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Comments of the Government of the Slovak Republic on the Sixth Opinion of the
Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of
National Minorities by the Slovak Republic

received on 5 October 2026

The comments have been submitted under the sole responsibility of the Slovak Republic and made public by the Council of Europe Secretariat in accordance with Rule 29 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49 on the revised monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Comments of the Slovak Republic on the Sixth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic

The Slovak Republic appreciates the dialogue with the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Advisory Committee”) within the sixth monitoring cycle concerning the implementation by the Slovak Republic of its obligations under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Framework Convention”).

The Slovak Republic takes note of the assessment of the persistent shortcomings concerning the situation of national minorities set out in the Sixth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention by the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “the Sixth Opinion”). The findings of the Advisory Committee and its assessment of the implementation of the individual provisions of the Framework Convention will be subject to thorough examination, assessment, and interactive dialogue among the competent authorities and institutions of the Slovak Republic, including in the framework of the follow-up seminar.

Transparency in the evaluation of the monitoring process in the Slovak Republic will, as in previous monitoring cycles, be ensured through the publication of the Sixth Opinion, the present comments of the Slovak Republic and the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

On the basis of an analysis of the Sixth Opinion and the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Government of the Slovak Republic will assign tasks to the competent state administration bodies and other institutions aimed at the further targeted implementation of the Framework Convention.

The Sixth Opinion was submitted to the competent state administration bodies, which provided comments, within their respective areas of competence, on the issues raised and the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee. The present comments of the Slovak Republic comprise the comments provided by the competent state administration bodies and are structured in the order of the individual sections of the Sixth Opinion.

Regarding the section “Summary – Promotion of minority cultures and languages”

Regarding paragraph 4:

With regard to support for the cultures of the newly officially recognised national minorities, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that the Vietnamese national minority was officially recognised by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 7 June 2023. This was followed by a process of amending the Law on the Fund, which was completed on 17 September 2024 with the adoption of an amendment incorporating the Vietnamese national minority into the Law on the Fund and increasing the financial resources of the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities. Independently of the process of recognising the Vietnamese national minority and incorporating it into the system of support provided by the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities, the Goral national minority was officially recognised by Resolution No. 37 of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 29 January 2025.

In the resolution concerned, the Government of the Slovak Republic recommended that the Minister of Culture take into account the cultural needs of the Goral national minority, particularly in relation to the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities and initiate the process of amending the Law on the Fund. At present, the process of amending the Law on the Fund and incorporating the Goral national minority into the system of support is still to be completed and remains pending.

Regarding the section “Summary – Antidiscrimination framework and protection from hostility and violence”

Regarding paragraph 6:

The Presidium of the Police Force does not have at its disposal statistical or other objectively verifiable data that would substantiate the assessment that Roma continue to be subject to stereotyping and discrimination in their interactions with law enforcement officers. The Sixth Opinion also does not specify the methodology, scope or representativeness of the evidence on which this general assessment was based. In this context, we propose that the above conclusion in the Sixth Opinion be substantiated by specific and verifiable data or, alternatively, be presented as the view of the representatives of civil society or national minorities consulted, rather than as a generally established fact.

Regarding the section “Summary – Situations of persons affiliating with the Roma”

Regarding paragraphs 9 to 12:

The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities does not dispute that the problems identified by the Advisory Committee persist. At the same time, however, it considers it necessary that the overall assessment of progress should take due account of the scope of the measures adopted over the past period. These include, in particular, the existence and implementation of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 and the related action plans, the legal prohibition of segregation in education, and measures in the areas of health mediation, employment, housing, participation and combatting anti-Roma racism.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities therefore considers it appropriate to interpret the persistent problems primarily as a call for more consistent and effective implementation of existing measures and for addressing the identified implementation gaps, rather than automatically as evidence of the absence or ineffectiveness of public policies. At the same time, it is necessary to clearly distinguish the responsibilities of individual ministries, state administration bodies, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, as several of the areas identified in the Sixth Opinion are cross-cutting in nature and cannot be addressed by a single authority.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities welcomes the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and considers them a relevant contribution to the further implementation of measures for the benefit of persons belonging to the Roma national minority. In particular, it supports recommendations aimed at more effective use of data, strengthening protection against discrimination and anti-Roma racism, eliminating segregation in education, ensuring equal access to quality education and healthcare, strengthening Roma participation,

and improving the housing and living conditions of marginalised Roma communities (hereinafter “MRCs”).

The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities also considers it important that further monitoring of the implementation of the Framework Convention take into account not only the shortcomings identified, but also the specific legislative, strategic, financial and practical measures adopted by the Slovak Republic. The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities considers the long-term, coordinated and systematic implementation of measures already adopted, their regular evaluation based on the results achieved, the addressing of implementation shortcomings, and the active participation of Roma in decision-making processes affecting them to be key prerequisites for further progress.

Regarding the section “Summary – Follow-up activities and awareness-raising related to the recommendations of the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee”

Regarding paragraph 18 and the related footnote 3:

The website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities, under the section “Framework Convention and European Charter”, provides links to the official website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic concerning the individual monitoring cycles of the Framework Convention, as well as a link to the English-language version of the monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention on the official website of the Council of Europe. Both of the links provided are fully functional and up to date. The link included in footnote 3 of the Sixth Opinion leads to a version of the webpage translated using Google Translate, in which the hyperlinks are indeed not functional. However, this is not due to the absence or malfunction of the links on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities. The Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention has also been translated into Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romani and German, and is available online. For completeness, we are providing a working link to the original website: <https://www.narodnostnemensiny.vlada.gov.sk/ramcovy-dohovor-a-europska-charta/>

Regarding the section “Data collection and population census (Article 3 and Recommendation No. 35)”

In response to the Advisory Committee’s recommendation concerning the use of data collected through the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia and the Atlas of Gorals in Slovakia, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that it makes ongoing use of the data in question when preparing legislative and other expert materials.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities supports the recommendation to use data from the Atlas of Roma Communities in the development and implementation of policies at national, regional and local levels. The Atlas is an important tool for identifying the needs of MRCs and planning targeted interventions. At the same time, in the view of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, the data from the Atlas should be regarded as a supplementary source alongside official statistical data and other relevant data. The Office therefore supports the regular updating of the Atlas and its use in the development of evidence-based policies.

Regarding the section “Legal and institutional framework for combatting discrimination and protecting minority rights (Article 4)”

Protection against discrimination and the status of human rights institutions

Article 12 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic provides a fundamental constitutional guarantee of equal treatment and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms without distinction. Further provisions of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic provide specific constitutional protection for individual fundamental rights and freedoms.

The constitutional framework for protection is reflected in a number of legislative provisions, in particular Law No. 365/2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination (the “Anti-Discrimination Law”), which lays down the principles and mechanisms for protection against discrimination. With regard to persons belonging to national minorities, the Anti-Discrimination Law includes among the protected grounds, inter alia, racial or ethnic origin, affiliation with a national minority or ethnic group, colour, language, and national or social origin.

At the same time, the legal framework provides persons seeking protection against discrimination with a number of procedural mechanisms. These include the reversal of the burden of proof in proceedings concerning breaches of the principle of equal treatment, the possibility of adopting temporary equalising measures, the representation of victims of discrimination by a legal entity, including the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, as well as the possibility of bringing an *actio popularis* claim under Section 9a of the Anti-Discrimination Law.

Constitutional safeguards also apply in the field of criminal law. The provision of Section 140 of the Criminal Code, in defining a specific motive which constitutes a statutory element of the qualified forms of several criminal offences, reflects the principle of equality before the law and the universality of legal protection.

The applicable legal framework is based on the principle of universal and equal protection of the rights of all persons, while at the same time allowing account to be taken of the particular situation and needs of persons or groups exposed to discrimination or disadvantage, to the extent provided for by law.

With regard to the Advisory Committee’s recommendation concerning the status and mandate of human rights bodies, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic also draws attention to the ongoing transposition of Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 and Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council on standards for equality bodies. The transposition is being carried out through a draft law amending Law No. 308/1993 and the Anti-Discrimination Law, with the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic being responsible for the draft. The draft was prepared in co-operation with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, as the national equality body.

The proposed legislation strengthens, in particular, the guarantees of the independence of the equality body, the requirements for adequate human, technical and financial resources, its powers in handling complaints from victims of discrimination, the provision of its services free

of charge and their accessibility, as well as the regular planning of its activities and reporting. It also takes particular account of multiple and intersectional discrimination.

Under the applicable legal framework, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights already has standing to bring an *actio popularis* claim under Section 9a of the Anti-Discrimination Law and is entitled to represent a party in proceedings concerning breaches of the principle of equal treatment.

As regards the Advisory Committee's recommendation to consider further extending the powers of the Centre and the Public Defender of Rights in civil, criminal and administrative proceedings, the possible granting of further procedural status in criminal and administrative judicial proceedings would require amendments to the relevant procedural codes and a separate legislative assessment. This issue goes beyond the scope of the transposition of the aforementioned directives.

With regard to the recommendation to ensure adequate human and financial resources, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic also states that the activities of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights are financed through a subsidy from the state budget, for which the Centre applies annually to the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic pursuant to Section 2(2) of Law No. 308/1993. As the ministry responsible for the Law, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic has no budgetary authority over the Centre. Similarly, it has no budgetary or managerial authority in relation to the Office of the Public Defender of Rights.

Regarding the section "Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages (Article 5)"

Regarding Recommendation No. 59:

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is preparing an amendment to Law No. 138/2017 on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Laws (hereinafter referred to as the "Law on the Fund"), in connection with Resolution No. 37 of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 29 January 2025, by which the Goral ethnic group living in Slovakia was officially recognised as the 15th national minority. In this connection, in view of the increase in the Fund's operating costs, the percentage of the Fund's resources that may be used to cover its own operating costs should also be increased. The introduction of pluri-annual funding is likewise dependent on an increase in financial resources to cover the staffing and material capacities required for the full and systematic performance of all the Fund's tasks.

Regarding Recommendation No. 61:

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic provides financial support to the museums of national minorities within the Slovak National Museum in the form of subsidies from its budget chapter or through special subsidies granted at the request of individual museums. In co-operation with the Slovak National Museum, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic uses targeted communication strategies to raise awareness among the general public of the importance and contribution of the museums of national minorities and to highlight their key role in preserving the cultural heritage of national minorities.

Regarding the section “Promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding (Article 6 and Recommendation No. 71)”

The promotion of intercultural dialogue constitutes a separate grant programme (Programme 4 – Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding) within the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities, a public-law institution which, in accordance with the Law on the Fund, receives annual funding from the budget chapter of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

The main aim of intercultural dialogue is mutual understanding and support for bringing the national majority and national minorities closer together, as well as for fostering closer relations among the national minorities themselves.

Funding is provided for multicultural and interethnic activities that bring together at least two national minorities or the majority population and national minorities through joint events (festivals, exhibitions, concerts, conferences and workshops) of an international or interethnic nature, as well as for presentations of cultures combined with activities aimed at combating prejudice and promoting tolerance and coexistence in society.

Regarding the section “Protection from hostility and violence (Article 6)”

Hate crimes, hate speech and extremism

With regard to the concerns and recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning hate crime, hate speech and extremism, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic states that the current legal framework governing hate crime and extremism provides a criminal-law framework for addressing the relevant forms of conduct and takes account of the international obligations of the Slovak Republic.

Criminal offences relating to extremism fall within the jurisdiction of the Specialised Criminal Court, thereby creating the conditions at the judicial level for specialisation in adjudicating this type of crime.

With regard to the concerns set out in the Sixth Opinion in connection with a bill introduced by a Member of Parliament to amend the legal framework governing criminal offences relating to extremism, the bill in question proposed, among other things, the repeal of the criminal offences under Sections 422a to 422c of the Criminal Code and a reduction in the penalties for certain criminal offences relating to extremism. The bill in question was withdrawn from parliamentary proceedings at the end of January 2026. The proposed amendments were therefore not adopted, and there was neither a reduction in the penalties nor a repeal of the offences in question.

Regarding Recommendation No. 86:

With regard to the Advisory Committee’s priority recommendation No. 86, according to which all cases of hate crime and hate speech reported to the competent authorities should be effectively recorded, promptly and thoroughly investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted and sanctioned, the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic states that the Advisory Committee’s recommendations constitute a constructive contribution to the ongoing efforts of government bodies to strengthen the rule of law, protect human rights, and systematically

combat any manifestations of intolerance and racism. The Police Force pays particular attention to such cases, including through the Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Presidium of the Police Force and the regional directorates of the Police Force, where designated police officers are assigned to deal with extremism-related matters. The National Unit for Special Types of Crime of the Presidium of the Police Force has a dedicated approach to addressing harmful conduct in the online environment. This approach and specialisation—whether in the investigation or detection of hate crime and hate speech—have thus sent a sufficiently clear signal of zero tolerance towards such conduct. The Police Force thus has a functional, independent and legally regulated system that helps to identify and effectively verify or investigate the conduct of all members of the Police Force in cases of excessive use of force. It also has mechanisms in place to detect and investigate hate crimes and hate speech, which are recorded, or, where required, monitored and, where necessary, documented or dealt with by specialist units.

The Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic also recommends that the general statements in the Sixth Opinion concerning persistent stereotyping, discrimination and distrust of the Police Force be supported by specific, verifiable and methodologically transparent data or that the text explicitly state that these reflect the subjective views of selected participants in the monitoring process.

Regarding paragraphs 77, 78 and 83 and Recommendation No. 87:

An internal regulation adopted in 2024 governing the activities of the basic units of the public order police service of the Police Force established the status and duties of the senior officer for work in the communities. In particular, the senior officer for work in the communities independently manages and organises activities aimed at establishing, maintaining, strengthening and guiding relations between the Police Force and socially excluded groups; carries out crime prevention activities and activities aimed at preventing other anti-social conduct among socially excluded persons; delivers lectures and training and engages in publishing activities; provides legal awareness-raising activities aimed at increasing legal awareness among socially excluded persons; co-operates with field social workers, community centres, non-governmental organisations, interest associations, local and regional authorities and state administration bodies; performs patrol duties and conducts regular patrols; and receives reports of administrative offences and criminal offences involving persons from socially excluded groups. The above tasks are performed within socially excluded groups for at least 50% of the officer's basic service hours. There are currently 316 established posts for senior officers for work in the communities within the Police Force. Senior officers for work in the communities hold regular meetings with mayors and designated persons, representatives of public authorities, schools, teaching assistants, field social workers, community centres, Roma leaders, and non-governmental organisations. Their activities also include participation in meetings of local and regional government bodies, preventive activities within socially excluded groups, participation in community events, and the delivery of lectures. The Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force therefore considers the work of senior officers for work in the communities to be an appropriate means of building trust between the Police Force and socially excluded communities, improving communication, carrying out preventive activities, identifying security issues, encouraging the reporting of unlawful conduct,

and cooperating with local and regional partners. With regard to the recommendation to increase the number of such posts, the Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force considers it appropriate to note that the need to establish and fill additional posts must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account developments in the security situation, the number and nature of socially excluded groups within the area served, the number of residents in the communities concerned, the scope of the tasks of the relevant basic unit, and the staffing and budgetary resources available to the Police Force. The Advisory Committee's recommendation can therefore be supported in general terms; however, its implementation cannot be automatic, nor can it be based exclusively on a fixed number of posts without taking local conditions into account.

The Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force positively assesses the activities of the Local Civil and Preventive Services (MOaPS) and their co-operation with units of the Police Force. The information provided by the regional and district directorates of the Police Force indicates that the activities of MOaPS are particularly important in the areas of preventive work within communities; the timely reporting of risk situations to the Police Force; communication with community members; mitigating conflicts and preventing their escalation; supporting public order at cultural, social, and sporting events; co-operation with schools and the prevention of truancy; helping to ensure the safety of children on their way to and from school; co-operation with field social workers, local authorities, and municipal police; making use of personal knowledge and knowledge of local circumstances in determining the whereabouts and movements of persons; overcoming communication and language barriers; and providing relevant information to units of the Police Force within the limits of the law. The information provided by the individual regional directorates of the Police Force highlights the positive preventive and communication role of MOaPS. Their presence in communities can contribute to reducing the risk of conflicts, facilitating faster information transfer, and reducing the number of incidents requiring the immediate dispatch of a Police Force patrol. Several units of the Police Force also state that the possible discontinuation of MOaPS could lead to an increased workload for Police Force patrols, weakened communication links between the Police Force and communities, and reduced capacity to identify problems at an early stage. However, these findings are predominantly qualitative in nature and are based on the personal and local knowledge of police officers. Without a uniform methodology, they cannot be presented as a statistically proven causal relationship between the existence of MOaPS and trends in crime. In the final comments, we therefore recommend using formulations such as “according to observations from practical experience”, “may contribute to” or “units of the Police Force assess positively”, rather than making a categorical assertion that MOaPS demonstrably reduces crime. At the same time, a clear distinction must be made between the remit of the Police Force and the activities of MOaPS. Members of MOaPS are not members of the Police Force and do not have the same powers. Their activities are intended to be primarily preventive, informative, communicative, and supportive in nature. They are not intended to independently carry out police interventions, coercive measures, procedural acts, or activities reserved by law for the Police Force or law enforcement authorities. The Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force has also identified a number of practical risks associated with the operation of MOaPS, in particular varying levels of professional preparedness among its

members, insufficient knowledge of the relevant legislation, possible personal or family ties to persons involved in incidents being dealt with, conflicts of interest, varying levels of respect for MOaPS members within the community, limited working hours, security risks to the members themselves, and the need to clearly define the limits of their powers. These risks do not call into question the overall benefits of the project, but they justify the need for appropriate selection of members, their professional training, supervision by the employer and a clear definition of their roles. Matters concerning the employment status of MOaPS members, the duration of their employment contracts and the funding of the project do not fall within the decision-making competence of the Presidium of the Police Force. With regard to the recommendation to provide MOaPS members with the opportunity to join the Police Force, the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic states that every applicant for admission to the state service of a member of the Police Force must meet the generally applicable statutory requirements. Previous experience in MOaPS may constitute practical experience for an applicant; however, it cannot replace the statutory conditions for admission or establish an automatic entitlement to admission to the state service.

Regarding paragraphs 75, 76 and 83 and Recommendation No. 88:

The Sixth Opinion positively acknowledges the provision of training for members of the Police Force in the areas of working with communities and preventing stereotypical treatment and discrimination. A member of the Police Force assigned to the post of senior officer for work in the communities undergoes two weeks of specialised training focused on working with communities. The specialised training is intended to prepare police officers for the specific requirements of performing their duties in socially excluded communities, communicating with community members, cooperating with local authorities, state administration bodies, field social workers, community centres and non-governmental organisations, as well as carrying out preventive and awareness-raising activities. The Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force also organises an annual methodological training session focused on work in communities and socially excluded groups; during this session, it provides methodological guidance to the organisational units of the public order police service, assesses current issues and observations arising from police work, harmonises procedures for working in socially excluded communities, facilitates the exchange of practical experience among the individual regional directorates of the Police Force, discusses opportunities for co-operation with local authorities, state administration bodies and entities working in communities, and identifies the needs for further professional and methodological development of police officers engaged in community policing. As part of inter-institutional co-operation, the Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force also co-operates with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and directly with the Plenipotentiary. This cooperation focuses primarily on the exchange of information on current issues in MRCs, the coordination of related activities, and the identification of practical solutions to problems encountered in work within communities. On the basis of the above, it may be concluded that the recommendation to continue the initial and ongoing training of law enforcement officers is being implemented on an ongoing basis within the public order police service. The Public Order Police Department of the Presidium of the Police Force supports the continuation of these training and methodological activities in the future.

The professional development of labour inspectors also covers compliance with the principle of equal treatment in employment relations, including specific training focused on manifestations of extremism, intolerance and other serious forms of discrimination. This competence falls within the remit of the National Labour Inspectorate pursuant to Section 6(1)(h) of Law No. 125/2006 on Labour Inspection and on Amendments and Supplements to Law No. 82/2005 on Illegal Work and Illegal Employment and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Laws. The National Labour Inspectorate provides general and professional training for labour inspectors on the basis of the Training Framework for Labour Inspectors. Training courses for labour inspectors on discrimination are generally held every five years, or on an ad hoc basis in response to legislative changes.

Regarding the section “Freedom of expression, freedom of thought and conscience (Article 7)”

Legislation framework concerning the so-called Beneš Decrees

With regard to the Advisory Committee’s concerns and recommendation concerning freedom of expression in connection with legislation concerning the so-called Beneš Decrees, the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic states that the Criminal Code already sets out statutory limits on freedom of expression, in accordance with Article 26(4) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Under this provision, freedom of expression and the right to seek and disseminate information may be restricted by law where such measures are necessary in a democratic society to protect the rights and freedoms of others, state security, public order, public health and morals.

On this constitutional basis, criminal law also penalises certain forms of verbal expression, such as the denial or glorification of the Holocaust, the crimes of political regimes and crimes against humanity, vilification of a nation, race or belief, incitement to national, racial or ethnic hatred, or expressions of sympathy for a movement aimed at suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms. The criminal offences referred to above may be committed by expressing certain ideas, whether orally or in writing. Under the legislation in question, the issue of the peaceful settlement of conditions after the Second World War was also included among the values protected by criminal law.

The case law of the European Court of Human Rights also recognises that certain forms of expression may be subject to criminal sanctions. Criminal sanctions, however, should constitute a means of ultima ratio and should be applied in the most serious cases, while respecting the requirement of necessity in a democratic society. From this perspective, the very existence of the offence of denying the settlement of conditions established after the Second World War is not regarded as contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights; at the same time, the question of compliance with the requirements for the protection of freedom of expression is linked to the manner in which it is applied in specific cases.

The Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic also points out that Section 417f of the Criminal Code is currently subject to ex post constitutional review before the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Constitutional Court”). By Plenary Resolution No. 2/2026, the Constitutional Court accepted the motion for further proceedings and did not

suspend the effect of Section 417f of the Criminal Code. No decision has yet been taken on the merits of the case.

Regarding the section “Broadcasting programmes for national minorities (Article 9)”

Regarding paragraph 99:

In their sixth state report, the authorities stated that Law No. 264/2022 on Media Services and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Laws (hereinafter referred to as “Law No. 264/2022”) had adversely affected broadcasting for national minorities, particularly private broadcasters licensed, under the legislation in force until 31 July 2022, to provide a television programme service exclusively in one or more languages of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the “EU”) other than the state language of the Slovak Republic. Following the amendment to the Law on the State Language, these television broadcasters are also required to provide a Slovak-language version of their broadcasts, which they do primarily by providing subtitles in the state language. The authorities state that Law No. 264/2022 makes it more difficult for the public service broadcaster to obtain or change a broadcasting frequency.

Regarding Recommendation No. 108:

With regard to the Advisory Committee’s recommendation concerning subtitling in Slovak or the parallel broadcasting of programmes in Slovak, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that the recommendation in question may also be implemented through the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities, which, pursuant to Section 15(1) of the Law on the Fund, provides financial resources, inter alia, for the support of projects in the following areas: artistic creation; the promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding; the promotion of the identification and recognition of shared cultural values and traditions; and the promotion of the use and development of national minority languages. However, the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities is an independent public-law institution, and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is not authorised to decide on its funding programmes and sub-programmes.

Regarding Recommendation No. 109:

With regard to the Advisory Committee’s recommendation concerning increasing the number and duration of programmes broadcast for persons belonging to national minorities on television channels, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that the principal activities of Slovak Television and Radio (“STVR”) include, inter alia, broadcasting programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups that are balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, in the languages of the national minorities and ethnic groups living in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

Such broadcasting must be provided for a period of time corresponding to the official national and ethnic composition of the population of the Slovak Republic, and STVR establishes separate organisational units to ensure the production and broadcasting of programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups. Pursuant to Section 6 of Law No. 157/2024 on Slovak Television and Radio (hereinafter referred to as the “Law on STVR”), STVR is required to provide programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups in television broadcasting that

are balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, so that the average daily broadcasting time on working days is at least 120 minutes and at least 500 hours are broadcast annually across all television programme services. With regard to radio broadcasting, Section 6 of the Law on STVR requires the provision of programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups that are balanced in terms of content and regional coverage through a radio programme service intended exclusively for broadcasting programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups living in the territory of the Slovak Republic. According to STVR's 2025 Annual Report, all in-house television programmes are available in the STVR web archive and are freely accessible, as are radio programme blocks. Radio Patria's Hungarian-language editorial team also operates the news website www.patria24.stvr.sk, which is comparable to the STVR news website and is tailored to the programme offering, primarily from radio broadcasting. In addition, the editorial team produces at least one podcast a day, featuring a selection of the best interviews from that day. Further information:

https://www.stvr.org/media/a542/file/item/sk/0002/vyrocna_sprava_stvr_2025.yaQE.pdf

Regarding the section “Printed and online media for national minorities (Article 9)”

Regarding paragraph 95:

Educational activities on the life and history of national minorities in the Slovak Republic at primary and secondary school level, as well as research into the history and ethnology of national minorities by higher education institutions, are also supported through the grant schemes of the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities. This mainly concerns Programme 1: Support for cultural and awareness-raising activities, educational activities, science and research, and Programme 2: Literary, publishing and publication activities.

Regarding Recommendation No. 115:

With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning the provision of long-term, sustainable, pluri-annual project funding for national minority magazines and other printed and online media, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that, within the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities, support for printed and online media falls under Programme 2: Support for literary, publishing and publication activities. Financial support in the form of grants is divided into specific sub-programmes according to the type of media: printed media (periodicals) and online and electronic media.

The introduction of pluri-annual project funding for national minority magazines and other printed media through these programmes is dependent on an increase in financial resources to cover the staffing and material capacities required for the full and systematic performance of all the tasks of the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities. The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is currently preparing an amendment to the Law on the Fund, which should also facilitate the introduction of pluri-annual project funding for national minorities in this area.

Regarding Recommendation No. 167:

With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendation concerning ensuring the availability of education in minority languages or the teaching of minority languages, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic states that the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities continues to support the development of teaching materials and other educational resources, as well as the professional development of teaching and professional staff in national minority schools, through the following grant schemes: Professional development for teaching staff and professional staff under Programme 1: Support for cultural and awareness-raising activities, educational activities, science and research, and the development of teaching materials and other educational resources (Programme 2: Literary, publishing and publication activities, and Programme 1: Educational Activities).

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

The conditions governing the use of national minority languages are laid down in Section 2(1) of Law No. 184/1999 on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "Law No. 184/1999"). Under the aforementioned provision, citizens of the Slovak Republic who belong to a national minority and have permanent residence in the municipality concerned have the right to use the language of the national minority in official communication if, according to the results of two consecutive population censuses, they constitute at least 15% of the municipality's population. The provisions of Law No. 184/1999 apply in the municipalities listed in Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 35/2023 issuing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority constitute at least 15% of the population (hereinafter referred to as "Government Regulation No. 35/2023"). The buildings of district offices located in ethnically mixed areas whose territorial districts include municipalities meeting the above condition (particularly in relation to the Hungarian and Ruthenian national minorities), as well as their client centres, where established, are duly marked with official signs in both the state language and the relevant national minority language. Communication with persons belonging to national minorities is ensured through employees of state administration bodies who are proficient in the relevant national minority language. Information on the possibility of using a national minority language in official communication is also published in the relevant language on official and information noticeboards, as well as on the websites of the offices.

With regard to language training for employees of district offices in ethnically mixed areas, the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic states that the Personnel Office of the Personnel and Social Activities Section of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic continues to co-operate with district offices and participates in the provision of language training in accordance with the 2026 Continuing Education Plan for Civil Servants of the Service Office of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic. The planned training activities for the second half of 2026 also include language training in Ruthenian. With the aim of gaining new experience and strengthening employees' communication skills in the languages of national minorities, the Personnel Office approached Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, specifically the Faculty of Central European Studies, with which the Ministry of the Interior of

the Slovak Republic has concluded a Memorandum of Cooperation dated 21 May 2014, as well as the University of Prešov, specifically the Centre for Languages and Cultures of National Minorities, with a view to co-operation.

Regarding the section “Display of minority language signs and topographical indications (Article 11)”

Regarding paragraph 126:

The use of bilingual information on road signs, as well as destination names and other geographical names, is governed by Law No. 184/1999 in municipalities where persons belonging to a particular national minority constitute at least 15% of the population (see Article 10). Law No. 184/1999 and Law No. 513/2009 provide for the display of destination names at railway stations in the relevant minority languages. At the time of adoption of the present opinion, 137 railway stations and stops on the network of the Railways of the Slovak Republic were equipped with bilingual signs, of which 125 displayed the name in Hungarian, 10 in Ruthenian, one in both Ruthenian and Ukrainian, and one in German.

Regarding paragraph 127:

Government Regulation No. 35/2023 was adopted on the basis of the 2021 Population and Housing Census and took into account Section 2(1) of Law No. 184/1999 Coll., under which citizens of the Slovak Republic who belong to a national minority and have permanent residence in the municipality concerned have the right to use the minority language in official communication in that municipality if, according to two consecutive population censuses, they constitute at least 15% of the municipality’s population. The list of such municipalities is laid down in Government Regulation No. 35/2023. The adoption of Government Regulation No. 35/2023 was not the result of discussions between the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic concerning the issue of road signage.

Regarding the section “Inclusive and intercultural education and knowledge about national minorities (Article 12)”

Since 2023, the Slovak Republic has introduced and is implementing comprehensive and mutually interlinked reform and legislative measures aimed at inclusive education and the elimination of all forms of exclusion and segregated education, with particular attention paid to ensuring equal access to high-quality and inclusive education for children and pupils belonging to national minorities.

The Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Ministry of Education”) supports the development of inclusive and intercultural education through state education programmes, the professional development of teaching and professional staff, methodological support and the production of educational materials.

Content related to national minorities is included in educational areas and school subjects, in particular history, civic education, geography, ethics, language and literature education, arts

and regional education. The new State Educational Programme for Primary Education – representing a key curriculum reform – introduces positive changes in support of inclusion and provides scope for the development of critical thinking, civic and social competences, an understanding of diversity and coexistence, and respect for human rights. As it is gradually introduced, links between subject content, the use of local and regional contexts, and the exploration of historical and social issues from different perspectives are supported. In 2024, the Ministry of Education also carried out an analysis of textbooks with an approval or recommendation clause used in history, geography, civic education and ethics, in terms of content concerning the Roma national minority. The findings provide an expert basis for the further development and updating of educational materials and for strengthening the accurate, comprehensive and age-appropriate treatment of topics related to Romani history, culture, language, and contemporary life. At the same time, the Ministry of Education systematically provides professional development for teaching and professional staff on inclusive education, intercultural dialogue, human rights, working with diversity, and promoting the use of the Romani language and culture in the teaching process. It also builds on the outputs of the project “We can achieve more with Roma II”, which focused on the development of teaching materials, publications and methodologies for the Romani language, culture and history, the promotion of intercultural and inclusive education, and the development of the competences of teaching and professional staff and school management. In the further development of curricula, methodological and educational materials, the Ministry of Education will continue to co-operate with experts, teaching staff and representatives of national minorities with a view to systematically strengthening the inclusion of content on minority cultures, histories and languages that reflects different perspectives and experiences, including those of the numerically smaller minorities.

Regarding the section “Equal access to education – Roma (Article 12 and Priority Recommendation No. 6)”

The Slovak Republic considers ensuring equal access to quality and inclusive education for Roma children and pupils to be a priority. The Ministry of Education is developing a multi-level system for preventing and eliminating segregation, effectively linking the legal framework, binding standards, methodological support, monitoring of the risk of segregation, inspection activities, reform of the counselling system, the system of support measures, the expansion of pre-primary education, increasing school capacity, and the implementation of national projects in specific localities, with a total allocation of almost EUR 17.5 million, with a view to ensuring that the measures adopted are effective, measurable and sustainable.

Key milestones in ensuring equal access to quality and inclusive education for Roma children and pupils:

- January 2023 – Reform of the counselling and prevention system: A new system of counselling facilities and a unified system of support for children based on their needs were introduced, with a view to facilitating access to professional assistance and improving diagnostic procedures, particularly for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (hereinafter referred to as “SDBs”).

- May 2023 – Legal definition of segregation: An official definition of segregation in education and training was introduced into the Law on Education with immediate effect, thereby establishing a clear legal framework for identifying and combating segregation.
- September 2023 – System of support measures: Launch of a targeted system for ensuring equal opportunities for all children, facilitating the inclusion of pupils from MRCs and SDBs in mainstream education.
- September 2023 – National Project “Support for Helping Professions 3” (POP 3): Ensuring funding for the positions of teaching assistants, school psychologists and professional staff directly in schools to support inclusive practice.
- September 2023 – Standards for professional activities in counselling: Adjustment of the diagnostic assessment of children from SDBs/MRCs, taking into account their mother tongue and socio-economic circumstances, with a view to preventing misdiagnosis.
- December 2023 – Methodological guide to desegregation: Publication of a guide providing a broader legal interpretation of the definition of segregation and practical guidance on its prevention and elimination in the Slovak Republic.
- January 2024 – Monitoring the risk of segregation: Launch of an analytical system which uses the Ministry’s administrative data to monitor the risk of segregation in schools and provides a basis for policy development.
- March 2024 – Early care projects: Launch of a grant scheme to support early care and intervention for children aged 0–6 from MRCs and communities experiencing multi-generational poverty.
- July 2024 – National Project “Opportunity for All” Start of pilot desegregation projects in localities with different forms of segregation.
- July 2024 – National project on early school leaving: Implementation of an early warning system and targeted support for pupils at risk within the counselling system.
- September 2024 – Right to pre-primary education from the age of 4: Amendment to the Law on Education guaranteeing this right, thereby increasing the chances of a successful start to school for children from SDBs.
- November 2024 – Standards for compliance with the prohibition of segregation: Introduction of binding preventive measures and procedures for schools and school facilities to ensure compliance with the prohibition of discrimination and segregation.
- January 2025 – National Project “Support for Educational Opportunities”: Launch of a support system for pupils in “special education” who have the potential to successfully complete primary school and obtain lower secondary education.
- January 2025 – Elimination of the two-shift operation of primary schools: Compulsory education is provided exclusively in the morning. A transitional period allowing afternoon classes under strict conditions is provided for until 31 August 2029 at the latest.

- September 2025 – Right to pre-primary education from the age of 3: Full implementation of the right for three-year-olds to be admitted to kindergartens, in order to address inequalities from an early age.
- January 2026 – Comprehensive education reform: Focus on ensuring equal opportunities for children’s development at all levels of education.

In complying with the prohibition of segregation, schools and school facilities proceed according to the standards issued by the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic; the Ministry supports their practical implementation through a methodological guide, model documents, expert webinars, methodological guidance and consultations. The Ministry of Education also carries out monitoring of the risk of segregation as an analytical tool to identify situations that require a more detailed expert assessment, targeted support or inspection activities. Compliance with the relevant legislation and the principles of education and training is monitored, within the scope of their statutory competences, by the regional school authorities and the State School Inspectorate. Where shortcomings are identified, the State School Inspectorate is authorised to impose measures on a school or school facility to remedy them and subsequently monitor their implementation.

At the same time, the system of support measures makes it possible to respond to the individual education and training needs of a child or pupil. The relevant measures include, in particular, support for achieving school readiness, acquiring proficiency in the school’s language of instruction, tutoring, improving the conditions of education and training for children from SDBs, preventing early school drop-out, providing teaching assistants, and removing barriers. The Ministry of Education is also continuing the reform of the counselling and prevention system and strengthening professional standards for the assessment and diagnosis of children. Particular attention is being paid to improving diagnostic procedures for children from SDBs and MRCs, with a view to supporting evidence-based and individual assessment of their educational needs. In the area of pre-primary education, the implementation of the reform of compulsory pre-primary education for children from the age of five is continuing, while the statutory entitlement has been progressively extended to children from the age of four (from the 2024/2025 school year) and from the age of three (from the 2025/2026 school year). The elimination of the two-shift operation of primary schools forms part of the investment and reform measures, with compliance with the principles of desegregation, destigmatisation and deghettoisation being strictly assessed under the relevant calls.

Outputs of the National Project “Opportunity for All”

The “Opportunity for All” national project actively contributes to addressing racial segregation in the Slovak education environment through the implementation of its sub-activities from September 2024 to June 2027. The project outputs will directly contribute to achieving the expected ESF+ objective set out in the Partnership Agreement with the Slovak Republic 2021–2027: to reduce, by 2030, to 30% the proportion of Roma children aged 6 to 15 attending schools where Roma pupils constitute the majority of their classmates. The analyses produced and the practices tested in the field will serve as a legislative basis for systemic changes in the

school network, while trained staff and representatives of local authorities will continue desegregation activities even after the project's financial support ends.

Expected qualitative and process-related outputs of the “Opportunity for All” national project:

- Analysis of legislation, administrative practice and examples of good practice, and supporting materials for proposals for legislative changes in the area of segregation in education and training.
- A set of proposals for legislative and procedural changes (focusing, for example, on the determination of school districts, administrative barriers, etc.).
- Training of 500 teaching and professional staff in schools and 50 staff of school founders in desegregation, human rights and the intercultural approach.
- Independent assessment of changes in the attitudes of training participants, with a target of at least 550 completed questionnaires.
- Pilot desegregation projects created and implemented in 13 locations, with financial support for pro-inclusive measures and staffing support from local desegregation managers.
- A Framework Manual for the Development of Desegregation Projects prepared for school founders and headteachers, containing case studies and a database of examples of good practice.

Outputs of the National Project “Support for Educational Opportunities”

The aim of the “Support for Educational Opportunities” national project is to contribute, to the greatest extent possible, to the gradual development of a fairer and functional system that will provide pupils from MRCs and SDBs who have the potential to be educated in mainstream schools with the necessary support. The Ministry of Education aims to help these children make the transition from “special education” to mainstream education, while at the same time preparing schools to receive them.

The project sets out specific measures:

- Adaptation classes will be established and supported – small groups (a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10 pupils) in which children will, over the course of one school year, prepare for the transition to mainstream education under the guidance of teaching and professional staff.
- An expert analysis will be carried out of the number of pupils with “mild intellectual disabilities” (MID) in “special education”.
- Experts will be trained in testing using a specialised method (the so-called RR screening), which takes into account the specific circumstances of children from low-stimulation environments and from SDBs, for the purposes of reassessment and their placement in an adaptation class and subsequently in a mainstream class.
- Teaching and professional staff working in adaptation classes will be supported through methodological materials, supplementary guides, and training seminars.

- In collaboration with the project partners, professional development courses will be organised for teaching and professional staff working with pupils in mainstream classes.

Regarding the section “Teaching in and of minority languages (Article 14 and Priority Recommendation No. 7)”

The right of persons affiliating with national minorities to receive education in their language and to learn their language is guaranteed by the constitutional, legislative, institutional and curricular framework. Recognising that the development of education in the languages of numerically smaller national minorities depends on sufficient demand, the availability of qualified teachers and the necessary conditions, the Ministry of Education will continue to co-operate closely with the regional school authorities, local authorities, school founders, higher education institutions, and representatives of national minorities to identify needs, raise awareness, and develop sustainable forms of education. With a view to meeting the long-term educational needs of national minorities, the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with representatives of institutions representing national minorities, is preparing a framework for the development of national minority education. Its aim is to define the measures necessary to ensure accessible, sustainable, quality and inclusive education for persons affiliating with national minorities.

The amendments to the Law on Education have also clarified the definition of national minority education and allow 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 creates space for a more flexible inclusion of national minority languages in school curricula. The teaching of the languages of national minorities is carried out in an inclusive manner, based on expressed interest, while ensuring professional, qualified teaching and in accordance with the prohibition of segregation.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education approved several revisions to the National Education Programmes for primary and secondary education. Within these programmes, new educational standards were introduced for the subjects of national minority language and literature, and the sections governing the specific features of education and training in national minority education, as well as the framework curricula, were updated.

The Ministry also supports the creation, assessment, translation and accessibility of learning materials in national minority languages, as well as development projects supporting teaching in these languages, including the languages of numerically smaller national minorities. When expanding the range of educational provision, it takes into account the interest expressed, local conditions, the availability of qualified teaching staff and the need to ensure continuity between education levels. With a view to raising awareness about the possibilities for national minority education, the Ministry of Education will issue relevant methodological guidance. As of 1 January 2026, the regional school authorities are also legally required to provide methodological guidance for the education of national minorities within their territorial jurisdiction.

Regarding the section “Effective participation in socio-economic life – access of Roma to healthcare (Article 15)”

Compensation for Persons Sterilised in Violation of the Law

With regard to the issue of sterilisations carried out in violation of the law, the Advisory Committee recommends, as a matter of priority, that legislation be enacted to enable compensation to be paid to the women affected and that measures be taken to raise awareness of the available mechanism.

With regard to this priority recommendation, the Ministry of Justice states that the Slovak Republic is preparing specific legislation aimed at compensating persons who were sterilised in violation of the law between 1966 and 2004. The Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government of the Slovak Republic includes a draft bill on one-off financial compensation to persons sterilised in violation of the law, which aims to establish a specific mechanism for providing one-off financial compensation to persons who were sterilised in violation of the law between 1966 and 2004.

The draft bill has been developed in substantive terms, and its explanatory memorandum reflects the historical context, the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the need to ensure an effective, accessible and dignified mechanism for redress. The aim of the proposed legislation is to ensure an effective and practically accessible mechanism for redress, whilst respecting human dignity and minimising the risk of secondary victimisation.

The proposed legislation thus represents a concrete legislative step towards implementing the Advisory Committee's priority recommendation concerning compensation for persons sterilised in violation of the law.

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

Regarding paragraph 191:

The authorities have continued their efforts to develop 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 for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 (hereinafter referred to as "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 MRCs", as well as activities aiming to enhance the inclusive practices of healthcare professionals working with patients 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 of the Slovak Republic 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. The aim of this co-operation is to develop a methodology for measuring health disparities between MRCs and the general population.

In addition, the national project “Healthy Communities” is continuing; it aims to promote health and reduce barriers to access to healthcare for people from marginalised Roma communities through the work of health support assistants in community and hospital settings. The aim of the project is to carry out community health mediation, increase health literacy, and support communication between members of MRCs and healthcare professionals, including by overcoming language barriers. These activities are carried out by health support assistants directly in local communities, health support assistants in hospital settings, and regional managers for improving conditions for health. The project operates in more than 280 municipalities through more than 320 health support assistants, as well as through 20 health support assistants in 16 hospitals and specialised healthcare facilities.

Health support assistants undergo systematic and regular training on topics necessary for performing health mediation and co-operating with clients and healthcare professionals. On 17 July 2026, the “Healthy Regions” organisation submitted an application for accreditation of the “Health Support Assistant” training programme through the Adult Education Information System. The application is currently being assessed by the Sectoral Councils Alliance. The establishment of the health support assistant position within the career framework of the Sectoral Councils Alliance creates conditions for ensuring the sustainability of this position and its activities.

As of January 2026, the Ministry of Health has established the National Screening Centre, whose role is to co-ordinate, manage, and evaluate screening programmes, and support the introduction of new programmes for the early detection of diseases. The National Screening Centre also supports efforts to improve access to screening for disadvantaged and hard-to-reach population groups through strategies that take their specific needs into account. In this regard, a working meeting of the National Screening Centre and the organisation Healthy Regions took place on 25 August 2026, focusing on co-operation and the involvement of people from MRCs in screening programmes.

In the context of MRCs, it is therefore more appropriate to refer to barriers in access to and uptake of preventive healthcare and screening, rather than to a lack of preventive screening or dental check-ups. The right to preventive healthcare is guaranteed in the Slovak Republic by the relevant legislation and applies to all persons on equal terms, regardless of their ethnic origin.

The activities of the “Healthy Communities” project also include awareness-raising in the field of dental hygiene. The organisation co-operates with a civic association specialising in prevention and with dentists on dental prevention, including for persons living in MRCs. The activities also include addressing clients’ situations related to health insurance, including newborn insurance. Health support assistants also help clients address situations related to health insurance debts and inform them about the healthcare services available to persons registered as debtors.

The long-term sustainability of interventions after the end of project funding remains a relevant challenge and needs to be considered in the context of available public budget resources and the arrangements for systemic funding of individual measures.

Regarding paragraph 193:

The Ministry of Health respects the assessment of the situation by civil society, but considers it necessary to provide updated information on health promotion in MRCs.

Health promotion directly in MRC settings is currently provided through health support assistants, who receive systematic and regular training. In addition to their induction training, they have completed training on more than 10 topics focused on areas needed for health promotion at the community level and in hospital settings. In 2026, steps are also being taken towards the accreditation of the training system for the position of “health support assistant”.

Health support assistants also contribute to raising awareness of cervical cancer prevention by promoting HPV vaccination, through awareness-raising activities directly in communities as well as at seminars for paediatricians. In the area of dental prevention, they co-operate with a civic association specialising in prevention and with dentists, including on preventive activities for persons living in MRCs. Health support assistants also help clients address situations related to solving health insurance debts and inform them about the healthcare services available to persons registered as debtors.

The Ministry of Health also supports the need to pay attention to the issues of menstrual poverty and access to contraception. These issues were considered during the preparation of the Action Plans for 2025–2027, but were ultimately not included in them. Their inclusion in future action plans and the involvement of the relevant ministries are encouraged. In this context, the “Healthy Regions” organisation co-operated with the civic association INTYMYTA on a survey focusing on menstrual exclusion in Slovakia, which also included respondents from MRCs.

At the same time, it is important to emphasise the role of field-based positions that do not require healthcare qualifications in ensuring that health support reaches people directly in their communities. The increase in the number of Roma healthcare professionals, particularly doctors and nurses, is welcome; however, without field-based support, it is not possible to ensure that health interventions effectively reach communities directly at the local level.

Regarding the section “Effective access to employment – Roma (Article 15)”

Regarding paragraph 202:

Under Section 19b of Law No. 112/2018 on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises, the wording “compensatory allowance provided to an integration enterprise” is used instead of “compensatory allowance for the social enterprises’ scheme”.

Regarding paragraph 204:

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic states that the use of social economy instruments and integration enterprises is one of the tools for supporting labour market integration. In this context, additional concrete actions such as professional development, training courses and social and work inclusion projects, including the use of social economy instruments and integration enterprises, are needed, including in the private sector, to promote and improve employment opportunities for individuals affiliating with the Roma national minority, especially among women and youth.