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**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**Information Document**  
**on the implementation of the**  
**Recommendations for Immediate Action**  
**based on the 5th monitoring cycle**

**Submitted by the Slovak Republic**  
**on 15 December 2020**

## MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

The limit for the use of languages of national minorities is regulated by § 2 par. 1 of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the use of languages of national minorities, as amended, according to which citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority and have a permanent residence in a given municipality constitute at least 15% of the population according to two consecutive censuses, have the right to use the language of the minority in official communication in this municipality, while according to § 7c par. 1 of the cited Act, two consecutive censuses are censuses whose results were announced after 1 July 2011.

At present, most of the provisions of the Act on Minority Languages (relevant in particular for Article 10 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages) apply in the municipalities established by *the Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 534/2011 Coll., amending and supplementing the Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 221/1999 Coll. on the list of municipalities whose citizens belonging to a national minority represent at least 20% of citizens.*

The Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, which includes district offices and state archives, includes 14 district offices in the territorial district of which there are municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 20% of the population and 5 state archives. These are members of the Hungarian national minority and the Ruthenian national minority.

### **Hungarian - recommendations for immediate action**

- **Increase the use of Hungarian in public signs in accordance with Articles 7.1.d (facilitation and/or promotion of verbal and written expression in Hungarian in public life (e.g. education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life) and private life and 10.2.g of the Charter**

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From the point of view of administrative authorities, a citizen of the Slovak Republic who is a person belonging to a national minority has the right to communicate in the municipality in oral and written communication before a local state administration authority, territorial self-government authority and territorial self-government established by a legal entity, including submitting written documents and evidence also in the language of minorities (e.g. 13 forms in the area of trade business, 3 forms in the area of registry agenda).

- **Art. 10.2.g - the use or adoption of traditional and proper local names in the regional or minority languages and, if necessary, together with the names in the official language(s).**

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**The article in question of the Charter is not within the competence of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic.**

District offices and municipalities in an ethnically mixed area are also designated in the language of the national minority.

### **Ruthenian - recommendations for immediate action**

- **Strengthen the use of Ruthenian in relations with administrative authorities and public services in cooperation with speakers of this language and in accordance with ratified commitments, regardless of limits, and encourage such use in**

**practice and increase the visibility of Ruthenian through its use on public signs, including place signs**

Ruthenian is used in local state administration authorities and in municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belong to the Ruthenian national minority. In the case of administrative authorities, Ruthenian is used mainly in words (in oral communication) with citizens forming a national minority. Members of a national minority may submit oral as well as written applications in the minority language in municipalities belonging to a national minority. Oral requests or oral communication is used in practice by clients, but a written request in the language of a national minority has not yet been submitted and no one has asked for an answer in the language of a national minority.

Municipalities are designated in the language of the national minority, as well as buildings of public administration authorities.

**German - recommendations for immediate action**

**Increase the visibility of German by using it on public signs, including place signs**

The municipality in which the citizens of the Slovak Republic belong to the German national minority is the municipality of Kunešov. The name of the municipality, the name of the municipal authority, the name of the mayor of the municipality and the municipal council are designated in the language of the German national minority.

The municipality of Krahule is a municipality that is not on the list of municipalities whose citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 20% of the population, nevertheless the name of the municipality and the municipal authority building are also designated in German.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND SPORT**

In accordance with generally binding legal regulations of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with international documents, including the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, an equal and inseparable part of the educational system of the Slovak Republic is the education and training of national minorities in the mother tongue/of the mother tongue, including institutional provision with schools and school facilities with the language of a national minority as the language of instruction and with teaching the language of a national minority. In the education and training of children and pupils belonging to national minorities, the democratic right of parents to choose the language of instruction of the school or the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority is applied and observed in the education sector.

**Recommendations for immediate measures resulting from the Report of the Committee of Experts submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe** The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic thoroughly considered and approached the solution very responsibly in accordance with the Programme Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2020–2024 “... **increase support and development of education of children and pupils belonging to national minorities in their mother tongue.**” After the accession of the new Government of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic focused in the issues of education of national minorities primarily on mapping the factual state of developed pedagogical documents according to the Charter's obligations to the individual languages of national minorities. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic allocated funds for the development of national minorities within the preparation of the draft budget for the years 2021–2023. From 2021, it plans to implement

(for the time being as the initial solution) the development project "Support for the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority at primary and secondary schools" through which it will support the development of Croatian, Polish, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Romani, etc.

On the part of the state, through the Ministry of Education, it is necessary to ensure conditions for schools so that they can teach the language of a national minority (e.g. the state educational programme, the necessary pedagogical documentation, textbooks and qualified teachers). Of course, partners are important in teaching the language of a national minority, i.e. founders of schools, interest of parents, content provision and readiness of a particular school.

### **Generally accepted solutions for the education of national minorities since the publication of the Report of the Committee of Experts**

1. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved on 30 November 2019 two amendments to the **State Educational Programme (SEP)** for Primary Schools, which teach in the language of national minorities. Under No. 2019/11788:5-C1620 **the Supplement No. 4 „Framework curriculum for primary schools with the language of instruction of the national minority“** was approved and under No. 2019/11788:6-C1620 **the Supplement No. 5 “Framework curriculum for primary schools with teaching the language of a national minority“** was approved.
  - a) **The Supplement No. 4 of the SEP “Framework curriculum for primary schools with the language of instruction of a national minority”** is valid since 1 September 2020 starting from the 1st to the 3rd year. The Supplement regulates the framework curriculum taking into account the possibility of choosing the first foreign language in primary education.
  - b) **The Supplement No. 5 “Framework curriculum for primary schools with teaching the language of a national minority”** is valid from 1 September 2020 starting from the 1st to the 3rd year. The Supplement regulates the framework curriculum taking into account the possibility of choosing the first foreign language in primary education.
2. With effect from 1 September 2019, Act No. 138/2019 Coll. on pedagogical and professional staff and on amending and supplementing certain acts, has been valid which also applies to pedagogical and professional staff working at schools and school facilities with the language of a national minority as the language of instruction or teaching the language of a national minority. Pursuant to this Act, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has issued and published the **Code of Ethics** on its website <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/15445.pdf>. The aim of the Code of Ethics is to provide a basic framework for the conduct of a pedagogical or professional staff member, inter alia, in approaching children and pupils belonging to national minorities.
3. Act No. 209/2019 Coll., amending and supplementing Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training and on amending and supplementing certain acts, as amended, introduces compulsory pre-primary education for five-year-olds with effect from 1 January 2021. Pre-primary education from September 2021 will be **compulsory for the first time for all children** who reach the age of five years by 31 August 2021 and will have one year before starting compulsory schooling. Enrolment in kindergartens for these children will take place in May 2021.
4. In 2019–2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic provided professional terminological dictionaries/glossaries of school terminology with an effort to simplify, facilitate and streamline the work of the

professional public in education when using professional terminology in the language of a national minority. The Slovak-Hungarian, Slovak-Roma, Slovak-Ruthenian, Slovak-Ukrainian and Slovak-German glossaries are available at the link: <https://www.minedu.sk/odborna-terminologia-pre-narodnostne-skolstvo/>.

5. With effect from 1 September 2021, starting with the first year, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved 23 amendments to state educational programmes (SEP) for vocational education and training, which contain Framework Curricula for the individual groups of education departments and the various levels of education provided by secondary vocational schools. Framework Curricula are developed for schools and classes with Slovak as the language of instruction and for schools and classes with the language of instruction of national minorities. At the same time, **the Framework Curricula for Secondary Vocational Schools Teaching the Language of a National Minority were modified.** In classes with teaching the language of a national minority, the subject of the language of a national minority and literature is a compulsory part of the educational area "Language and Communication" with a minimum length of 1 lesson per week.
6. In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic established the "National Education" section on its website. In this section, it publishes information and documents related to education and training of children and pupils belonging to national minorities. Published documents, materials, as well as other useful information resources provide assistance to schools and their founders. The section in question currently also contains a translation into Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian.
7. The "National Education" section offers ONLINE METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR TEACHERS DURING INTERRUPTED TEACHING DUE TO MEASURES AGAINST THE DISSEMINATION OF CORONAVIRUS in Hungarian.
8. By order of the Minister No. 26/2020, the Commission of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic was established to evaluate applications for subsidies from the state budget for the development of education and training in the area of national and inclusive education.
9. Directive No. 33/2020 on teaching aids, which also repealed the Directive No. 22/2017 of 15 May 2017, which regulates the procedure of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and directly managed organizations in the selection and assessment of teaching aids. The Directive in question also covers teaching aids issued for the purposes of education in the languages of national minorities.
10. With effect from 1 September 2020, **the Guide to the 2020/2021 school year** Chapter 2.3.3. National minorities includes instructions for schools: **Provide information to legal representatives on the possibilities of choosing a school with the language of instruction of a national minority or with teaching the language of a national minority, in case of interest to provide such education.** Until the school year 2019/2020, the instruction in question was published in a departmental regulation in the Pedagogical-Organizational Instruction for the relevant school year.
11. On 28 April 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic issued guidelines on the content and organization of the education of primary school pupils during the extraordinary interruption of school teaching at schools in the school year 2019/2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. It also includes the material of the State Pedagogical Institute entitled "Content of education at primary schools during the extraordinary interruption of teaching at schools". Within the main educational area Language and Communication, educational goals, key subjects and examples of activities for Slovak language and Slovak literature

(for primary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction) and also for languages of national minorities were defined: Hungarian language and literature, Romani language and literature, Ukrainian language and literature, Ruthenian language and literature, German language and literature, Russian language and literature. Link: <https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/distančne-vzdelávanie/usmernenia-stanoviska-odporúčania/usmernenie-k-obsahu-organizácii-vzdelávania-žiakov-základných-skol-pocas-mimoriadneho-prerušenia-skolskeho-vyučovania-skolach-skolskom-roku-2019/2020/>

12. On 26 May 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved under the number 2020/10884:1-C1620 **the Supplement No. 6** to the state educational programme for primary education - 1st level of primary school **“Supplement to educational standards for the subjects of homeland studies and music education at schools with the language of instruction of the national minority - 1st level of primary school”** with effect from 1 September 2020.
13. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved **the Supplement No. 7** "Measures to eliminate or minimize the consequences of extraordinary interruption of school teaching at schools in the school year 2019/2020 and to harmonize the wording of state educational programmes with the wording of the Education Act" of 29 June 2020 as part of the State educational programme for primary schools with Slovak as the language of instruction, primary schools with the language of instruction of a national minority and primary schools with teaching the language of the national minority valid from 1 September 2020. Its aim is to take into account the needs of pupils in connection with the interruption of school teaching in connection with an emergency situation, in particular by adjusting the educational standards and curricula of school educational programmes.
14. Since 2 September 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has changed the current centralized policy of textbook selection and opened the textbook market. Since the school year 2020/2021, primary schools have been choosing textbooks for the first to fourth graders freely, according to their own preferences or the educational needs of children. Schools received EUR 11.4 million to purchase textbooks, the highest amount ever provided by the Ministry for this purpose. Each primary school received an allowance for the purchase of textbooks in the amount of EUR 32 to EUR 104 per pupil. **Schools** that make it more expensive to create and print textbooks **received a higher allowance**, such as school **with pupils from national minorities** or schools that educate pupils with hearing or visual impairments. The total amount was based on the number of pupils registered by the school as of 15 September 2019. The Ministry of Education continues to provide allowances for foreign language textbooks for pupils in the 5th year of primary schools and for textbooks for pupils in the 1st to 10th years of special schools for the Slovak language as the language of instruction as well as for the languages of instruction of national minorities. The Ministry of Education retains control to ensure that only the textbooks containing appropriate content or expertise are received by schools. Primary schools will have a choice of only state-approved or state-recommended textbooks, teaching texts and workbooks.
15. By order of the Minister No. 52/2020, among other things, the Commission of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic was established to evaluate applications for funding for the development project “Support for regional and multicultural education of pupils belonging to national minorities” and its status. In 2020, 33 projects were approved and supported in the total amount of EUR 48,000.

Information on approved projects is published:

<https://www.minedu.sk/podpora-regionalnej-a-multikulturnej-vychovy-ziakov-patriacich-k-narodnostnym-mensinam-2020/>

16. With effect from 14 October 2020, Order of the Minister No. 57/2020 amended the statute of the Council of the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic for national education. Among other things, the membership was extended to include a representative from the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities and a representative from the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities.
17. The State Pedagogical Institute, in cooperation with experts, has prepared a publication entitled **National Minorities – Let's Get to Know Them**. The publication includes these national minorities: Bulgarian, Czech and Moravian, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Russian, Ruthenian, Roma, Serbian, Ukrainian and Jewish. The aim of the publication is to present, to a limited extent, the documented historical context of the life of national minorities in Slovakia and it is intended for pedagogical staff at primary schools. It provides an overview of which national minorities live in Slovakia and selects the most interesting moments that characterize them. The publication is available among teaching texts. Link:  
<https://www.statpedu.sk/sk/publikacna-cinnost/ucebne-texty/>
18. This year, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, sent EUR 48 mil. to preserve the jobs of female teachers, educators and other teachers and professionals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic disease. Of course, this also applies to schools with the language of instruction of national minorities or with teaching the language of a national minority.

**Croatian language** - To ensure the teaching of Croatian in pre-school, primary and secondary education as an integral part of the curriculum.

Members of the Croatian national minority are concentrated mainly in the Bratislava region, therefore the teaching of the Croatian language is also concentrated at primary schools in Čunovo, Devínska Nová Ves, Jarovce and in Chorvátsky Grob. Croatian is taught by a teacher of Croatian language and culture and takes place once a week after regular schooling and lasts two lessons. The costs associated with this teaching shall be borne by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia.

Currently, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with a lecturer from the Republic of Croatia, is preparing a basic starting document for the gradual introduction of the Croatian language and literature to kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools.

Basic pedagogical documents for ISCED 0, ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 have been developed, i.e. the state educational programme, the framework curricula for schools with the language of instruction of the national minority, the framework curriculum for schools with teaching the language of the national minority and the catalogue of target requirements for knowledge and skills in the Croatian language of secondary school graduates.

At present, due to the COVID-19 pandemic disease, official negotiations with interested parties are interrupted.

**German language** - Expand the teaching of German as a minority language at pre-school and primary level to cover all areas where there is a sufficient number of German speakers

At present, the network of schools with the German as the language of instruction and with teaching the German is stabilized mainly in localities where the German national minority lives. Basic pedagogical documents for ISCED 0, ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 have been developed, i.e. the state educational programme, the framework curricula for schools with the language of instruction of the national minority and the framework curriculum for schools with teaching the language of the national minority and the catalogue of target requirements for knowledge and skills in the German language (B1, B2 and C1) of secondary school graduates.

The State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, organized on **6 to 7 May 2019** at the Tatra Hotel in Bratislava **the 2nd year of the international conference: Multilingualism in Slovakia - challenges and perspectives**. The conference was aimed at supporting the teaching of foreign languages and **the languages of national minorities at primary and secondary schools**. The aim of the conference was to create a platform focused on the exchange of experience, examples of good practice, a discussion on the topic of current development of language education in Slovakia. Another task of the conference was to emphasize the importance of multilingualism, teaching the languages of national minorities at primary and secondary schools. Within the individual sections and workshops, the State Educational Programmes in foreign languages and languages of national minorities, examples of good practice were presented: Erasmus+ and European Mark for Languages projects, modern innovative methods, methodologies and activities leading to improved quality of foreign language teaching such as CLIL methodology or narrative approach. Over the course of two days, 270 foreign language teachers, primary and secondary school headmasters, teachers of schools with the language of instruction of a national minority, CLIL teachers, language school teachers and other professionals involved in language education took part in plenary lectures in the morning and in 45 different seminars and workshops in the afternoon, which were divided not only by topics but also by languages. The working languages of the conference were English, Czech, French, Hungarian, Russian, Italian, Slovak and German.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic plans to implement from 2021 the development project "Support for the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority at primary and secondary schools" through which it will also support the development of the German language as the mother tongue of the German national minority.

**Hungarian language** - Ensure that secondary and technical and vocational education remains available in Hungarian, in all areas where the language is used

With effect from 1 September 2021 starting with the first year, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved 23 amendments to state educational programmes for vocational education and training, which contain framework curricula **for the individual groups of education departments** and the various levels of education provided by secondary vocational schools. Framework curricula are developed for schools and classes with Slovak as the language of instruction and for schools and classes with the language of instruction of national minorities.

Within upper secondary education (secondary and technical and vocational education), the education in Hungarian is still available in all regions of Slovakia where Hungarian is



used. Ensuring or maintaining a network of secondary schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction is in the full competence of their founders.

At present, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre implements the accredited programme **“Elements of Experiential Pedagogy in the Teaching Process of Primary Education and in the School Club of Children at Primary Schools with Hungarian as the Language of Instruction”**, updating, the scope of 40 lessons, and other professional events published on their website.

Link: <https://mpc-edu.sk/ponuka-vzdelavania>.

**Polish language** - Introduce the teaching of Polish as an integral part of the curriculum in pre-school, primary, secondary and technical and vocational education in areas identified in cooperation with speakers

At present, there is no school in the network of schools in the Slovak Republic with Polish as the language of instruction or with teaching the Polish language. So far, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has not seen any interest on the part of legal representatives in teaching the Polish language as the mother tongue of a national minority. To ensure the teaching of the Polish language, basic pedagogical documents have been developed for ISCED 0, ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and ISCED 3, i.e. the state educational programme, the framework curricula for schools with the language of instruction of the national minority, the framework curriculum for schools with teaching the language of the national minority and the catalogue of target requirements for knowledge and skills in the Polish language of secondary school graduates.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic plans to implement from 2021 the development project "Support for the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority at primary and secondary schools" through which it will also support the development of the Polish language as the mother tongue of the Polish national minority.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic is interested in starting official negotiations with interested parties after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic disease.

**Romani language** - In cooperation with speakers, expand the teaching of Romani in pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education as an integral part of the curriculum

Since the school year 2018/2019, a "state" primary school has been included in the network of schools in the Slovak Republic with the teaching of the Romani language: Primary school, Kružlová 103 (district of Svidník). The founder is the municipality.

At present, the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra provides an accredited updating programme of continuous education pursuant to Act No. 317/2009 Coll. **"Basics of the Romani language for pedagogical staff of schools"** in the scope of 60 lessons. Furthermore, pursuant to Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning and on amending and supplementing certain acts, it provides the "Romology" programme in the scope of 40 lessons.

From the academic year 2019/2020, a new accredited study programme of pedagogical focus has been introduced - Romani language, literature and facts in combination with another

subject at the University of Prešov in the study field of Teaching Academic Subjects. The result of this activity is an effort to train teachers who would be able to teach the Romani language in a qualified manner at primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. The University of Prešov currently also provides education for the Hungarian national minority, the Ruthenian national minority and the Ukrainian national minority.

### **Secondary schools in which the Romani language is taught**

- Private Music and Drama Conservatory, Požiarnická 1, Košice,
- *Jozef Adamovič Conservatory*, Exnárova 8, Košice,
- Private Music and Drama Conservatory, Školská 31, Rimavská Sobota,
- Private Pedagogical and Social Academy, Požiarnická 1, Košice,
- *Private joint school, Angyalova Street 417/31, Kremnica*,
- Private primary school, Galaktická 9, Košice,
- Private secondary vocational school, Biela voda 2, Kežmarok.

**Ruthenian language** - Expand the offer of Ruthenian at pre-school and primary level and make available a substantial part of the education in Ruthenian in secondary, technical and vocational education

Since the school year 2020/2021, the teaching of the Ruthenian language has been expanded by 2 primary schools in Medzilaborce.

Basic pedagogical documents for ISCED 0, ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 have been developed, i.e. the state educational programme, the framework curricula for schools with the language of a national minority as the language of instruction, the framework curriculum for schools with teaching the language of the national minority, the educational standard of Ruthenian language. In the future, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic plans to prepare, through the State Pedagogical Institute, a catalogue of target requirements for the knowledge and skills in the Ruthenian language of secondary school graduates.

At present, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre implements accredited updating programmes:

- Ruthenian language and its teaching at primary and secondary schools, the scope of 40 lessons;
- Ruthenian language and literature in pre-primary education, the scope of 40 lessons;
- Ruthenian facts and possibilities of their inclusion in the school educational programme at primary school, the scope of 35 lessons;

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic plans to implement from 2021 the development project "Support for the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority at primary and secondary schools" through which it will also support the development of the Ruthenian language as the mother tongue of the Ruthenian national minority.

**Ukrainian language** - Increase the number of kindergartens and schools that will make available a substantial part of pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education in the Ukrainian language

The Slovak Republic has created conditions for schools with the Ukrainian language as the language of instruction or with teaching the Ukrainian language, i.e. state educational programme, pedagogical documentation, textbooks and qualified teachers.

At present, the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre has an accredited updating programme "Development of professional competences of pedagogical staff in the area of learning about the Ukrainian national minority" in the scope of 20 lessons.

In recent years, the network of schools for the Ukrainian national minority has stabilized.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic plans to implement from 2021 the development project "Support for the teaching of the mother tongue of the national minority at primary and secondary schools" through which it will also support the development of the Ukrainian language as the mother tongue of the Ukrainian national minority.

## **MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

There are expected fundamental changes in the view of solving the issues of national minorities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic. They result from the Programme Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the years 2020–2024, which also includes a commitment to adopt an act on national minorities. In 2021, there will be a census that will provide the citizens of the Slovak Republic, for the first time in history, with the possibility of double choice of nationality. It is therefore realistic to assume that these circumstances will, in a broad sense, positively affect national minorities, their status and rights.

The evaluation of the obligations arising from the Report on the Progress and Results of the 5th Round of Monitoring the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages must be based on the current legal situation. The scope of the use of the state language in official communication and certain areas of public life in the territory of the Slovak Republic is determined by Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the state language of the Slovak Republic, as amended. By referring to specific regulations, this legal norm does not interfere with the linguistic and other rights of national minorities, which are guaranteed in accordance with international treaties.

The rules for the use of minority languages in official communication and in some other areas are regulated in the Slovak Republic by Act No. 184/1999 Coll. It follows from it that *"citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority and have a permanent residence in a given municipality, according to two consecutive censuses make up at least 15% of the population in the municipality, have the right to use the language of the minority in official communication in this municipality."* The list of affected municipalities, as well as the list of their designations in the languages of minorities, are established by the Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 221/1999 Coll.

From the point of view of granting greater rights to persons belonging to national minorities in the area of the use of their languages in the territory of the Slovak Republic, therefore the already mentioned census in 2021 will be crucial. Based on its results, the list of municipalities whose inhabitants can use the minority language in official communication will be updated, as the next year's census will be the second consecutive census after the 2011 Census of Population, Housing and Dwellings, taking into account the lower, i.e. 15%

(previously 20%) limit for the use of the language of a national minority in the individual municipalities.

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic will support activities that will contribute to increasing the participation of the population in the census. High participation is a guarantee of obtaining relevant data on real life in the Slovak Republic, including the status of national minorities. For this reason, it expects national unions and associations to play a mobilizing role in explaining the importance of the population's claiming allegiance to national minorities, as they have the highest authority to call on persons belonging to national minorities to actually claim allegiance to their nationality in the census. With public education and targeted education of persons belonging to national minorities, the Ministry of Culture is also ready to contribute to the visibility of the forthcoming census as a means of correctly achieving the relevant requirements set out in the Report on the Progress and Results of the 5th Round of Monitoring the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In this context, we consider it appropriate to draw attention to the National Action Plan of the Census of Population, Housing and Dwellings 2021, whose mission was to involve all important authorities and institutions across society in the preparation of the census, including the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, and to support their participation in this international statistical event of particular importance through a specific approach to national minorities.

## **MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND CONSTRUCTION**

The Railways of the Slovak Republic had a role in accordance with the instruction of the Minister of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic No. 60/2016 of 19 December 2016 to ensure the designation of the names of railway stations in the language of the national minority by 31 December 2017. Bilingual signs are placed at railway stations where regular public passenger trains stop for passengers to get on and off. The changes in designating concerned railway stations pursuant to the Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll., if the number of inhabitants of the national minority of the given municipality exceeds 20%. A total of 55 railway stations were designated in the language of the national minority by 28 September 2017, of which 54 were in Hungarian and 1 in Ruthenian.

At present, the amended Act No. 513/2009 Coll. on railways and on amending and supplementing certain acts, as amended, amending and supplementing certain acts, is valid which also includes the obligation of the infrastructure manager to ensure designating in the language of national minorities, in addition to railway stations, also those railway stations where regular passenger transport is performed in municipalities pursuant to Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the use of languages of national minorities, as amended by Act No. 204/2011 Coll., by 31 December 2019.

Regarding the presentation of information concerning the threat to life and health, safety or property of Slovak citizens in places accessible to the public in addition to the state language, they are also written in the language of the minority. This task is provided on an ongoing basis within the available resources.

As part of the possibility of displaying all notices and announcements intended to inform the public at railway stations and on trains, also in the language of the minority, these are currently written in the state language on the Railways of the Slovak Republic network. Communication between Railways of the Slovak Republic employees in the performance of activities related to the operation of railway transport is exclusively in the Slovak language, due to the safety of railway transport.

The Railway Company of Slovakia uses, in addition to the state language, the languages of national minorities, namely Hungarian and Ruthenian (if the operating staff speaks this language), when communicating at railway stations, contact centres, trains and on the infoline.

Internationally recognized pictograms are used to indicate threats to the life, health and safety of passengers.

**Additional Specification:**

When depositing the instrument of ratification of the Charter of Languages on 5 September 2001, the Slovak Republic made the following declaration: “Pursuant to Article 3 par. 1 of the Charter, “regional or minority languages” in the Slovak Republic are the following languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian.” Upon the ratification of the Charter, Yiddish was not included among the languages in relation to which the SR undertook to apply the provisions of the Charter. The SR reports from the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Charter of Languages in the Slovak Republic that there is no requirement for teaching in the Yiddish language in connection with the Jewish national minority, since the language that the Jewish national minority considers to be part of the cultural heritage is mainly Hebrew language and its modern Ivrit form. Currently, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Slovakia provides courses in the Hebrew language. In 2015, the Slovak Republic recognized two other languages, Russian and Serbian, as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with Part II of the Charter (by the Resolution of the Government of the SR No. 618 of 18 November 2015).