

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Comments of the Government of Slovenia on the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Slovenia - received on 14 March 2018

**Position on the findings and recommendations of the Fourth Opinion of the
Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for
the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia**

(8 March 2018)

INTRODUCTION

On 21 June 2017, the Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities published its Fourth Opinion on the implementation of the convention in the Republic of Slovenia, No. ACFC/OP/IV(2017)003, on the basis of the Fourth State Report, other written sources and information obtained from governmental and non-governmental sources during its visit to Ljubljana and Lendava, and to settlements in the municipalities of Grosuplje and Ribnica from 10 to 13 April 2017. After the adoption of the Opinion, the Advisory Committee invited the authorities of the Republic of Slovenia to take account of the observations and submit any comments.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: Government) is grateful to the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for their work and the Fourth Opinion, of which the Government will endeavour to take heed and bear in mind in future activities. The position of the Government on the findings and recommendations of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, No. ACFC/OP/IV(2017)003 of 21 June 2017 is as follows:

Regarding paragraph 9 and in relation to paragraphs 32 to 27 (in accordance with Article 4 of the Framework Convention) and recommendations included under chapter III. Conclusions of the Fourth Opinion, the Government notes that on 11 May 2017, an Inter-ministerial Working Group was formed to resolve the housing problems in Roma settlements.

The main objective of the inter-ministerial working group is to improve the housing situation in Roma settlements, namely via the following tasks:

- prepare a review of the housing situation in individual Roma settlements in Slovenia,
- prepare a review and analysis of good practices in arranging the housing situation of Roma,
- prepare draft measures (legislative, organisation, financial, etc.) to deal with housing issues and improving the housing situation.

The inter-ministerial working group consists of representatives from the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Secretariat-General of the Government, the Office for National Minorities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Ministry of Public Administration. To increase operational capacity, if necessary, the working group invites representatives of other ministries and their bodies (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities, Community of Social Services, the Police, etc.) to participate in meetings, as well as representatives of Roma organisations.

Thus far, the inter-ministerial working group has forwarded questionnaires to municipalities, and based on the results, it has started to supplement the record of Roma settlements in order to complement the review of housing issues in Roma settlements in Slovenia. To that end, the working group, in cooperation with the Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia, organised a

workshop in September 2017 targeting municipalities with a Roma population, which served as an extended meeting of the commission for the Integration of Roma Communities.

The working group also prepared a questionnaire for municipalities with Roma settlements on their current practices in dealing with Roma settlements in order to obtain different suggestions and practical knowledge on positively received measures. Some of the more detailed questions refer to spatial planning, land arrangement, public utilities provision, arranging housing conditions, and decisions regarding the regulation of Roma settlements and cooperation with the Roma community. The questionnaire on practices in Roma settlement arrangements includes legislative proposals.

With regard to drafting proposals for different measures (legislative, organisational, financial, etc.) to settle the housing issue and improve the housing situation of Roma, the working group established that the targeted housing standard can only be achieved progressively, which is why individual steps must be defined to ensure appropriate buildings for all individuals. For each of these steps, relevant legislation regulating the activities will be noted. To address the issues identified, a range of measures will be proposed (legislative, organisational, financial, etc.) to settle the housing issue and improve the housing situation of Roma. Suitable measures and solutions will be sought in accordance with the applicable legislation.

The inter-ministerial working group also realised that in order to achieve the targeted housing standard, various provisional measures are needed (sanitation/public utility buildings and other solutions), as the gap between the current situation and the targeted standard is too wide. A list of proposals has also been drafted, with amendments and supplements to the applicable legislation, in order to facilitate the regulation of this area and increase the effectiveness of measures aimed at improving the housing situation of the Roma.

The inter-ministerial working group drafted a review of relevant past and present EU programmes and projects targeting Roma that could be implemented in Slovenia.

Additionally, the Government adopted the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2017–2021, which defines measures related to housing conditions and access to housing. One of the important strategic goals of this document is to “improve the housing conditions of Roma, accelerate the ‘arrangement’ of settlements with a majority Roma population, ensure access to public good in accordance with national legal requirements, such as access to water and electricity, and encourage ending actual residential segregation stemming from the history of Roma settlement establishment and long-term exclusion from social life”. One of the priority areas of the Programme is entitled “housing situation and access to housing” which foresees six measures aimed at improving the current situation.

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning played an active role in the drafting of the programme, which resulted in a range of tasks that are now being carried out steadily. Three specific measures stand out. Measure No. 2 is related to drafting solution proposals for improving the housing situation of the Roma in individual Roma settlements on the basis of the review of the current housing situation prepared by the aforementioned Inter-ministerial working group.

Measure No. 5 covers the provision of the legal basis for systemic land development related to existing construction works, which has already been adopted by the National Assembly in November with the Building Act, which allows for the regulation of illegal buildings; it enters into force on 1 June 2018.

Measure No. 6 concerns the implementation of a public call for applications for co-funding the construction of housing units, and has already been implemented. The Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia has already published the Programme of co-funding public rental housing in the period 2016–2020 (Official Gazette, No. 41/2016 of 10 June 2016 and amendment No. 88/2016), which provides co-funding for housing units.

The topic of access to safe drinking water is directly linked to the legalisation on housing units, since, according to the applicable legislation, public water supply cannot be granted to illegal buildings. Nevertheless, the right to drinking water access cannot be equated with the public water supply. Municipalities are bound to ensure a public water supply only in cases with a sound legal basis under existing regulations, while in other cases the right to water may be ensured in different ways.

Following the constitutional amendment of November 2016, which enshrined the right to drinking water in the Constitution (newly adopted Article 70a), all legislation pertaining to this issue must comply with the Constitutional Act within 18 months of its entry into force. In order to harmonise Slovenian legislation with the right to drinking water as enshrined in the Constitution, an inter-ministerial working group was established and has already increased its activity.

Until new legislation is passed, the regulations in force before the Constitutional amendments remain in force.

The National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2017–2021 lists different orientations aimed at improving cooperation between all the relevant bodies (at national and local levels) competent to implement measures, namely regular communication and coordination among sectors, the establishment of a network for exchanging information faster and better coordination within individual ministries and between ministries.

On Article 3 of the Framework Convention

Regarding paragraph 14 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the establishment of the Council for Issues concerning the Communities of Members of Nations of the Former SFRY, the Government wishes to clarify the misunderstanding that this body operates within the Ministry of Culture. In fact, the Council is a government body (and operates within the Secretariat-General). In the same year, in 2011, the Ministry of Culture established a special Office for Cultural Diversity and Human Rights, which functions as an internal department within the ministry and responds directly to the minister, and is tasked with ensuring that the cultural rights of these communities are effectively enforced. The preceding paragraph serves as a commentary also on paragraph 18.

Regarding paragraph 16 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, namely on the implementation of Article 12 of the Voting Rights Register Act (Official Gazette, No. 98/13, hereinafter ZVEP-2), the Government wishes to explain that Article 4 of the said Act stipulates that the voting rights register contains information on the voting rights of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, members of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and members of the Roma community (hereinafter: voting rights of members of communities). This facilitates the compilation of electoral registers, which include precise information on all citizens with voting right. The voting rights register of members of communities was established on 14 December 2014 on the basis of the most recent, manually compiled, electoral registers, thereby ensuring that no members of communities were denied their previously recognised voting rights.

Article 12 of ZVEP-2 stipulates that citizens wishing to enforce the right to vote as members of a national community must provide a statement of affiliation to the relevant national community commission or the Roma community commission. The voting right of members of communities is established on the basis of this statement and a review of the criteria for determining voting rights which are independently decided by the self-governing national communities or the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia. The act envisages only the basis for such criteria, namely:

- preservation of a long-standing, strong and continuous link with the community, or
- endeavours to preserve all the elements forging a common identity of an individual community, including their culture or language, or
- family ties up to the second generation directly related to a citizen with a recognised voting right as a member of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities or the Roma community.

If the commission responsible for deciding on a community member's right to vote acknowledges this right, it issues a claim for the applicant to be registered in the voting right register by the administrative unit. If the criteria are not met, the commission issues a decision providing legal protection.

ZVEP-2 is a technical document featuring numerous improvements also regarding the voting rights records of community members and electoral registers for elections or ballots in which members of communities have a special voting right, i.e. in elections of deputies of the Italian or Hungarian national communities to the National Assembly and in elections of representatives of national communities to local self-government bodies.

In drafting the provisions of the Act, the Ministry of the Interior cooperated with the parliamentary group of Italian and Hungarian national communities, as well as with representatives of the Coastal Italian Self-Governing Community and the Pomurje Hungarian Self-Governing National Community.

The criteria laid down in the Act do not prejudice the rights of individuals to self-identify. Every individual has the right to provide a statement which constitutes the grounds for further deliberations by the Commission. ZVEP-2 (paragraph six and seven of Article 19) even foresees a stimulative provision stating that in order to inform new voters of the possibility of obtaining special

voting rights as members of communities, the Ministry of the Interior is bound to forward to the relevant national community commission personal data, such as the name, surname, date of birth, address, of all citizens, aged 18 or older who do not have any record on voting rights as members of communities, although such a record exists for at least one of the parents. The ministry must forward the data within 5 days after calling an election to the National Assembly or local elections or at any time upon the enquiry of the commission.

Without the criteria, Slovenia would not be able to prevent possible abuses of voting rights of members of communities. In the absence of framework criteria, voting rights could be unduly recognised, which could also affect polling results. Moreover, the Government explains that the draft act was also prepared in accordance with decision No. U-I-283/94 of the Constitutional Court. In fact, the latter decided that the previous act on voting rights was unconstitutional, as it failed to provide clear criteria according to which the Italian and Hungarian Commissions of local self-governing communities decided to register voters in a special electoral register of citizens who are members of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities.

On Article 4 of the Framework Convention

Regarding paras. 27 and 30 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee regarding the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (hereinafter: the advocate), the Government notes that, in 2016, the Protection Against Discrimination Act was passed (Official Gazette, No. 33/16), which mainly concerns the regulation of the status of the body charged with promoting equal treatment. The Protection Against Discrimination Act more clearly defines the tasks and powers of the advocate, thus enhancing the coordination of work between different institutions responsible for combating discrimination. The advocate has the status of an independent national body. Its head has the status of a state official, appointed by the National Assembly on the proposal of the President of the Republic of Slovenia. The advocate provides independent assistance to victims of discrimination by means of awareness raising, inspection, and cooperation in judicial proceedings, conducts independent studies, research, and analyses, and monitoring, and publishes recommendations and independent reports. The body has the power of inspection and may investigate complaints regarding alleged discrimination and issue decisions in cases of violations, although it does not function as a minor offence authority. If the offender fails to take measures as instructed by the advocate, the advocate may have recourse to the competent inspection authorities, which then proceed to sanction the offender.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities points out that, as of 1 January 2018, the advocate has operated as an independent budget user; the funds earmarked for 2018 amount to 500,000 EUR. In October 2017, the advocate was provided with appropriate premises. In the transitional period, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is carrying out administrative and technical tasks for the functioning of the advocate, as set forth in the Protection against Discrimination Act, namely general support tasks, HR, finances and IT. The competent ministry believes that the status of the advocate is now regulated, and that the institution has been given the appropriate conditions to fulfil its functions.

In light of this, and based on explanations provided by the Ministry of Finance, the Government underscores that prior to this change, the advocate functioned as a body within the ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. With the entry into force of the Protection against Discrimination Act in the first half of 2016, an independent body was established with certain competences according to the Act. The Act was drafted by the ministry responsible for equal opportunities (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities).

During preparatory work for budgetary proposals for 2017 and 2018, the advocate was allocated EUR 200,000 for 2017, which is comparable to the early stages of other comparable bodies. During 2017, an additional EUR 50,000 were allocated for full operations. In 2017, the total budget outturn of the advocate was EUR 225,352.

The budgets for 2018 and 2019 foresee an increase in funds for the advocate's work. For each year, EUR 500,000 are earmarked in the budget, which is why the competent ministry believes that the remarks of the Advisory Committee are unfounded, considering the early stage of the institution's functioning.

On Article 5 of the Framework Convention

Regarding paragraph 42 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the provision of financial support for the cultural activities of national minorities and increased public awareness and visibility of all minority cultures and traditions as a vital and integral part of the Slovenian society, the Government notes that it has already ensured this, primarily through the public Radio and Television (RTV Slovenia) services and indirectly through the system of public funding of media programmes.

In accordance with the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, the national broadcaster (Radiotelevizija Slovenija) must broadcast one radio and one television programme per each national minority and radio and television programmes for the Roma ethnic community; moreover, the act stipulates that its programmes must:

- provide credible and impartial informative broadcasts, whereby it provides comprehensive information regarding political events at home and in neighbouring countries, important events in other European countries, especially Member States of the European Union, and important international topics so as to facilitate objective public informing of Slovenian citizens, Slovenians abroad, members of Slovenian ethnic communities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, members of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities in Slovenia and the Roma community in Slovenia;
- ensure fulfilment of the constitutional rights of the Hungarian and Italian ethnic communities in the area of public information via public radio and television, and promote ties between the ethnic communities and their mother countries and incorporation of cultural and other achievements of the Italian and Hungarian nations into ethnic community channels;
- support the spread of knowledge about other cultures that are represented in Slovenia and about their representatives.

Regarding the regular annual public call for applications for co-financing media programmes, it must be stressed that the primary goals of this call are (1) to enforce the right to be informed and to provide public information for citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenians abroad, members of Slovenian ethnic communities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities in the Republic of Slovenia and the Roma community in Slovenia; and (2) to nurture a culture of public dialogue. Moreover, during the assessment of eligible projects, the two following criteria apply, among others:

- ensure the application of the principles of cultural diversity, equal opportunities and tolerance,
- to enable the enforcement of the right to be informed and to provide public information to local and minority communities, to enable the information to be distributed in minority languages.

On Article 6 of the Framework Convention

In relation to paragraphs 43 and 51 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on hate speech and intolerant discourse, the Government notes that the Ministry of the Interior also detected an increase, particularly from 2015 onwards, related to the marked increase in migrant arrivals in the EU. For many years, the Ministry has provided co-financing, through European funds, for programmes of inter-cultural dialogue and awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of inter-cultural dialogue. In 2015, in cooperation the AMIF fund, it co-financed, several projects on inter-cultural dialogues in six Slovenian towns, and a media campaign aimed at raising awareness on the link between migration and social development.

With the active participation of third-country nationals in both the development and the implementation phase, the projects on inter-cultural dialogue were devised with a view to promoting inter-cultural dialogue with third-country nationals in different areas of everyday life. The objectives of the programme were:

- encourage cooperation between different cultures and national identities,
- encourage a tolerant and respectful attitude to cultural difference,
- increase general public awareness of the importance of inter-cultural dialogue,
- promote ethnic diversity.

The project was also intended to advance the social inclusion of certain target groups with special needs among third-country nationals: women, youth and children, elderly, illiterate persons and disabled persons. The concept of the project foresaw weekly activities in ten Slovenian towns, with the aim of increasing the social inclusion of third-country nationals.

In December 2015, the Ministry of the Interior in collaboration with AMIF fund co-financed a media campaign aimed at raising public awareness about migration and social development. The campaign 'We are all migrants' within the selected project featured two video messages, which aired on major national media from 11 to 17 December 2015, along with a series of activities to mark International Migrants Day. The three central events were held in Maribor, Ljubljana and Koper, while local events were organised in cooperation with other societies and organisations in Kamnik, Kočevje, Cerklje na Gorenjskem, Postojna, Trbovlje, Novo mesto, Idrija, Cerknica, Celje, Kranj, Izola,

Velenje, Hrpelje, Jesenice and Ptuj. The activities included panel and round-table discussions, cultural events, theatre, film and literary events, exhibitions, a living library and others.

The main purpose of the project was to increase general public awareness of the positive effects of including migrants in Slovenian society and the benefits of migration for social development, as well as to contribute to the development of inter-cultural sensitivity, raise awareness of the advantages of co-existence between people of different cultural and linguistic origin and help build an effective, encouraging and participative environment for their active inclusion in Slovenian society.

By supporting this project, the Ministry helped to promote tolerance and respect for diversity and inter-cultural dialogue, and will continue to do so in future.

Furthermore, various activities were carried out by the permanent working group of the General Police Directorate in order to strengthen the awareness-raising activities. With a view to raising awareness of discrimination, the Police Academy is conducting a special training programme, 'FA012 – Recognising stereotypes, overcoming prejudice and eliminating discrimination in a multicultural society', which is aimed at spreading the knowledge needed to recognise and understand various forms of discrimination. Police officers are trained to respond appropriately when dealing with persons who are 'different', relegated to the margins of society, socially excluded due to their origin, values, lifestyle, orientation (sexual, religious, political, etc.) or personal characteristics. Trainees learn about the social stereotypes and prejudice which can lead to discrimination; they learn about and understand the role and importance of human rights declarations and conventions, become aware of their own prejudices and the need to overcome them in their work, learn about different forms of discrimination, ways and possibilities to suppress them in Slovenia, develop empathy for 'different', marginalised and socially excluded individuals, and understand the importance of dialogue in forming partnerships with representatives of communities which could be at risk of discrimination.

The Police Academy has been providing this training for police officers since 2009, and since 2013, for other civil servants who regularly encounter members of the Roma community or members of other multi-cultural groups members during their work.

The training of police officers and civil servants is included in the annual plan of work of the Police (in 2017 and 2018), and is among the proposed measures which are included in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2017–2021.

To effectively implement the measures, four training sessions were organised for the Police (Murska Sobota Police Directorate, Ljubljana Police Directorate, Kranj Police Directorate and Koper Police Directorate), attended by 147 police officers, and four training sessions for other civil servants who regularly come into contact with the Roma community (in Pomurje, Ribnica municipality, Elementary School Šentjernej, Social Services Nova Gorica), with 117 servants attending.

Members of the working group provided special training for Police officers, as foreseen in the amendments to the PPSA Implementation plan No. 226-91/2015/1 (207-09) of 23 December 2015,

namely “with a view to building professional competence to address larger numbers of migrant, ensure appropriate trainings focused on tolerance and respect for peculiarities stemming from national, religious, cultural and linguistic differences of migrants”. To this end, the Police Academy held a consultation, on 26 January 2016, entitled ‘Dealing with stereotypes and awareness of cultural diversity in working with migrants’, with the participation of renowned experts in sociology, representatives of non-governmental organisations, the Consul General of the Kingdom of Jordan and two citizens, from Syria and Iran. The aim of the consultation was to share knowledge and experience on dealing with migrants and respecting peculiarities, whether national, religious, cultural or linguistic, and focusing on tolerance. The participants shared valuable information and experience, extending their knowledge and enabling a better understanding of inter-cultural differences and the elimination of prejudices. The consultation acted as an introduction to developing and implementing multiplier training courses.

The following training courses were held:

- 11 February 2016 – multiplier training courses, Murska Sobota Police Directorate,
- 15 February 2016 – multiplier training courses, Ljubljana Police Directorate,
- 17 February 2016 – training courses for police officers, Special Police Force, Maribor Police Directorate,
- 16 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Nova Gorica Police Directorate,
- 17 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Celje Police Directorate,
- 22 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Ljubljana Police Directorate,
- 24 March 2016 – training courses for police officers, Special Police Force, Celje Police Directorate,
- 25 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Koper Police Directorate,
- 29 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Maribor Police Directorate,
- 31 March 2016 – multiplier training courses, Kranj Police Directorate,
- 11 April 2016 – multiplier training courses, Novo mesto Police Directorate
- 14 June 2016 – training courses for officers of the special countermeasures police unit, Nova Gorica.

In total, the training courses were attended by 464 participants, 226 were multipliers.

In 2016, several activities were carried out concerning migrants which were aimed at fostering cooperation with other institutions and non-governmental organisations (Amnesty International Slovenia, Legal Information Centre, UNCHR Slovenia, Community of Social services of the Republic of Slovenia, etc.).

The National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2017–2021 by the Government also foresees police work in the community aimed at enhancing the partnership with the local community and promoting effective solutions related to various security needs. Such a relationship enables the collection of information necessary for the timely detection of security issues. Police work within the community and in prevention focuses on direct contact with the Roma community and on resolving individual issues together with other stakeholders. The police increased preventive activities in the Roma community. As a linking element they set the pace of work of various consultative bodies and expert and multidisciplinary teams, which include representatives of the Roma community, and are actively involved in them. The work of such teams effectively prevents

the rise of tensions and contributes to defining and implementing adequate measures when such situations and violations of positive laws arise. In working within the Roma community, the police have consistently implemented the fundamental tasks stipulated by the Police Tasks and Powers Act, the Police Organisation and Work Act, Police rules, the Resolution on the National Programme of Crime Prevention and Suppression for 2012–2016, the Medium-term Plan of Work and Development for the period 2013–2017, and the Resolution on the Long-term Development of the Police until 2025. The key objectives are contained in the strategic document of the General Police Directorate, i.e. the 2013 Strategy on Police Work in the Community, and the Resolution on the Long-term Development of the Police until 2025. These include in particular: increased partnership cooperation with the local community, state authorities and civil society; enhanced visibility and presence of police officers in local communities; increased sense of security; enhanced public trust in, and satisfaction with, the work of the police; effective prevention and investigation of crimes.

An active role in security panels of municipalities and local communities with a Roma population is another form of police work in the community. In certain, the most heavily burdened, local communities, the activities of these security panels have already been launched. The exchange of information and identification of security issues regarding police work have a clear positive impact on building trust in the work of the police in areas with Roma settlements. However, local communities have not yet recognised the advantages of such an approach to resolving and addressing problem situations. The police strive to adequately present the impact of establishing consultative bodies (a multidisciplinary approach). Another part of police work in the community is police participation in municipal commissions for resolving Roma issues and monitoring the situation of the Roma community. They have also been involved in drafting municipal strategies to resolve Roma issues and participate at meetings of commissions that deal with concrete problems.

In 2017, the working group carried out 210 preventive activities in the Roma community. These included informal discussions, counselling, awareness-raising on specific problem situations, and educating members of the Roma community.

At all three levels, the police actively cooperate with legitimate representatives of the Roma community (Roma Community Council), Roma organisations and individuals. They held regular meetings with the Forum of Roma Councillors, which regroups the councillors elected as representatives to municipal councils, during which the police, the Roma community and the local community actively cooperate to address individual problems and seek solutions. In 2017, three such meetings were held (Novo mesto, Kočevje and Grosuplje) with the participation of the Roma councillors, the police and municipal representatives and, on one occasion, a representative of the Office for National Minorities.

The police have established excellent cooperation with the Office for National Minorities. They regularly exchange information on specific problems with the aim of seeking solutions. The police have also actively participated at all three levels in the Office's project, namely the national platform for Roma SIFOROMA, aimed at enhancing the consultation procedure, establishing an open and structured consultation procedure and fostering the exchange of good practice and experience. The project targets the Roma community (in particular, children and adolescents),

institutions and the non-governmental sector. The police participated in the projects during the identification of key challenges in resolving issues in the Roma community, on the basis of which the needs were determined and measures developed. Additionally, they have actively participated in the inter-ministerial working group for the preparation of amendments to the Roma Community Act; they have not yet concluded their work, as the draft Roma Community Act is currently being publicly debated.

Regarding paragraph 51 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on efforts to combat the increasing level of hate speech, the Government additionally notes that several legal and self-regulatory measures were adopted in the last year to curb hate speech in the media. Among them, in particular, the amendment to the Media Act, adopted in 2016, which stipulates that online publishers must draft terms and conditions for commenting which must be published in a prominent place in the medium. Comments violating the terms must be removed as quickly as possible, or within one working day at the latest after having been reported.

With regard to endeavours to fight hate speech, the Government also prepared a draft Resolution on the National Programme of Crime Prevention and Suppression for the 2018–2022 period, which also focuses on the fight against public incitement to hatred and intolerance. The Government has not confirmed the draft thus far (the proceedings have been suspended), and the Resolution must also be adopted by the National Assembly.

Among the strategies and programmes aimed at countering public incitement to hatred and intolerance, the draft Resolution foresees the following targets:

- to reduce the level of hate speech, in all forms or manners, and public incitement to hatred and intolerance,
- to ensure and enhance educational, promotional and other preventive activities to reduce hate speech and promote the culture of public dialogue.

Among the key activities and measures to achieve these goals, the draft resolution foresees the following: “Programmes and action plans must be devised to counter all forms of hate speech or public incitement of hatred and intolerance. In light of this, support must be given to educational, promotional and other preventive activities on hate speech, public discussions on this topic must be encouraged, as well as awareness-raising campaigns for countering hate speech and discriminatory public discourse. The practice of adopting Codes of conduct should also be promoted, as well as the establishment of a self-regulatory mechanism and increased cooperation between all competent and relevant stakeholders in the field of hate speech, national bodies and institutions, non-governmental sector, civil initiatives, interest groups, educational, scientific and research sectors, and internet providers and publishers. Furthermore, regulations must be thoroughly examined, in particular on the detection, prevention, investigation and definition of crimes and minor offences related to hate speech, with a view to drafting better regulatory solutions.”

In relation to paragraphs 52 to 57 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee (on protection from hate crime and hostility), the Government indicates that the discrepancy between the number of complaints received by the Spletno oko/Web Eye platform and the number of convictions for

criminal offences is no proof of poor substantive criminal regulation or that the judiciary rarely uses the relevant provisions. The Ministry of Justice warned that the Web Eye platform could not replace criminal proceedings nor is it intended to. The aim of the Web Eye platform is to contribute to reducing the level of hate speech online in cooperation with the police, internet service providers, websites and other stakeholders in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Criminal proceedings, on the other hand, are aimed at collecting enough evidence for a conviction, while at the same time ensuring procedural safeguards and applying the principle of legality. The Ministry of Justice insists that the police, the prosecutor's office and the judiciary actively and successfully investigate and prosecute hate speech cases in accordance with the law, as demonstrated by the statistical data included in the Report.

Regarding citizens of other successor states to the former SFRY who were removed from the register of permanent residents (paragraphs 58 to 61 and final recommendations of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee), the Government notes that in 2010, the Act Amending the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia was adopted in order to regulate the status of the erased (hereinafter: the Amending Act). The National Assembly adopted the Act with a view to finally regulating the legal status of persons who had been removed from the register of permanent residents. According to the Act, persons deleted from the register of permanent population who do not reside in Slovenia on reasonable grounds are also entitled to a permanent residence permit. As defined under the Amending Act, reasonable grounds for absence include departure from Slovenia due to the consequences of deletion from the register or due to the failure to acquire a residence permit, failure to return to Slovenia because of war in other successor states to the SFRY, expulsion from Slovenia, and refused entry. Therefore, according to the Amending Act, a permanent residence permit may also be granted to those "erased" who have lived abroad since 1992 for justified reasons. The Act also sets a deadline for submitting permanent residence permit applications, namely within three years following the entry into force of the Act, specifically by 24 July 2013. The legislative authorities assessed that this was long enough to allow all potential applicants to acquaint themselves with the amended Act and file their applications. To this end, the Ministry of the Interior prepared a special brochure in Slovene and the four other official languages of the successor states to the SFRY containing all relevant information. All five versions were made available at administrative units throughout Slovenia and at Slovenian diplomatic missions and consular posts in the successor states to the SFRY. They were also distributed to civil society organisations. Despite public announcements on the Amending Act, not all "erased" people took the opportunity given by the State to apply. In other words, they showed no interest in regulating their status.

In terms of content, the Act was thoroughly examined by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, which on 10 June 2010 issued decision No. U-II-1/10, ruling that a referendum on this matter would be inadmissible; additionally, the Court established that the Amending Act resolved all issues that had been declared unconstitutional by Court decision No. U-I-246/02-28 of 3 April 2003. In decision No. U-I-48/13 of 8 January 2015 on a request from the Association of the Erased Residents of Slovenia for a constitutional review of the Amending Act regarding an alleged unconstitutional legal gap, the Constitutional Court dismissed the request as obviously unjustified. According to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, the Act allows the acquisition of

the permanent residence permit also for those "erased" who do not live in the Republic of Slovenia, but who intend to return.

Regarding the regulation of status, the Ministry of the Interior is of the opinion that Slovenia adequately provided for the regulation of persons erased from the register of permanent residents, as a special act was adopted and such persons were provided with the possibility of obtaining a permanent residence permit. Those who failed to apply for a permanent residence permits under this Act or whose applications were refused may apply for a residence permit in Slovenia under the conditions set forth in the Aliens Act (Official Gazette, No 1/18 – official consolidated text 6).

In 2013, Slovenia passed another special act concerning people removed from the register of permanent residents, namely the Act Regulating the Compensation for Damage Sustained as a Result of Erasure from the Register of Permanent Residents, which entered into force on 18 December 2013 and began to apply on 18 June 2014. As specified in the introductory provision, the Act aims to redress the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms caused to persons who were removed from the register of permanent residents. The Act also executes the judgement of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights of 26 June 2012 in *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*.

During the legislative procedure, the scope of beneficiaries was extended. In addition to the erased who obtained a permanent residence permit or Slovenian citizenship after having been deleted from the register, compensation for damage should also be provided for the erased who attempted to regulate their status in the Republic of Slovenia, but whose applications for permanent residence or citizenship were denied or dismissed or if the procedure was stopped. This extension of the scope of beneficiaries also executes the judgement of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights of 26 June 2012 in *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*, and the recommendation issued by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Deputies. The eligibility of applicants was determined according to the criteria used by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in their decision on which claimants in the case *Kurić and others v. Slovenia* are victims of alleged violations and were accordingly granted indemnity for non-material damage. In accordance with Article 35 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled that applications lodged by two applicants who had never expressed a wish to reside in the Republic of Slovenia since their deletion from the register were unfounded.

The Act regulates the right to financial compensation and to other forms of just satisfaction as redress for damage sustained as a result of erasure. As the purpose of the Act is to enable eligible claimants just satisfaction in an expedited and efficient way, it provides that beneficiaries may claim pecuniary compensation in an administrative procedure lump-sum compensation is foreseen, namely EUR 50 for each month of deletion; and the beneficiaries need not substantiate any causal link between the deletion and damages); concurrently, it entitles beneficiaries other forms of just satisfaction. In addition to seeking financial compensation in an administrative procedure, beneficiaries may also claim financial compensation in court proceedings. It is for each beneficiary to decide whether they will exercise their right to financial compensation in an administrative or

judicial procedure. Persons claiming to have suffered damages higher than those recognised by the administrative procedure may claim compensation before a court.

Other forms of just satisfaction provide or facilitate the exercise of rights in other areas where it was deemed that such benefits could be useful or necessary. Claimants are thus entitled to the payment of contributions for compulsory health insurance; inclusion and priority consideration in social protection programmes; facilitation of exercising rights to public funds; state scholarships; equal treatment as Slovenian citizens in resolving housing problems; access to the education system, and participation or priority treatment in integration programmes (programmes facilitating faster integration in the cultural, economic and social life in the Republic of Slovenia).

At its 1257th session on 25 May 2016, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers responsible for monitoring the execution of ECHR judgements adopted its final Resolution on *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*. Based on the action plan for the execution of judgement, the Committee of Ministers decided that Slovenia has complied with the requests specified in the ECHR Grand Chamber judgement of 26 June 2012 and 12 March 2014 by adopting both individual measures related to applicants and general measures. By passing the Act Regulating the Compensation for Damage Sustained as a Result of Erasure from the Register of Permanent Residents, Slovenia complied with the requests for general measures specified in the pilot judgement. Thus, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers closed the procedure in the case of *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*.

On 17 November 2016, the European Court of Human Rights issued a judgement in *Anastasov and others v. Slovenia* (application no. 65020/13). The applicants, who were deleted from Slovenia's Register of Permanent Residents, lodged the application with the ECHR in October 2013. The ECHR decided to strike the application referring to 212 applicants from its list of cases and to close the pilot judgement procedure initiated in *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*. The Court was satisfied with the system of compensation introduced in Slovenia, and its functioning in practice. In fact, in November 2013, the National Assembly passed the Act Regulating the Compensation for Damage Sustained as a Result of Erasure from the Register of Permanent Residents, which entered into force on 18 December 2013 and began to apply on 18 June 2014. The Act also executes the pilot judgement of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights of 26 June 2012, issued in the case of *Kurić and others v. Slovenia*. According to the ECHR, those 'erased' who had regularised their legal status (in this particular case, the 212 applicants) have reasonable prospects of receiving compensation for damage in the Republic of Slovenia. The ECHR concluded that the issue of compensation for the 'erased' had been resolved at the national level, and did not find any special circumstance regarding respect for human rights which required continued examination of the case.

In light of the above, the Ministry of the Interior is of the opinion that the compensation for the damage incurred by the erased is appropriately regulated.

On Article 9 of the Framework Convention

With regard to paragraph 62 (publishing a magazine for the Hungarian national community within the national broadcaster (RTV Slovenia) programming and sustainability of the project in terms of

personnel job security) of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government indicates that the constitutional rights of the Hungarian national community in terms of the right to information are sufficiently protected by the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, according to which RTV Slovenia is bound to broadcast one radio and one television programme for the Hungarian national community, and to comply with the right of information and fulfil the democratic, social and cultural needs of the Hungarian national community in Slovenia in all other programmes and services.

RTV Slovenia provides for programmes for the Hungarian national minority through a regional centre in Maribor and a unit in Lendava, broadcasting regional programmes and television programmes, as well as in programmes at the national level. In 2017, RTV Slovenia programmes for the Hungarian national community included:

- 200 hours of TV programmes on TV Maribor, of which 90 hours were first-time programmes,
- 760 hours of radio programmes on MMR, of which 8 hours from the MMR studios and 401 hours from Radio Si studios.

Regarding the proposal by the Hungarian national community to include the community magazine within the framework of the RTV broadcasting to ensure personnel job security, the Government notes that the problem is unclear and that RTV Slovenia will proceed with additional enquiries. However, RTV Slovenia is not a publisher.

In relation to paragraph 63 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government, based on clarifications of the Ministry of Culture and RTV Slovenia, indicates that RTV Slovenia allows for national minority programmes for the Italian national community through its centre in Koper, for the Hungarian national community through the centre in Maribor and its unit in Lendava, by broadcasting regional programmes and television programmes, as well as in programmes at the national level. Minorities are granted full participation in programme management. In practice, programmes are created in three minority languages, mostly by staff of the respective nationality. The indicative annual plan for these programmes is as follows:

- for the Italian national minority, 3,350 hours of television programmes and 8,760 hours of radio programmes;
- for the Hungarian national minority, 100 hours of television programmes and 4,700 hours of radio programmes,
- for the Roma community, 24 hours of television programmes and 52 hours of radio programmes.

The Italian and Hungarian national minorities participate in adopting the orientations for, and monitoring of, the national minority programmes and the totality of RTV Slovenia programmes. Based on the provision of the Act, two independent programme committees exist, for RTV programmes for the Italian and the Hungarian national minorities. Both committees cooperate with the main programme council, which adopts the annual programme and production plans at the

proposal of RTV Slovenia for all programmes and their realisation. Each national community also has a representative on the main programme council,

In relation to this, RTV Slovenia explains that it has faced different development issues of late, also regarding finances and human resources. The direction of development will be determined in a mid-term development strategy currently being drafted. Along with programming decisions, in particular for 2017 and 2018, the management bodies also held open discussions on possible means of rationalising and increasing the efficiency of RTV Slovenia, including its two regional centres, with the aim of improving mid-term programming production and offering to the public – in more financially realistic frames – better programmes which would attract more viewers. This holds true for all of RTV Slovenia's production, but more specifically programmes in Slovenian, while the volume of programmes in Italian, Hungarian and Romani are being maintained and further developed. Some issues arise throughout all RTV Slovenia programme production, and smaller ones also in ensuring own production for the Italian national minority in the Koper regional centre. Although during the last period the programme council did not adopt any measures regarding the national minority programmes, some heated debates emerged during commission and working group meetings with some controversial statements with which the national minority representatives disagreed and strongly opposed, especially from the Italian national community. But these debates were held during working group bodies and not in decision-making processes at the highest level.

In relation to paragraph 64 on legal obligations and support for the media of other minorities, and with paragraph 68 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government indicates that, in accordance with the Media Act, all media, including those intended for new or other minorities or published by these communities, may submit their applications in the annual public call for applications for co-financing media programmes. Moreover, positive discrimination applies to such programmes, as the evaluation of proposed projects is also based on the following two criteria:

- ensure the application of the principles of cultural diversity, equal opportunities and tolerance,
- enable the enforcement of the right to be informed and to ensure public information to local and minority communities, and ensure that the information is distributed in minority languages.

It is also worth mentioning that through the regular annual public call for co-financing media programmes in 2017, financial support was granted to the following two projects:

- Minority on minority – contributions aimed at obtaining new, younger readers, and media education for the weekly *Nepujsag*. Applicant: Institute for the Information Activity of the Hungarian National Community. *Nepujsag* is a weekly magazine of the Hungarian national minority in Slovenia. The aim of the magazine is to provide information to Hungarian nationals in their mother tongue. It focuses on presenting, actively monitoring and commenting on various events related to the national community, and events taking place in nationally mixed and bilingual areas in Pomurje, which affect the lives of minority members and their enforcement of special rights of

autochthonous national community. The content contributes to preserving the language and culture of minority communities, while enabling the quality integration of national community members into the social environment of the majority;

– Most sožitja (Bridge of Coexistence) on Radio Romic. Applicant: Union of Roma of Slovenia. Radio Romic is a broadcaster of the Roma community and other communities; their programme Coexistence Bridge focuses on stories which counter prejudice against Roma, as one of the most vulnerable groups in Slovenia. The broadcasts are in the Slovene language and partly in Romani. Targeting the Roma and non-Roma community of Prekmurje and in the wider region (Slovenians, Roma and Hungarians), the main role of the radio is to encourage peaceful and tolerant cooperation in the community, as well as to raise awareness and share knowledge on different cultures, origins, history and common past. Radio Romic strives to preserve Roma values and Romani. They also collect literature on Roma and literature by Roma authors. It encourages members of the Roma community to be actively engaged in the community within Roma organisations and elsewhere.

Moreover, through the regular annual public call for co-financing media programmes in 2017, the Ministry of Culture allocated resources to the following informative programmes which dealt with national minority issues, and topics related to other minority and ethnic communities in Slovenia:

	Applicant	Project title	Included community (Hungarian, Italian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenians living abroad, etc.)	Cofinanced
1	INSTITUTE FOR THE INFORMATION ACTIVITY OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL COMMUNITY	Minority on minority – contributions aimed at obtaining new, younger readers, and media education.	Nepujsag is a weekly magazine of the Hungarian national minority in Slovenia. The aim of the magazine is to provide information to Hungarian nationals in their mother tongue.	EUR 2,929.20
2	Roma Union of Slovenia	Most sožitja (Bridge of Coexistence)	Radio Romic is a broadcaster of the Roma community and other communities. Their programme Coexistence Bridge focuses on stories which counter prejudice against Roma, as one of the most vulnerable groups in Slovenia. The broadcasts are in the Slovene language and partly in Romani.	EUR 11,631.89

3	TV CELJE, d. o. o.	Dogodki dneva (Events of the Day) – news programme	The programme allows representatives of the Roma community and other ethnic communities to express their views.	EUR 42,582.28
4	RADIO TRIGLAV JESENICE, d. o. o.	Zgornja Gorenjska na Radiu Triglav (Upper Gorenjska region on Radio Triglav)	The programme includes information on the activities of immigrant organisations and cultural societies and the lives of Roma and Sinti.	EUR 46,636.29
5	TELEVIZIJA NOVO MESTO, d. o. o.	News	The programme focuses on the Roma community, which has a strong presence in the region.	EUR 70,000.00
6	UNIVOX, d. o. o.	Zahodnodolenjski odmevi (Topical news from West Dolenjska)	The programme also touches on issues related to the Roma community around Kočevje in Ribnica. Within the project, a regular monthly show is foreseen, 'Romani Hours', which gives an opportunity to spread information on the life and culture of Roma and the problems they face.	EUR 45,060.39
7	RADIO MURSKI VAL, d. o. o.	Aktualno (In Focus) – informative programme on the Murski Val Radio	The show systematically covers topics related to different national communities (Hungarian and Croatian). They provide information on specific topics to national community members and the majority population. It also keeps Roma informed and contributes to better cooperation between Roma and the majority population.	EUR 79,448.00
8	PRO MUNDUS, d. o. o.	Studio +	This is a 30-minute studio talk show which focuses on the situation of Hungarians and Croats living in Pomurje, and gives viewers an opportunity to learn about the culture and (political) lives of Roma, their views on current affairs, and successful individuals of Roma	EUR 4,550.00

			descent.	
9	HI-FI VIDEOSTUDIO, d. o. o.	Event	Within the project, every last Friday of the month is dedicated exclusively to topics related to minorities living in Pomurje (Hungarians and Croats) and Roma.	EUR 64,887.75
1 0	TV IDEA – KANAL 10, d. o. o.	Pomurski dnevnik (News programme)	The show focuses mainly on minority communities and the problems they encounter, as it has a strong regional dimension (the Hungarian national community and the Roma community).	EUR 80,000.00
1 1	KOROŠKI RADIO, d. o. o.	Odmevi koroških dolin (Echos of Carinthian Valleys)	The main objective of the show is to share information among Carinthian Slovenians, living in Austria. Every Saturday (except in July and August) a special show Odprta meja (Open Borders) is broadcast focusing on topics related to Slovenians living abroad, particularly on the economy and culture, as well as on the activities of Slovenian organisations and political parties.	EUR 74,512.50

1 2	Radio Študent Institute	Urban student media and education platform	Radio Študent cooperates with several minority and ethnic communities. Members of these communities are included in their year-long education programmes on radio production. This promotes the integration of individuals and ensures editorial and overall subject-matter quality. Members of minority communities manage and run these shows as authors. Within the project, the following shows have a special focus on minority communities: Puko Učkur (on migrant workers), Kontrola leta (by the Serbian national minority), Mali granični prijelaz (by the Croatian national minority), Sunrise Africa (by the African community) and Romano horo (by the Roma community).	EUR 81,600.00
1 3	GORENJSKI GLAS	Priloga GG+/Snovanja (GG+ supplement/Creation s)	The traditional column Med sosedi (Among Neighbours) focuses on informing the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia. The 'Multikulti' column focuses on minorities, ethnic communities, immigrants and emigrants.	EUR 18,000.00
1 4	KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SOCIETY VÓTER	MI – zamejci 2017 (Us - living abroad 2017)	The project foresees 10-minute educational and informative shows targeting Slovenians living abroad, in the immediate vicinity of Pomurje region, namely in Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The shows are intended to raise awareness, provide counselling, educate and inform the public of Pomurje and Slovenians living abroad.	EUR 4,496.00
			TOTAL:	EUR 626,334.30

On Article 10 of the Framework Convention

In relation to paragraph 70 (use of minority languages in court proceedings and in bilingual areas) of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government indicates that the current regulation on the criteria for the appointment of judges (Judicial Service Act) does not stipulate that judges working in bilingual areas must have linguistic competence in the language of the national community. As this regulation is deemed appropriate, no changes are foreseen, but it needs to be stressed that the right to use a minority language in court proceedings is respected and ensured with the use of court interpreters. The costs related to the use of the languages of Italian and Hungarian national communities in courts are covered by budgetary resources. The Ministry of Justice has no record of cases or complaints from persons with regards to the presence of interpreters when needed.

On Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Regarding paragraph 82 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government notes that the text reads as though the funds that Slovenia (Ministry of Culture) allocates for preserving Gottscheerisch could be in danger. However, the uncertainty applies only to funds provided by the Austrian side.

In relation to paragraph 101 (on the recommendation regarding efforts to combat hate speech) of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government adds that the criminal justice system, namely the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and the Police, and the Ministry of Justice and the State Prosecutor's Office.

The Advisory Committee calls on the Slovenian authorities to continue providing appropriate support for television and radio production for the Italian, Hungarian and the Roma national minorities by consulting their representatives, and to increase support for the media in the languages of other national communities in order to promote and preserve their identities.

The Government notes that it has always acted in accordance with this recommendation, which is already regulated by the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act and the Media act. The Ministry of Culture is well aware of the importance of preserving cultural and linguistic diversity, also in the media, this is why all the activities will continue in this vein, and the Ministry will endeavour to find even more effective legal solutions within the existing legal and financial resources. Additionally, see the comments on paragraphs 42, 62, 64, 67 and 68.

As a response to the general comments on the recommendations (in the summary) and in relation to paragraph 42 of the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Government explains that this area falls within the competence of the Slovenian Language Service at the Ministry of Culture, which coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014–2018, which concludes at the end of this year, and has already started drafting a new resolution for the 2019–2023 period. Among the measures included in the current resolution are measures for developing and promoting minority language communities. After

consultation with the communities, similar measures and the protection of minority language communities in general will also be included in the new language policy programme.

The Office for national minorities actively participated in drafting and adopting the Programme of Measures of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Implementation of Regulations on Bilingualism 2015–2018, which includes 17 detailed measures. These include regular and planned supervision, examination of job classification and appropriate employment, verification of legitimacy of bilingualism bonuses, maintenance for the e-service publication tool on the e-administration website, national minorities language courses, translation of forms into national community languages, provision of all forms used by the police in the languages of the national communities, increased linguistic competence of school workers in minority languages in bilingual education facilities in Prekmurje in Porabje, increased linguistic competence of school workers in minority languages in schools with Italian as the language of instruction in Slovenia and in schools with Slovene as the language of instruction in Italy, update of brochures published by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia on compulsory health insurance, translation of the national focal point website, inclusion of additional topics in the website on the Language Policy of the Republic of Slovenia and co-financing of various activities aimed at preserving and promoting the Italian and Hungarian languages in the framework of regular annual cultural programmes. The working subgroup for preparing the Programme of Measures for the Implementation of Regulations on Bilingualism (coordinated by the Office for National Minorities) must prepare an annual report on all measures implemented based on reports provided by ministries responsible for implementing relevant measures. Upon its adoption by the Government (at the proposal of the Ministry of Culture), the report is submitted to the Commission for the National Communities of the National Assembly. The reports for 2015 and 2016 are already drafted and adopted, while the report for 2017 is still underway. The competent service has devoted careful attention to monitoring the commitments in cooperation with representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities.

On Article 15 of the Framework Convention

In relation to paragraphs 96 and 97 (inclusion in social and economic life) of the Advisory Committee, the Government believes that the endeavours aimed at including Roma in the labour market are already appropriate within the available possibilities, in particular by improving the educational level of the Roma community, which is undoubtedly an area where improvements are required. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities stresses that it regularly monitors the situation of Roma in the labour market and that the available data are reliable.