³⁰² The “simple land consolidation” is a measure that replaces conventional means such as the purchase or the exchange of contracts and allows for the settlement of property relations in the situation of a large number of owners or their fragmentation.

³⁰³ See [Projekt DOM.ov](#).

³⁰⁴ €3 150 000 from EU funds and €556 000 from the state budget.

³⁰⁵ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 57.

³⁰⁶ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 58.

³⁰⁷ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 59.

³⁰⁸ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 60.

³⁰⁹ For instance, the [Slovak Roma Housing Fund](#) works to support Roma homeownership and community development in mixed municipalities, aiming to reduce segregation and build affordable, decent housing.

³¹⁰ See Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Commission meeting at the Monitoring Committee for the Slovakia 2021-2027 Programme](#), 16 May 2025; Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [The conclusions of the European Mission are interpreted in a misleading and deceptive manner](#), 18 July 2025.

including limited access to clean water and sanitation.³¹¹ This situation is also exacerbated by the fact that many of these dwellings are built on plots of land where owners are not identified or which have a complicated owners' structure. The Advisory Committee regrets that legalisation of homes often remains complicated and costly for low-income families, requiring multiple permits and that the legislation still allows local authorities to demolish houses that do not have these permits, thus resulting in limited protection against eviction for the inhabitants.

187. The Advisory Committee regrets that there is no obligation at the domestic level for the state or the municipality to provide alternative housing to the inhabitants of these "illegal" houses in case of forced evictions.³¹² It, however, notes that the recent landmark court decision on 17 September 2025 by the District Court in Prešov provides an innovative approach, inviting the authorities to respond to the historical and unsettled issue of land ownership. Additionally, there are structural barriers that contribute to making regular standard social housing practically inaccessible to the Roma. Access to social housing of a regular standard is often conditional on having employment (of at least one family member) or having a minimum level of income. Persons affiliating with the Roma are much less likely to meet such requirements than the non-Roma population.³¹³ While bearing in mind that most measures envisaged to improve the socio-economic situation of the Roma require mid- and long-term efforts, the Advisory Committee emphasises that local and regional authorities are key to improving the living conditions in most of the Roma settlements and in developing infrastructure providing basic sanitary facilities, heating, running water, electricity and with sufficient access to health care facilities. However, persistent regional and municipal disparities continue, and the state must play a critical role in obtaining their support and commitment to achieve long-term improvement of Roma housing conditions.³¹⁴ The Advisory Committee stresses that Roma representatives, including women, and other relevant actors need to be actively involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of housing programmes.

Recommendation

188. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to address, in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including Roma representatives, the long-standing issue of land ownership of informal Roma settlements and to implement integrated housing policies that promote long-term inclusion of persons living in Marginalised Roma Communities, with adequate living conditions and access to essential services.

Effective participation in socio-economic life – access of Roma to healthcare (Article 15)

189. Article 40 of the Constitution guarantees the right of every Slovak citizen access to healthcare. The Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities allows for the use minority languages in healthcare facilities in areas where a substantial number of persons affiliating with a national minority live.³¹⁵ Furthermore, Law No. 576/2004 on Health Care and on Services Related to the Provision of Health Care was amended in 2022 to refer to the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities in the provision concerning instruction and informed consent.³¹⁶

190. The authorities have continued their efforts to developing regional health policies for improving the situation of Roma in segregated settlements. Under the EU Programme Slovakia 2021-2027, funding has been earmarked for healthcare, improving, *inter alia*, its quality and accessibility. Furthermore, the main aim of the Strategy 2030 is to reduce health inequalities among all individuals living in the Slovak Republic, in particular individuals living in MRCs. The Health Action Plan 2025-2027 includes measures and activities to strengthen "the professional and ethical level of crisis management in MRC", as well as activities aiming to enhance the inclusive practices of healthcare professionals working with patients

³¹¹ The Advisory Committee notes however a gradual improvement of roads leading to segregated communities. See Filčák R. and Škobla D., [Sanitation Infrastructure at the Systemic Edge: Segregated Roma Settlements and Multiple Health Risks in Slovakia](#), 2021.

³¹² See [Human Rights Guide - Access to housing](#).

³¹³ Under the applicable legislation (Law No. 443/2010), only an upper income threshold is established as a condition for access to social housing. Housing, however, falls within the original competence of local self-government authorities, which are entitled to set their own eligibility conditions within the bounds of the statutory framework. The minimum income requirement is intended to ensure that a household is capable of meeting its rental obligations (a condition applied by local authorities in practice not only to members of marginalised Roma communities, but to all prospective tenants generally, as required by the Act on Municipal Property, which obliges municipalities to protect municipal assets). This situation is further influenced by the fact that, within the broader social policy framework, the effective functioning of the housing allowance has not been adequately ensured.

³¹⁴ See Slovensko.gratis, [The state will support projects to improve life in municipalities with marginalised Roma communities](#), 21 November 2025.

³¹⁵ [Law No. 184/1999](#), Article 2(3). ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 270. However, according to [Law No. 270/1995](#), Article 8(4), the programme of healthcare facilities and social service facilities shall be kept in the official language. A specific area where regional or minority languages can be used is for emergency calls at the number 112. [Sixth state report](#), paras. 229-230.

³¹⁶ [Sixth state report](#), para. 233.

from the MRCs. This plan also includes awareness raising measures for reporting cases of discrimination in accessing healthcare services by individuals living in the MRCs. According to the authorities, the Institute for Healthcare Analyses of the Ministry of Health actively co-operates with the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities to implement the Action Plan for the Health priority area in the 2030 Strategy.³¹⁷ The aim of this co-operation is to develop a methodology for measuring health disparities between MRCs and the general population. Furthermore, the national project “Healthy Communities” continues, which is also crucial for measuring and documenting health disparities. The project is implemented by the contributory organisation of the Ministry of Health, “Healthy Regions”.³¹⁸ The aim of the “Healthy Communities” project is to carry out community health mediation, increase health literacy, and reduce barriers in access to healthcare, including language barriers between members of MRCs and healthcare professionals. These activities are carried out by Roma health mediators directly in local communities, Roma health mediators in hospital settings, and regional managers for improving conditions for health. The project operates in more than 280 municipalities and by more than 320 Roma Health mediators, as well as in 16 hospitals and specialised healthcare facilities.³¹⁹ The authorities further informed the Advisory Committee that all health support assistants within the “Healthy Communities” project undergo systematic and regular training on topics necessary for performing health mediation and co-operating with clients and healthcare professionals. As of 2026, the training of health support assistants has been accredited. The authorities explained that the existence of this position within the career framework of the Sectoral Councils Alliance will create appropriate and important conditions for ensuring the sustainability of this position and its activities. In addition, as of January 2026, the Ministry of Health has established the National Screening Centre to improve the detection of oncological and other diseases, including among populations with limited access to services. Steps are also being taken to strengthen organised cancer screening, including the development of systemic tools to improve its accessibility. The activities of the “Healthy Communities” project include awareness-raising in the field of dental hygiene and addressing client situations related to health insurance, including newborn insurance (as of May 2026 in 16 hospitals).

191. In the Slovak Republic, forced sterilisation has been included as a criminal offense under the Criminal Code.³²⁰ The Slovak authorities issued an official apology to the victims in November 2021.³²¹ In 2022, the working group³²² looking into the issue of illegal sterilisations was enlarged to include additional ministries and the National Council, and it now collaborates with the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.³²³ According to the authorities, the Ministry of Justice is preparing legislation that would shift the burden of proof for women seeking compensation for forced sterilisation onto the responsible state body.³²⁴ Based on the proposals of the working group, the Bill on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilised in Violation of the Law was presented to the National Council in November 2025.³²⁵ This follows previous unsuccessful attempts to pass a similar Bill in 2023 and 2024.³²⁶ In a report submitted to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2024, the authorities claimed that “all past cases of forced sterilisations of Roma women have been properly investigated by law enforcement authorities.”³²⁷ However, the issue of forced sterilisation of Roma women is not included in the Strategy 2030 or in the Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025.

192. According to interlocutors from NGOs working to promote and protect the rights of Roma, the unequal access to healthcare for Roma persists, especially for Roma women and for individuals living in settlements located far from urban centres. No systematic policies and measures have been established to combat cases of discrimination and segregated practices, such as the existence of separate areas in some hospitals for Roma patients (“Roma rooms”) or similar forms of spatial

³¹⁷ [Sixth state report](#), paras. 88, 91 and 231-232.

³¹⁸ See [Healthy Regions](#) implements the development of health mediation in marginalised Roma communities to improve health conditions.

³¹⁹ This programme is implemented by “Healthy Regions” a grant organisation of the Ministry of Health, which started as an NGO project initially financed by diverse private donors and which has since been developed into a longer-term programme, albeit almost exclusively financed by the EU.

³²⁰ [Criminal Code](#), Article 159.

³²¹ See [Apology of the government of the Slovak Republic for illegal sterilisation of women](#).

³²² The working group has been established by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice to establish the circumstances under which forced sterilisations occurred and to examine the possibility of financial compensation for the victims.

³²³ ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), para. 273.

³²⁴ See national statement of the Slovak Republic to the proposed Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic, 2025.

³²⁵ See [draft Law on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilised in Violation of the Law](#) and [Details of Draft Law](#).

³²⁶ See [parliamentary records](#).

³²⁷ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, [Fourth periodic report submitted by the Slovak Republic under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant](#), para. 253.

separation in some general practitioners' clinics ("Roma waiting rooms").³²⁸ These interlocutors of the Advisory Committee also stress that all efforts to address violations of Roma women's rights in reproductive and maternal health care by legal means remain largely ineffective due to ongoing shortcomings in the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation as well as in decision making of courts and responsible state administrative bodies. The 2025 civil society monitoring report³²⁹ stresses that the Healthy Communities programme is valuable and that efforts to increase the knowledge and sensitivity of healthcare personnel toward MRC residents are also justified. However, it also identified limitations, particularly concerning the lack of ongoing qualification training for health support assistants, which does not permit to ensure the sustainability of these individuals in the healthcare system in the long term. Generally, the report also points out several shortcomings in the existing strategies and measures, such as the unsuccessful involvement of key stakeholders in addressing health issues of those living in MRCs, particularly healthcare providers and doctors, the difficulties for individuals living in MRCs obtaining health insurance, the lack of preventive screening, including dental check-ups, and the fact that the Strategy 2030 does neither mention menstrual poverty and available contraceptives measures, nor cancer prevention activities. In its memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights noted that, despite important efforts and initiatives, inequalities in health status and access to health services for Roma communities persist. In February 2025, it again encouraged the Slovak authorities to develop and implement a one-time compensation mechanism for Roma victims of forced sterilisation.³³⁰

193. Interlocutors of the Advisory Committee raised concerns over the limited progress towards establishing an effective compensation mechanism for the victims of forced sterilisation. They reported about limited collaboration and engagement by the authorities with relevant NGOs and human rights bodies during the drafting of the Bill on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilised in Violation of the Law, and they also voiced disappointment with the establishment of the working group, arguing it risked unnecessary delays to establishing a compensation mechanism.³³¹ Several interlocutors were concerned that the Ministry of Health, rather than the Ministry of Justice, was granted competence to decide on compensation, whereas a competence granted to the latter would have emphasised the nature of forced sterilisation as a human rights violation.³³²

194. During the sixth monitoring cycle, the Centre for Human Rights reported the issue of forced sterilisations of Roma women to several UN bodies and collaborated with the working group on the drafting of the Bill on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilised in Violation of the Law. In observations submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2022, the Centre for Human Rights noted that domestic courts have failed in several cases to find a substantive violation of human rights or have dismissed the award of a financial compensation, with only a small number of domestic cases resulting in financial compensation being awarded.³³³ In observations submitted to the UN Committee against Torture in 2023, the National Centre for Human Rights stated that no reliable data regarding the number of victims of historic forced sterilisation exists in the Slovak Republic, and that the Ministry of Health had failed to respond to its request for information concerning planned outreach activities aimed at identifying possible victims of forced sterilisation.³³⁴

195. The Advisory Committee reiterates that "persons belonging to certain national minorities face particular difficulties in their access to health care, a situation which results from different factors, such as discrimination, poverty, geographical isolation, cultural differences or language obstacles. Difficulties in the access to health care have a negative impact on the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in socio-economic life."³³⁵ The Advisory Committee further reiterates that "it is also important that appropriate legal remedies are available in cases of discrimination. State Parties should raise

³²⁸ See, *inter alia*, minority rights group Europe and EPEKA, [Equality and justice on the sidelines: Comparative report on discrimination against Roma and their access to justice in the Slovak Republic and Slovenia](#), 2022. According to the report and information sent by [Poradňa pre občianske a ľudské práva](#), Roma women experience multiple, and intersecting, forms of gender and racial discrimination, in particular in the area of reproductive and maternal health care.

³²⁹ See Publications Office of the EU – 2025 civil society monitoring report, pp. 30-32.

³³⁰ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, [Slovak Republic: urgent need to address human rights of Roma and adopt an intergenerational approach](#). See also Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: Memorandum on the human rights of Roma in the Slovak Republic.

³³¹ See Centre for Human Rights, [submission to the Advisory Committee concerning shortcomings in the implementation of the Convention in the Slovak Republic](#), 2024.

³³² *Ibid.* See also the [observations of the Centre for Human Rights in relation to the fourth periodic report of the Slovak Republic to the Committee against Torture](#), para. 28.

³³³ See [Observations of the Centre for Human Rights in relation to the thirteenth periodic report of the Slovak Republic to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), para. 39.

³³⁴ See [Observations of the Centre for Human Rights in relation to the fourth periodic report of the Slovak Republic to the Committee against Torture](#), para. 26.

³³⁵ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 61.

awareness among persons belonging to national minorities on existing remedies and ensure that these are easily accessible.”³³⁶

196. The Advisory Committee notes that the Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan for 2025-2027 provide clear guidance to address issues related to equal access to quality healthcare for Roma. On this basis, various projects are continuing, in co-operation with relevant NGOs and other stakeholders. Although these projects have had an overall positive impact, many challenges remain. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee observes that many of the programmes and projects rely extensively on EU funding, with the allocation of state funding insufficient to achieve their long-term sustainability. The Advisory Committee welcomes initiatives to improve the healthcare situation of Roma. The multi-level approach adopted by the Strategy 2030, which simultaneously addresses issues related to health, housing, education and employment, has produced some positive results and has identified the multiple disadvantages Roma face through its 3Ds strategic principles: desegregation, deghettoisation and destigmatisation. However, the Advisory Committee also notes that access to healthcare remains difficult and that obtaining funding for projects is still subject to the political will at national, regional and local levels. It notes that the Centre for Human Rights could leverage its authority to initiate *actio popularis* claims to combat structural discrimination against the Roma in healthcare.

197. The Advisory Committee notes the progress made by the working group in preparing a Bill to establish a compensation mechanism for the victims of forced sterilisation. However, it regrets the delay in establishing such a mechanism despite repeated attempts to pass a Bill on Financial Compensation to Women Sterilised in Violation of the Law. The Advisory Committee furthermore regrets that the Strategy 2030 and the Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2021-2025 do not address this issue.

Recommendation

198. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to enact legislation that will allow all women who have undergone forced sterilisation to be compensated without further delay, and to conduct awareness raising campaigns in this respect. The authorities should support, through long-term and sustainable funding, efforts in addressing practical barriers to healthcare for persons living in Marginalised Roma Communities, particularly women.

Effective access to employment – Roma (Article 15)

199. The right to work is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and in domestic legislation.³³⁷ However, the overall unemployment rate for adults living in MRCs is 38%, with 46% of those unemployed being young people under the age of 34, and 38% in the 35-49 age group. The share of young Roma aged 16 to 24 who were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) was 65%. Furthermore, the gender employment gap for those living in MRCs is significantly more pronounced than in the general population, due, *inter alia*, to early school dropout, unfavourable housing conditions, low inclusion of children in preschool education, low levels of digital skills and discrimination by employers.³³⁸ In the Slovak Republic, anti-discrimination legislation allows for the adoption of “temporary equalising measures” (positive action measures), when they are necessary and appropriate to reduce or remove inequality.³³⁹ In 2024, three of these temporary equalising measures were registered by the Centre for Human Rights.³⁴⁰

200. One of the main objectives of the Strategy 2030 is to improve the employability and to increase the employment rate of Roma, specifically those living in MRCs. The Action Plan Employment 2025-2027 aims, *inter alia*, to “[reduce] labour market discrimination and other manifestations of anti-Roma racism.” During the sixth monitoring cycle, the EU Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021-2027 has allocated resources under its Objective No. 4, focusing on social inclusion, education, employment and accessibility of services. The majority of the funding has been directed toward less developed

³³⁶ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 35.

³³⁷ Constitution of the Slovak Republic, Articles 35 to 38. See also, *inter alia*, [Law No. 5/2004](#) on employment services and on amendments to certain acts.

³³⁸ Publications Office of the EU – 2025 civil society monitoring report, pp. 28-30. According to the report, there is at least one unemployed person or someone on parental leave in nearly every MRCs household. The further a Roma settlement is from the centre of a municipality, the lower the economic activity among its adult residents. In settlements located outside municipalities and towns, one employed person can be found in approximately every third household, while for every 10 households, there are 11 unemployed individuals.

³³⁹ [Law No. 365/2004](#), Article 8(3)a.

³⁴⁰ For more information, see 2025 Slovak Republic Country Report on Non-discrimination, pp. 78-81. See also Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, [Tesco without prejudice, an opportunity for everyone](#).

regions to reduce regional disparities.³⁴¹ These projects are administered by the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.³⁴²

201. According to the civil society monitoring report on the implementation of national integration strategies in the Slovak Republic, the existing projects implemented in the framework of the EU Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021-2027 and the Strategy 2030 fail to address the elimination of segregation and social exclusion. The creation of certain temporary jobs inside segregated and socially excluded communities, such as local civil order services, community workers and teaching assistants, reduce unemployment in MRCs but also reinforce isolation and do not offer opportunities for formal professional development and training that would support long-term inclusion and transition in the mainstream labour market. Furthermore, the different activities do not target private employers. According to NGOs working to promote and preserve the rights of Roma, increasing employment alone may be insufficient to ensure effective social protection and participation. However, as a positive measure, the report welcomes the entry into force of the compensatory allowance for the social enterprises' scheme, which is, according to them, a "proven model of support."³⁴³

202. The Advisory Committee reiterates that "some national minorities have proportionally higher unemployment rates, sometimes lower employment rates, and a generally lower participation in the labour market than the majority population. They can be faced with direct and indirect discrimination, inequalities in career development and often with structural obstacles."³⁴⁴ "Effective participation in social and economic life requires, *inter alia*, that State Parties remove barriers which prevent persons belonging to national minorities from having equal access to various spheres of economic life and social services."³⁴⁵

203. The Advisory Committee notes that the Strategy 2030 and the activities carried out under the EU Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021-2027 aim to improve the employability and social inclusion of persons and groups in a vulnerable situation to the labour market, in particular those living in MRCs. However, a heavy reliance on external funding undermines the implementation process and limits the effectiveness and long-term impact of this work. In practice, many persons affiliating with the Roma national minority, specifically women, continue to experience significant barriers in accessing the labour market. While the Advisory Committee commends the possibility of adopting temporary equalising measures, in particular in reducing the unemployment rate of those living in MRCs, it considers that the creation of temporary positions should not be the only strategy of the authorities. These jobs do not offer opportunities for formal professional development and training which would support the effective and long-term accessibility and inclusion of Roma in the mainstream labour market and tackle employer discrimination. In the long-term, such approaches could be counter-productive and detrimental to social inclusion. In this context, additional concrete actions such as professional development, training courses and social and work inclusion projects, including in the private sector, are needed to promote and improve employment opportunities for individuals affiliating with the Roma national minority, especially among women and youth.

Recommendation

204. The Advisory Committee requests the authorities to pursue and intensify their efforts to promote structural, long-term, sustainable employment opportunities for Roma, especially those living in Marginalised Roma Communities, including women and youth.

Cross-border contacts and bilateral co-operation (Articles 17 and 18)

205. The Slovak Republic has signed a number of bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries that are of relevance to national minorities, including with the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine. These agreements generally place a specific emphasis on culture, education, science, sports and youth. Furthermore, in the context of the EU Interreg programmes, several projects are being implemented with a specific emphasis on the preservation of minority histories and cultures.³⁴⁶

206. Bilateral intergovernmental commissions, which aim to promote the preservation, expression and development of the identities of the respective minorities continue to be regularly organised between the Slovak authorities and the Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian authorities, respectively, with

³⁴¹ European Commission, Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic - 2021-2027.

³⁴² Publication Office of the EU - 2025 civil society monitoring report, p. 12.

³⁴³ [Law No. 112/2018](#) on social economy and social enterprises and on amendments and supplements to certain laws, Article 19b. For more detailed information, see Publications Office of the EU - 2025 civil society monitoring report, pp. 28-30 and 34-36, 46-49.

³⁴⁴ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 32.

³⁴⁵ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 2 \(2008\)](#), para. 26.

³⁴⁶ For a general overview, see [Programmes - Interreg EU](#).

the participation of representatives of relevant state institutions and of the respective national minorities.³⁴⁷ The Slovak Republic continues to take an active part in the Roma-related intergovernmental work of the Council of Europe and joint Council of Europe/EU programmes.³⁴⁸

207. The Advisory Committee reiterates that “the responsibility to protect minority rights, as part of general human rights, lies primarily with the state where the minority resides.”³⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Advisory Committee reiterates that the conclusion of bilateral agreements, as well as informal cross-border co-operation, can contribute to the promotion of the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities, effectively complement the protection measures it takes at the national level and support the development of the infrastructure for national minorities, particularly in areas such as education.

208. The Advisory Committee notes with interest the various examples of bilateral and multilateral co-operation that respond to the needs and interests of the national minorities, as well as the close contacts that persons affiliating with them maintain with cultural and educational establishments in neighbouring and other countries.

Recommendation

209. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue to enhance and strengthen the effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral co-operation and dialogue between neighbouring states in the field of minority protection, in close co-operation with representatives of national minorities and with a view to improving the protection of the rights of persons affiliating with national minorities.

³⁴⁷ Ministry of Investments, [Regional Development and Informatisation of the Slovak Republic, Intergovernmental Commissions for Cross-Border Co-operation](#). It should be noted that the organisational arrangements for meetings of these commissions were transferred to the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation in September 2024 onward. On 15 November 2024 and 20 June 2025, two meetings of the Czech-Slovak Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Co-operation took place. On 10 April 2024, the 15th session of the intergovernmental Joint Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs was held in Budapest. During this session, 54 measures and recommendations in the fields of culture, education, economy and infrastructure were agreed upon (see [The Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs signs the minutes of the meeting](#)). The Advisory Committee notes that in 2022, two meetings of the joint commission were concluded without signing the joint minutes due to the request of the Hungarian side to include references to the Beneš decrees. On 10 October 2025, the 25th session of the Slovak-Polish Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Co-operation was held in Warsaw. On 24 February 2025, a Slovak-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Co-operation was held in Uzhhorod. In 2023, the 23rd meeting of the Slovak-Bavarian Commission took place.

³⁴⁸ Such as the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues ([ADI-ROM](#)), the [INSCHOOL project](#), the [Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation Project](#).

³⁴⁹ ACFC, [Thematic Commentary No. 4 \(2016\)](#), para. 36.

The **Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities** is an independent body that assists the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in evaluating the adequacy of the measures taken by the Parties to the Framework Convention to give effect to the principles set out therein.

The **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 10 November 1994 and entered into force on 1 February 1998, sets out principles to be respected as well as goals to be achieved by the states, in order to ensure the protection of national minorities. The text of the Framework Convention is available in English and French, as well as in other languages, including Slovakian, Hungarian, German, Romani, Polish, and Croatian.

This opinion contains the evaluation of the Advisory Committee following its 6th country visit to the Slovak Republic.

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