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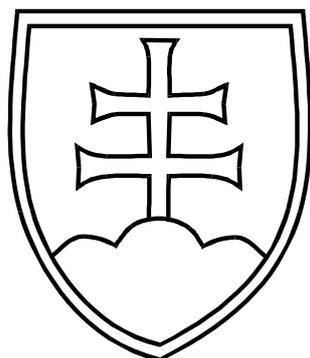
Strasbourg, 28 August 2018

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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Fifth periodical report
presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter

SLOVAK REPUBLIC



***Fifth Report on the Implementation of the European
Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
in the Slovak Republic***

Bratislava 2018

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter referred to as the "Charter") was signed on behalf of the Slovak Republic in Strasbourg on 20 February 2001. The National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Charter by Resolution No. 1497 of 19 June 2001. The President of the Slovak Republic ratified it on 20 July 2001 and the instrument of ratification was deposited and registered with the Depositary, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on 5 September 2001. The Charter entered into force in the Slovak Republic on 1 January 2002 on the basis of Article 19, paragraph 2, of the Charter. The text of the Charter was published in the Collection of Laws under No. 588/2001 Coll.

When depositing the instrument of ratification, the Slovak Republic made the following statement:

1. The Slovak Republic declares that it shall apply the adopted Charter in accordance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and the relevant international conventions ensuring the equality of all citizens before the law without distinction as to origin, race, religion or nationality in order to promote the European language heritage without prejudice to the use of the official language.

2. The Slovak Republic declares, pursuant to Article 1, paragraph b, of the Charter, that the term "territory in which the regional or minority language is used", also regarding the application of Article 10, shall refer to the municipalities in which the citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to national minorities form at least 20 % of the population, according to the Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic N. 221/1999 Coll., dated 25 August 1999.

3. In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the "regional or minority languages" in the Slovak Republic are the following languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian. The application of the provisions of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 2, shall be as follows:

Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, German, Polish and Roma languages:

Article 8, paragraph 1 a iii; b iii; c iii; d iii; e ii; f ii; g; h; i;

Article 9, paragraph 1 a ii/iii; b ii/iii; c ii/iii; d;

Article 10, paragraph 1 a iii/iv; paragraph 2 b; c; d; f; g; paragraph 3 c; paragraph 4 a; c; paragraph 5;

Article 11, paragraph 1 a iii; b ii; c ii; d; e i; f ii; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 12, paragraph 1 a; b; c; d; e; f; g; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 13, paragraph 1 a; b; c; paragraph 2 c;

Article 14 a;

Article 14 b, only for the Czech, German and Polish languages.

Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages:

Article 8, paragraph 1 a ii; b ii, c ii, d ii, e ii,

f ii; g; h; i;

Article 9, paragraph 1 a ii/iii; b ii/iii; c ii/iii; d; paragraph 3;

Article 10, paragraph 1 a iii/iv; paragraph 2 b; c; d; f; g; paragraph 3 c; paragraph 4 a; c; paragraph 5;

Article 11, paragraph 1 a iii; b ii; c ii; d; e i;

f ii; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 12, paragraph 1 a; b; c; d; e; f; g; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 13, paragraph 1 a; b; c; paragraph 2 c;

Article 14 a;

Article 14 b, only for the Ukrainian language.

Hungarian language:

Article 8, paragraph 1 a i; b i; c i; d i; e i;

f i; g; h; i;

Article 9, paragraph 1 a ii/iii; b ii/iii; c ii/iii; d; paragraph 2 a; paragraph 3;

Article 10, paragraph 1 a ii; paragraph 2 a; b; c; d; f; g; paragraph 3 b; c; paragraph 4 a; c; paragraph 5;

Article 11, paragraph 1 a iii; b ii; c ii; d; e i;

f i; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 12, paragraph 1 a; b; c; d; e; f; g; paragraph 2; paragraph 3;

Article 13, paragraph 1 a; b; c; paragraph 2 c;

Article 14 a; b.

4. The Slovak Republic declares that Article 8, paragraph 1 e i, relates to the training of teachers, theologians, cultural and education workers without prejudice to teaching in the official language, and the majority of teaching subjects, including the profile ones, will be conducted in the minority language, respecting the legislation of the Slovak Republic in the field of higher education institutions.

5. The Slovak Republic declares that Article 10, paragraph 1 a ii, Article 10, paragraph 2 a, and Article 10, paragraph 3 b, shall be interpreted without prejudice to the use of the official language pursuant to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and in accordance with the legal order of the Slovak Republic.

6. The Slovak Republic declares that Article 12, paragraph 1 e, and Article 13, paragraph 2 c, shall be applied provided that the effects of their application are not in conflict with other provisions of the legal order of the Slovak Republic on prohibition of discrimination of the Slovak Republic citizens in labour law relations on the territory of the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic has accepted ambitious undertakings, since it has chosen between 49 and 53 provisions (the minimum is 35 provisions) from the third part of the Charter for nine minority languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian. In terms of the provisions chosen, the languages are divided into three groups: 1) Hungarian, 2) Ruthenian and Ukrainian, 3) other languages.

Under the provisions of Part IV of the Charter (Application of the Charter), the Parties are, under Article 15, paragraph 1 (Periodical Reports), obliged to submit to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in the form determined by the Committee of Ministers, a report on their policy under Part II of the Charter and on measures taken to put into effect the provisions of Part III accepted by them. The first report shall be submitted within one year of the Charter entering into force for the given Party and subsequent reports shall be submitted at three-year intervals after the first one. The Parties shall make their reports public in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 2.

The Slovak Republic submitted its First Report on the Implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe through the

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic in 2003. Then the second, third and fourth implementation reports were submitted in 2008, 2012 and 2015. All previous reports were accepted by the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, thereby completing the individual monitoring rounds with respect to the implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic.

The Fifth Report on the Implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic has been drawn up in accordance with a methodological instruction specifying the revised structure of the three-yearly periodical reports submitted by the Parties to the Charter, which was accepted by the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe on 30 November 2015 (MIN-LANG (2015) 23). It also responds to the recommendations contained in the fourth evaluation report.

The basis for drawing up the fifth report was the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in Slovakia CM/RecCHL(2016)2, as well as the evaluation report by the Committee of Experts MIN-LANG (2015)23. The Fifth Report on the Implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic contains updated and comprehensive information on the state and situation of regional or minority languages in Slovakia. It is primarily focused on the presentation of the current state and development of legislation and social practice in the field of protecting and supporting regional or minority languages.

Comments by the Slovak Republic on the provisions of the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on the Implementation of the Charter for Languages in the Slovak Republic

Executive Summary

1. *The Slovak Republic signed and ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2001. The Charter entered into force in the Slovak Republic on 1 January 2002 and it protects Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, Romani, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Yiddish.*
2. *All languages, except Yiddish, are covered by different menus under Part III. The situation of these languages varies greatly and this makes the implementation of certain undertakings difficult for several languages. Flexible and specific measures need to be taken in order to make the provisions of the Charter operational, as required by the commitments entered into by the Slovak Republic.*
3. *The Slovak authorities have recently adopted a Human Rights Strategy, and an Action Plan concerning the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is being prepared. Institutional structures dealing with national minorities and minority languages are in place. A report on the use of minority languages in line with the national legislation is published annually. In 2013, an Advisory Council on education for national minorities and the implementation of the Charter was set up by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Subsidies are available, in particular for cultural activities of national minorities. A network of minority culture museums is funded by the authorities.*

Regarding point 3

Following the National Strategy for Human Rights Protection and Promotion in the Slovak Republic, the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups was prepared in 2015 for the 2016 – 2020 period (hereinafter referred to as the “Action Plan”), which built on the results of the activities in the previous period. In addition to the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Office of the Plenipotentiary”), the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (hereinafter referred to as “CNMEG”) was also involved in its preparation.

The main objective in this field identified in the Action Plan is to ensure an efficient, transparent and reliable system for protecting and promoting the rights of people belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, which includes ensuring more robust institutional resources for the system. This objective was developed into seven operational objectives focused on:

- ensuring a comprehensive approach to the creation of legal regulations related to the rights and status of national minorities;
- improving the system for promoting the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups;
- more effective incorporation of the characteristics specific to the educational needs of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups;

- improving the conditions of the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice;
- increasing public awareness of national minorities and ethnic groups through the media;
- improving the mechanisms for the involvement of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in decision-making on matters which concern them;
- extending the knowledge base for better identification of target groups, i.e. national minorities and ethnic groups, and of their needs through statistics and research.

Each of the operational objectives is developed to the level of specific measures and activities, which include fulfilment indicators, fulfilment deadlines, responsible persons, cooperating entities and sources of funding. The resulting draft of the Action Plan was approved by CNMEG on 17 December 2015 and by the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as the “Government Council”) on 20 June 2016. The Government Council also advised the Government of the Slovak Republic to approve the resulting draft.

The Action Plan was approved at the 33rd meeting of the Government of the Slovak Republic on 26 October 2016 by Resolution No. 492/2016. With this resolution, the Government of the Slovak Republic instructed the relevant ministers, the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic and the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Plenipotentiary”) to ensure, by 31 December 2020, the fulfilment of the tasks arising from the Action Plan and to present information on the fulfilment of the tasks in the Action Plan. The Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic shall also, by 31 December 2021, draw up and submit for talks at a government meeting a report on the fulfilment of the tasks in the Action Plan with a proposal for updating the tasks. The Government of the Slovak Republic also advised the President of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Government, the Executive Director of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, the President of the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as “ZMOS”), the President of the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia, the Director General of Radio and Television of Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as “RTVS”) and the General Director of the Slovak National Museum (hereinafter referred to as “SNM”) to engage in carrying out the tasks in the Action Plan, and to submit to the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic materials for preparing a report on the fulfilment of the tasks in the Action Plan by 31 December 2020.

To meet the main objective of the Action Plan, which is to ensure an efficient, transparent and reliable system for protecting and promoting the rights of people belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups and to ensure more robust institutional resources, the Plenipotentiary set up the Coordination Committee in December 2016 to ensure the fulfilment of the tasks arising from the Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Coordination Committee”). The Coordination Committee consists of 13 members who are representatives of minorities appointed by the members of CNMEG, one for each minority, and 18 members who are representatives of state authorities.

In respect of fulfilling the tasks related to the use of languages of national minorities, the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “Government Office”), in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary, provides expert and methodological assistance to public administration authorities and organisational units within security and emergency services in putting this law into effect, and handles administrative

infringements at the section for the use of languages of national minorities, which includes arrangements to preserve technical terminology in minority languages by compiling specialist terminology dictionaries.

The Government Office, in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary, prepared a Report on the State of the Use of Languages of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic in the 2015–2016 period (hereinafter referred to as the “Language Report”). The Language Report is submitted at a two-year interval under Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 184/1999 Coll.”). The report surveyed the 2015-2016 period and summarised the national legislative framework of the use of languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and the current development in the field of institutional resources for the use of languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic, as well as the fulfilment of obligations and the exercise of the rights arising from Act No. 184/1999 Coll. In contrast with previous reports, the Language Report provided more detailed data both in terms of the number of monitored entities, as well as in terms of the level of detail involved in surveying the areas of the use of languages of national minorities stipulated by law.

Compared to the scope of the surveys conducted for the earlier reports, the scope of the questionnaire survey aimed at collecting current data was extended in terms of the range of the approached types of relevant entities, the number of surveyed areas and situations in which the languages of national minorities are used under the conditions stipulated by law, and in terms of the number of questions for the individual types of respondents. A total of 763 respondents were approached (638 municipalities, 6 self-governing regions, 85 government authorities, 28 district directorates of the Police and 6 district directorates of Fire and Rescue Service). Completed questionnaires were received from 714 respondents, achieving a 94% completion rate. The survey approached all municipalities included in the list of municipalities set out in an annex to Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. on the List of Municipalities in which citizens belonging to a national minority represent at least 20% of the citizens, as amended. 507 of the 638 municipalities met the 20% condition with respect to the Hungarian minority, 56 with respect to the Ruthenian minority, 50 with respect to the Romani minority, 6 with respect to the Ukrainian minority, 1 with respect to the German minority, and 18 municipalities met the condition with respect to two national minorities (11 with respect to the Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities, 5 with respect to the Hungarian and Romani minorities, 1 with respect to the Ukrainian and Romani minorities and 1 with respect to the Ruthenian and Romani minorities).

The Language Report was approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic at a meeting on 11 January 2017 by Resolution No. 15/2017. The Language Report is available at the Office of the Plenipotentiary website:

http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/data/files/6922_report-on-the-use-of-national-minority-languages-in-the-territory-of-the-slovak-republic-for-the-period-2015-2016.pdf

In accordance with the adopted resolution, specific shortcomings in the application practice at all levels were summarised on the basis of information obtained from local authorities and local governments. Bilateral talks were then held with the ministries concerned and letters were addressed to the 578 municipalities where shortcomings had been found in the application of the law. In accordance with Government Resolution No. 15/2017, the Office of the Plenipotentiary, in cooperation with the Head of the Civil Service Office of the Government Office, also produced a draft of methodological guidelines for Act No.

184/1999 Coll. The draft is to be discussed by the Committee of Experts for the application of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. and shall then be made public by the Government Office.

Promotion of the culture of national minorities is facilitated by the Subsidy Programme “the Culture of National Minorities” (hereinafter referred to as the “CNM Subsidy Programme”). The objective of the CNM Subsidy Programme is to ensure the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education and training regarding the rights of national minorities, and to ensure the promotion of interethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between the national majority and national minorities and ethnic groups. The Plenipotentiary was responsible for the CNM Subsidy Programme until 31 December 2017.

See Point 10 and Part II, Article 7, paragraph 1 c for information regarding the subsidies for the cultural activities of national minorities.

See Point 69 in Part II, Article 7, paragraph 3 for information regarding the network of museums of national minorities.

The Minister’s Council for National Minority Education, whose establishment was prompted by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport in 2013, is an important support instrument in monitoring education in minority languages.

A change of the statute of the Minister’s Council for National Minority Education was approved in 2016 and its first members were appointed in the first half of 2017. According to its current statute, its members, besides the Head and the Deputy Head, are:

- a) three representatives of the Hungarian national minority,
- b) three representatives of the Romani national minority,
- c) one representative of the Ruthenian national minority,
- d) one representative of the Ukrainian national minority,
- e) one representative of the German national minority.

https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/6944_statut_rady.pdf - new statute

4. *The Slovak Republic has a highly detailed and complex legislation governing the use of the official language and the minority languages. Despite amendments made, some of the legal provisions, especially the State Language Act, and their implementation contradict the Charter’s principle to encourage and facilitate the use of minority languages in public life, and in some cases prevents their use.*

Regarding point 4

The Slovak Republic, in response to a finding by the Committee of Experts based on the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic, in response to the information received during a visit by a delegation of the Committee of Experts between 21-23 September 2015, and in response to the provision of Part III of the Charter regarding Article 13, paragraph 1 a, unequivocally refuted, in its official statement on the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts sent to the Secretariat of the Committee of Experts in February 2016, the claim stated in Point 4, and in so doing it emphasised and provided exhaustive arguments that there is no such provision of the State Language Act which contradicts the principle of the Charter to promote and facilitate the use of languages of national minorities in public life.

In respect of Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter, the Slovak Republic refers to the wording of § 8, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the State Language Act published also in the English language at the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “MCSR”) website: <http://www.culture.gov.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/statny-jazyk-3c.html>.

The State Language Act, in § 8, paragraphs 2 and 3, makes no distinction between the compulsory Slovak version of selected documents and their version in other languages. As these are documents which public administration authorities come into contact with, one of their versions must be in the state language and it is left to the discretion of the documents’ authors as to what language their other version with identical content shall be in, which version is also submitted to public administration authorities along with the version in the state language. The State Language Act does not address the question as to which version is official or non-official, and does not imply that one version should be a copy of the other. The claim that the use of minority languages is restricted for the above reason is therefore unsubstantiated.

The purpose of Article 13 of the Charter, according to Point 121 of the explanatory report, is to eliminate any measures prohibiting or discouraging the use of minority languages in economic and social life, and according to Point 122 of the explanatory report, its purpose is specific application of the non-discrimination principle. At the same time, the text of Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter clearly states that Contracting States undertake to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of minority languages, which clearly means that if a state has objectively justifiable reasons to impose an obligation to create a version of a document in the state language, this does not constitute a restriction of the use of a minority language which would represent failure to fulfil the undertaking of Parties in accordance with Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter. The state requires a state language version for the legitimate purposes of communication with public authorities, which is a justifiable reason for restricting freedom of expression, freedom of movement for workers, etc., for this is as much a legitimate public interest as the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Designating the state language as compulsory in certain economic and social documents which public administration authorities come into contact with within certain processes governed by laws, while permitting the use of versions with identical content in minority languages, does not restrict the use of minority languages, for it explicitly allows versions in the state language and versions in minority languages to be identical in terms of content. The same is provided for in the State Language Act, which guarantees content identity of document versions in the state language and in a minority language without making a distinction between the versions, hence it does not cause discrimination. The only difference between such versions is that the state language version is compulsory, whereas a version in any other language including a minority language is the choice of the entity concerned. However, this does not in itself differentiate between the two versions. The State Language Act does not therefore place a document version in a language other than the state language at a disadvantage in relation to the state language version.

As for employment contracts and employment-related contracts, compulsory use of the state language version while permitting a version in another language constitutes, in accordance with paragraph 32 of the judgement of the Court of Justice of the EU delivered on

16 April 2013 in Case C-202/11 Anton Las v. PSA Antwerp NV, permissible interference in freedom of movement for workers. So legislation which also permits a version of an employment contract in a language other than the state language does not go beyond what is necessary to meet the objectives to promote and stimulate the use of the official language, to protect workers socially and to simplify the related administrative controls, and is therefore adequate. The process for testing the adequacy of a member state's language requirements provided by the Court of Justice of the EU in relation to employment contracts is the same in this respect as the test outlined by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in his 1998 Oslo Recommendations.

As of 1 September 2009, the day when an amendment to the State Language Act entered into force, permitting the use of document versions with identical content, which must be in the state language and another language, in accordance with § 8, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the State Language Act, and at the same time as of 1 March 2011, the day when another amendment to the State Language Act entered into force, reducing the range of documents in § 8, paragraph 3, of the State Language Act to those which a public administration authority comes into contact with, the Slovak Republic unequivocally eliminated from its legislation any provisions prohibiting or limiting the use of minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the problem of labelling products, where § 8, paragraph 1, of the State Language Act no longer limits the use of minority languages and explicitly refers to the use of the state language in accordance with specific legal regulations, such as the Act on Consumer Protection, the Food Act and the Act on Medicinal Products.

As for the doubts expressed by the Committee of Experts as to whether relevant information in manuals for product use or installation can be presented bilingually, the footnote for reference No. 13 containing the phrase "to the extent and under the conditions specified by specific regulations" states the legal regulations specifying product labelling, which are as follows:

"If information stated in § 10a - 12 is provided in writing, it must be in the codified form of the state language. This is without prejudice to the possibility of simultaneously using other labelling, especially graphical symbols and pictograms, as well as other languages." The information in question is defined in Act No. 250/2007 Coll. on Consumer Protection (§ 13 of Act No. 250/2007 Coll.). This possibility is defined for member states by the Court of Justice of the EU in its judgement in Case Colim C-33/97 delivered on 3 June 1999.

Further, as of 13 December 2014, product labelling is also governed by Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, which states in Article 16, paragraph 3, that the directive permits the European Union state where the given food product is to be placed on the market to designate its official European Union language for providing compulsory information about food. Act No. 152/1995 Coll. on Food, in § 8, paragraph 1, imposes on those who produce, handle or place food on the market the obligation to label it with information in their state language in accordance with Regulation No. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers. The information in question is defined in Regulation No. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

As for specific regulation of the labelling of medicines, the new Act No. 362/2011 Coll. on Medicines is effective as of 1 December 2011, which in § 61, paragraph 1, imposes the requirement that accurately specified information on the outer and inner packaging be given in the state language, and it also states in § 61, paragraph 6: “If the outer packaging of a human medicinal product is also labelled in languages other than the state language, the name of the medicinal product must also be stated using the script for the blind (the Braille script) in all languages used on the outer packaging.” It therefore also permits the use of languages other than the state language.

As the above implies (more detailed argumentation is included in the statement by the Slovak Republic on the fourth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts), the laws of the Slovak Republic pertaining to product labelling fully comply with the requirements of the European law, both primary (free movement of goods) and secondary (optional or compulsory use of the official language, also permitting other languages of the vendor's choice).

The entry into force of the amendment to the State Language Act as of 1 March 2011 ensures full compliance of this legislation with the provisions of the Charter.

5. *The requirement that persons belonging to a national minority should reach a 20% share of the municipal population in order to render the undertakings in the field of administration applicable, still limits the use of minority languages in this field. The list of concerned municipalities established by the Government comprises also places where the 20% was met in the past, but is no longer met, and a 15% threshold is to be applied in some cases after the census in 2021. However, in practice, the thresholds continue to exclude minority languages from use in the administrative field in municipalities where their speakers are present in sufficient numbers to justify the application of Article 10.*

Regarding point 5:

The right of the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority to use their language in official communication arises out of Article 34, paragraph 2 b, of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The conditions of the use of languages of national minorities in official communication are provided for especially in Act No. 270/1995 Coll. on the State Language as amended and in Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of National Minority Languages as amended. Act No. 184/1999 Coll. determines, as a special legal regulation, the territory in which the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority have the right to communicate orally and in writing with public administration authorities, and in which the relevant public administration authorities are obliged to create conditions for the use of languages of national minorities.

In accordance with § 2, paragraph 1, of Act No. 184/1999 Coll., the Condition for Using a Minority Language in Official Communication is that citizens with permanent residence in a municipality make up, based on the results of two consecutive censuses, at least 15% of the municipality population. This condition is applied in conjunction with § 7c, paragraph 1, of Act 184/1999 Coll., according to which two consecutive censuses are understood as censuses whose results were announced after 1 July 2011. However, this circumstance will only occur after the announcement of the results of a census of population and housing after 2021.

It should be noted with regards to this that, due to the significant fragmentation of the legislation related to the rights and the status of national minorities and due to the need to prepare and adopt comprehensive and coherent legislation, the source material mentioned in Point 3 identified as one of its future priorities and tasks the promotion of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to developing and implementing the policy regarding the rights of members of national minorities. It is a long-term trend of the expectations of national minorities that leads to its adoption, and this legislation should address both the issue of the status of members of national minorities and the issue of its funding mechanisms. It is in this sense that the Action Plan (the information regarding Point 3) also set the operational objective No. 1, which is to ensure a comprehensive approach to the creation of legal regulations related to the rights and the status of national minorities and ethnic groups. This objective involves implementing measures aimed at providing an analysis of legal regulations related to the rights and the status of national minorities and ethnic groups, and at preparing comprehensive and coherent legislation for the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, if the need for such legislation arises from the analysis performed. These measures also concern legislation in the field of the use of languages of national minorities.

6. *Specific and immediate measures are necessary in the field of education. The steps taken to reduce costs in the educational sector (the so-called “school rationalisation”) are particularly affecting small schools and thereby disproportionately minority language education.*

Regarding point 6

As of 1 September 2015, new provisions of § 29, paragraphs 8 and 16, of Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Schools Act”) entered into force, setting the minimum number of pupils in a primary school class and specifying specific cases where a school founder may set a lower minimum number of pupils in a class than the set minimum number of pupils in a class. According to the legislation mentioned above, the minimum number of pupils in a primary school class is:

- a) 8 pupils in the zero grade; six pupils in the zero grade of a limited-grade primary school,
- b) 12 pupils in a class with pupils of two grades of the lower stage of primary school,
- c) 11 pupils in the first grade class,
- d) 13 pupils in the second to fourth grade class,
- e) 15 pupils in the fifth to ninth grade class.

§ 29, paragraph 16, also provides that in certain specific cases, a primary school founder may set a minimum number of pupils in a class that is lower than the number of pupils stated in § 29, paragraphs 8 and 15. These specific cases are, as follows:

- a) reduced accessibility of the school for pupils; the accessibility of the school is reduced when the travel by train or bus from the place of residence of the pupil is longer than 6 km,
- b) education of pupils in a minority language, if there is no other primary school with minority language instruction within 6 kilometres of a pupil’s place of permanent residence,
- c) education of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, if more than 80% of the total number of pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, or
- d) other cases deserving special consideration.

The interest in preserving classes with a low number of students, including classes with minority language instruction, was also confirmed by Act No. 216/2016 Coll., which

supplements the Schools Act. By means of this amendment, the National Council of the Slovak Republic supplemented the Schools Act with new paragraphs 17 and 18 in § 29 on 15 June 2016, whose wording is as follows:

§ 29, paragraph 17 – The provision of paragraph 8 a; b; c; and d does not apply to primary school classes where only the lower stage of grades has been set up.

§ 29, paragraph 18 – The provision of paragraph 8 does not apply to primary school classes with minority language instruction.

School rationalisation does not therefore have a significant impact on minority language instruction. With respect to preserving teaching at primary schools, it is important that classes with a lower number of students with minority language instruction are not cancelled in the Slovak Republic, rather, the Slovak legislation facilitates their further operation.

7. *The existing offer in the school system, except for Hungarian, complies only to a very limited extent with the commitments under the Charter. The number of schools has been decreasing, even in the case of Hungarian. Combined measures promoting teaching in and of minority languages among parents and pupils, ensuring financial support and providing teacher training are needed to further develop minority language education. Romani is still not taught on a wide scale and, despite efforts made by the authorities, the practice of enrolling Roma children in special schools and classes still persists.*

Regarding point 7

See the information for the individual languages in Part III for Article 8 of the Charter – Education

8. *As regards the judicial system, the legal framework still does not guarantee that a person having a command of Slovak can use a minority language in criminal proceedings. Minority languages in general have a limited presence in the administrative field, except, to some extent, Hungarian.*

Regarding point 8:

See the common information for Article 9 paragraph 1 of the Charter (in Points 109 and 112)

9. *Minority language broadcasting in radio and television is insufficient and the publication of weekly newspapers is non-existent, with a partial exception of Hungarian. The Bulgarian, Croatian, German and Polish languages have only a very limited presence on television.*

Regarding point 9:

Time slots for broadcasting programmes in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups are provided and developed on a regular and cyclic basis on the second public programme service “Dvojka” (hereinafter referred to as “Dvojka”) in the form of news and current affairs programmes (each with a premiere and at least one repeat).

Analyses of audience sizes suggest that ethnic Hungarian viewers, who are represented in the peplemeter panel, mainly watch Hungarian television channels. Two-thirds of ethnic Hungarian viewers watch foreign broadcasting in the Hungarian language, 20% of ethnic Hungarian viewers watch Slovak commercial TV channels, and 10% of ethnic Hungarian

viewers watch public broadcasting channels, including those in the Hungarian language.
See the information for the individual languages in Part III for Article 11 of the Charter – Media

10. *Awareness-raising and promotion of tolerance towards the minority languages and the cultures they represent are needed.*

Regarding point 10

Promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding between members of minorities and the majority population regarding their culture and languages is a long-term process, and it is not just the various publicly funded cultural and school institutions that continuously work on this process, but also the Office of the Plenipotentiary and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (hereinafter referred to as “OPGRC”).

The Slovak Republic has an elaborate system of promoting national minorities aimed at the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, provided for by Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the Provision of Subsidies within the Competence of the Government Office as amended.

One of the most important instruments of direct promotion of the culture and languages of national minorities, and of education and training regarding the rights of national minorities is the CNM Subsidy Programme, overseen by the Plenipotentiary until 31 December 2017. Subsidies in the CNM Subsidy Programme were provided within three sub-programmes focused on:

- - the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities;
- - education and training regarding the rights of national minorities;
- - interethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between the national majority and national minorities and ethnic groups.

The purpose of the third sub-programme was to support projects focused on:

- mutual understanding and closer ties among the national minorities themselves, as well as between the majority and the minorities, i.e. multicultural and interethnic activities aimed at mutual familiarisation, building and developing closer relationships among minorities, and organising joint events involving several minorities;
- identifying and learning about shared cultural, art-related and scientific values and traditions, i.e. multicultural and interethnic presentational activities including nationwide festivals and multicultural projects’ events aimed at combating racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination;
- discovering and learning about family-related, local and regional history, traditions, prominent figures and historical sites in an ethnically diverse environment, i.e. seminars and conferences with a national or international reach, as well as sociological, ethnographic and historical research with a multicultural or interethnic dimension related to at least two national minorities and focused on enhancing expert dialogue in matters regarding citizenship, national identity awareness, multiculturalism, and ethnic and cultural identity;
- respect, understanding and tolerance towards minority languages and cultures in the field of education and training and in the mass media, i.e. periodic and non-periodic publications, book publications about the life and history of minorities, as well as

- multimedia projects, development and updates of websites, internet databases, virtual galleries, preparation and creation of CDs and DVDs and audiovisual production;
- carrying out exchange programmes, visits, joint educational events, student and art competitions for children and youth from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Among the numerous CNM Subsidy Programme projects, we should particularly highlight the following: the Minority Culture Summer, the National Minorities Festival, and the International Ecumenical Concert 2017. We should note in this respect that in 2017 the amount allocated to the above sub-programme increased, as the table shows, by EUR 37,246 compared to 2015 and 2016.

Year	Total amount of funding	Amount allocated to the sub-programme Interethnic a intercultural dialogue
2017	EUR 4,500,000	EUR 270,000
2016	EUR 3,879,250	EUR 232,754
2015	EUR 3,879,250	EUR 232,754

The newly established Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as the “Fund”) is an important instrument for increasing awareness and promoting tolerance towards minority languages and cultures. This fund was approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 10 May 2017 by Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities as amended, effective as of 1 July 2017. The CNM Subsidy Programme now falls under the Fund as well, having been transferred from the Office of the Plenipotentiary.

The competence to allocate subsidies in this field has therefore been transferred to the Fund, which acts as the new public institution independent of central government authorities, represented by experts from all national minorities. The main role in the Fund’s operation has been given to expert boards represented by experts from the general public, whose members are democratically elected by national minority organisations. The law lays down the calculation of the proportion of funding allocated to the individual expert boards expressed as a percentage share. The purpose of the established Fund is primarily:

- preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities,
- education and training regarding the rights of national minorities,
- development and promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding between Slovak majority citizens and citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.

The new concept of promoting the cultural and scientific activities of the national minorities living in Slovakia is based on these main principles:

- establishment of the Fund as the main financial instrument focused solely on promoting the cultural and scientific activities of minorities,
- defining the tasks and objectives of the Fund’s promotion activities, and setting transparent rules for deploying its resources,
- ensuring independence and professionalism in decisions made by the Fund’s key bodies,
- defining the purpose of deploying the Fund’s resources and the mechanisms for controlling their deployment,
- defining the Fund’s financial resources.

The new mechanism for promoting the culture of national minorities allows each national minority to set up its systematic promotion of its cultural and art-related activities. Increasing the volume of funds will ensure more public exposure for the cultural values of members of national minorities and for presentations of the rich and colourful nature of their culture as well as their mutual tolerance and respect. The adopted law on the Fund will deliver systemic solutions in the field of promoting the culture of national minorities, whose ultimate objective is greater stability, transparency and utilisation of certain elements of cultural self-administration in the given field. Due to the amount of the government contribution to the Fund (8 million euro), the allocated funds are expected to be sufficient to provide adequate material support for the development of culture and small national minorities.

It nevertheless remains the case that the MCSR, in accordance with generally binding legal regulations, particularly Act No. 189/2015 Coll. on Cultural and Educational Activities (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 189/2015 Coll.”), and in accordance with international agreements, particularly the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, continues to perform a government administration function in the fields of intangible cultural heritage and cultural-educational activities.

The main role of cultural and educational activities is to ensure the development of cultural identity and intercultural dialogue at the national, regional and local levels, the development of the cultural potential of the Slovak Republic’s municipalities and regions, the safeguarding and development of intangible cultural heritage, the development of leisure art-related activities and non-professional art, and informal education in culture and in preventing negative social phenomena. These cultural and educational activities are performed in the regions by cultural and educational facilities.

The field of national minority culture in the individual regions also falls within the competence of self-governing regions. In addition to cultural and educational facilities, the scope of their founder’s competence also includes cultural centres, libraries, theatres, and self-governing regions’ and regional museums and galleries. A self-governing region, in performing its regional administration function under Act No. 189/2015 Coll., founds or establishes, abolishes or merges a cultural and educational facility whose scope of competence covers a region or a self-governing region; further, it provides and coordinates the cultural and educational activities of cultural and educational facilities and designates cultural and educational facilities which provide expert advice and perform methodological and informational-documentation functions for other cultural and educational facilities, legal entities and natural persons carrying out cultural and educational activities in its territory.

The activities of the National Centre of Culture and Further Education (Národné osvetové centrum – hereinafter referred to as the “NOC”), operating in accordance with Act No. 189/2015 Coll., also contribute to raising the level of culture and education among the citizens of the Slovak Republic. In addition to providing methodological guidance for the cultural-outreach establishments in the individual self-governing regions, the NOC’s role is to ensure, build, protect and aid the spiritual development of the citizens and the development of living non-professional culture belonging to Slovakia’s intangible cultural heritage. (see: <http://www.nocka.sk/>)

In 2016, the NOC held a seminar called “Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Field of Culture” dedicated to the cultural and language rights of the national minorities

in the Slovak Republic, focusing primarily on the Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian minorities, with a number of contributions on protecting the rights of vulnerable groups (topics: human rights, national minorities, marginalised Roma communities, disinformation campaigns and working with objective information, etc.). The “Národná osveta” (the National Outreach) journal published by the NOC featured a number of contributions reflecting upon the problems of protecting and promoting human rights, including the development of intercultural dialogue and the idea of understanding and mutual respect of cultural diversity (e.g. “Cultural Rights of National Minorities” by Kálmán Petőcz; - “Education in the Romani Language: Dilemmas and Solution Possibilities” by Jarmila Lajčáková, Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture).

Raising awareness of national minorities’ inclusion among the majority population is part of RTVS broadcast agenda, both television and radio. In television broadcasting, this intention is confirmed by the fact that all programmes for ethnic minorities feature subtitles in the Slovak language, and audience measurement shows that around 40% of those who watch TV programmes for national minorities are members of the Slovak majority. Major entertainment and educational TV programme formats also contribute to awareness of inclusion – an example worth noting is the folk music and dance show “Zem spieva” (the Earth Sings) featuring highly successful performers from minority backgrounds (reaching the semifinal and even the final of the contest). As for radio broadcasting, the production team at the section for programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups introduced the programme format “My, Rusíni” (We, Ruthenians), a typical programme format “on minorities for the majority”. The pilot format with Ruthenians did catch on and RTVS is planning to extend it to cover other national minorities as well.

Further, the MCSR, under Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the Organisation of Government Activities and on the Organisation of the Central Government Authorities, implements Article 12 of the Charter in the Slovak Republic by means of its budgetary and donation-funded organisations, particularly by means of specialised national minority museums under SNM, the NOC, the University Library, The Slovak National Library and other cultural facilities under its competence.

There are specialised documentation centres within SNM focused on the history and culture of the national minorities living in Slovakia:

- Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-zidovskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-ukrajinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-madarov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-rusinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-karpatskych-nemcov-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-chorvatov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>
- Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin;
<http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-romov-na-slovensku-stale-expozicie&clanok=romano-drom-cesta-romov>
- Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia;

National minority museums publish numerous valuable publications and non-genuine periodicals. The Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava publishes Acta Judaica Slovaca and the Judaica Slovaca series. It has been working on the long-term project of multi-volume encyclopaedia of Jewish religious communities. The Museum of Carpathian German Culture has its own Acta Carpatho-Germanica series, the Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia publishes the annual Acta Museologica Hungarica to present scientific research activities. The Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník has the non-periodical Scientific Proceedings. The following monographs and proceedings on the history of the national minorities have been published: Slovenskí Chorváti (Slovak Croats), Česi na Slovensku (Czechs in Slovakia), other non-periodical scientific publications, catalogues, and special publications for children and school youth. The museums cooperate with various domestic and international institutions at the level of national museums, academies of sciences, universities and other higher education institutions. They hold major events, exhibitions and specialised conferences. The concept of national minority museums also entails coordinating research and presentational activities in collaboration with other museum centres working in the field of minorities, along with other organisations and institutions working in the field.

Overview of the financing of SNM's organisational units – 8 specialised national minority museums in the 2014–2016 period (in EUR)

Name of museum	2014	2015	2016
Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava (including Sered' Holocaust Museum)	510,783	510,209	1,835,623
Museum of Ukrainian Culture	343,628	453,805	333,817
Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia	287,974	259,120	276,364
Museum of Ruthenian Culture	110,204	110,863	127,776
Museum of Carpathian German Culture	109,943	104,420	113,720
Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia	66,044	62,448	73,694
Museum of Roma Culture	40,373	33,754	49,547
Museum of Czech Culture	37,241	34,010	42,597
Total	1,506,190	1,568,629	2,853,138

Under § 12, paragraph 3, of Act No. 126/2015 Coll. on Libraries and amending and supplementing Act No. 206/2009 Coll. on Museums, Galleries and on the Protection of Cultural Objects and amending Act No. 372/1990 Coll. of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Offences as amended by Act No. 38/2014 Coll., a library is obliged, when building up its repository of books, to take into account the satisfaction of the needs of citizens belonging to a national minority or an ethnic group:

“In municipalities with citizens belonging to a national minority or an ethnic group, a public library is obliged to take this fact into account when extending or building up its repository of books”.

Each library builds up its repository according to its user base. Selection and purchase of works in a library (including the recommendation to purchase works in language other than the state language) follows decisions of the library's acquisition committee, which takes into account its users' requirements.

Promotion of book culture is currently carried out through the Slovak Arts Council, a

public institution guaranteeing support of art activities, culture and creative industry, which was established according to Act No. 284/2014 Coll.

The Centre for Traditional Folk Culture has been set up at the Slovak Folk Art Collective, whose mission is to protect and preserve the traditional folk culture wealth in Slovakia including the intangible cultural heritage of the national minorities living in Slovakia. The organisation is the guarantor of the electronic encyclopaedia project entitled “Slovakia’s Traditional folk Culture in Words and Images” – with details available at www.ludovakultura.sk. This is a unique source of information readily available for educational and curriculum development purposes also in the relevant field. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia has been compiled in order to give the elements of intangible cultural heritage more public exposure, and it is open to suggestions and nominations of any unique elements of intangible cultural heritage of the national minorities living in Slovakia.

Performances by the Slovak Folk Art Collective and the Lúčnica dance ensemble regularly showcase the culture of other nations and national minorities, thereby contributing to the promotion of cultural diversity and to the development of intercultural dialogue (on 7 January 2015, the Conception of Care for Traditional Folk Culture until 2020 was approved under Government Resolution No. 12, which also attaches great importance to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Slovakia’s national minorities). The Centre for Folk Art Production (hereinafter referred to as “ÚLUV”) is responsible for ensuring continuity in preserving the knowledge, skills, and the cultural and aesthetic values reflected in the living crafts and folk craft production in the Slovak Republic. The ÚLUV library is a specialised library focused primarily on literature in the field of material culture, folk art, production and crafts (electronic encyclopaedias of craftsmen and producers). Readers will also see literature dedicated to the problems of national minorities living in Slovakia, and the repository of books also comprises foreign-language literature. Information about the life of Slovakia’s minorities can be found in the following publications: Slovenský národopis (Slovak Ethnology), Etnická história Slovenska (Ethnic History of Slovakia).

As part of its activities, the Slovak Film Institute (hereinafter referred to as the “SFI”) has continuously supported (and is still supporting) mutual understanding among all language communities in the 2015–2017 period.

Kino Lumière, the SFI cinema, showcases the Slovak, European and world audiovisual culture for the public. Slovak cinema, European cinema and Archive Cinema are its programming priorities. It presents regular series, offers public displays and organises festivals. More than 95% of films screened at the cinema are subtitled original versions. Language version is indicated on Kino Lumière’s website and on its printed cinema programme.

Hungarian cinema, German cinema and Polish cinema are traditionally a near-constant feature in Kino Lumière’s programme, and as it was mentioned above, their screenings are, with a few exceptions, subtitled original Hungarian, German or Polish versions.

As part of its programming approach, the SFI also includes in its offer (depending on availability) films in Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Romani, Bulgarian and Croatian.

In addition to cultural activities, it also helps promote and raise awareness of tolerance towards minority languages through its outreach and pedagogical activities. The National Institute for Education (hereinafter referred to as “NIE”) is currently preparing a teaching material for upper stage primary school grades entitled “Národnostné menšiny – zoznámme sa” (National Minorities – Let’s Meet), whose objective is to introduce pupils belonging to the majority population to the national minorities that have historically inhabited the territory of what is now the Slovak Republic. The opening chapter of this supplementary teaching material explains the basic terminology and the historical conditions giving rise to the current ethnic composition, and the following thirteen chapters introduce the individual national minorities, their history, culture, traditions, language, selected prominent historical figures, etc. Each piece of text is authored by a renowned expert from the respective national minority.

The theme termed “Multicultural Education” continues to cut across the national curriculum at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education stages, and its objective is to make an impact through education and training in terms of understanding the various traditional and modern cultures and sub-cultures, accepting cultural diversity as a social fact, and nurturing tolerance, respect and socially beneficial behaviour with respect to cultural differences.

In implementing this cross-cutting “Multicultural Education” theme within the compulsory national curriculum, it is advisable to use such curriculum development procedures and methods which, instead of teaching a conception of cultural differences as something which ought to be blurred, teach pupils to understand and accept cultural differences, and to respect human rights. The objective of this cross-cutting theme is to guide pupils towards:

- respecting natural diversity in the society;
- discovering the various traditional and modern cultures and subcultures;
- accepting cultural diversity as a social fact;
- exercising their own rights and respecting the rights of other people.

Multicultural education is, naturally, classed as a humanities and social sciences subject. However, certain elements of multicultural education, be it at the level of content or methodology, can also be developed in natural sciences subjects and in teaching the native language and foreign languages.

As part of its activities, the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (hereinafter referred to as the “MPC”) provides continuing education to pedagogical and specialist staff through accredited education programmes. It holds seminars and workshops aimed at exchanging proven experience, methodological support for staff, and at the attestation process. Its portfolio includes education programmes focused on developing the competences of pedagogical and specialist staff in the field of promoting inclusive education and preventing radicalisation and intolerance. In 2016, there were 589 candidates who successfully completed various accredited programmes focused on the problems of human rights.

In 2016 and 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “MESRSSR”) announced a call for funding applications for “Regional and Multicultural Education of Pupils Belonging to National Minorities” projects. Its priority field is, firstly, activities contributing to mutual familiarisation and multicultural dialogue, to eliminating prejudice against others, to developing national identity and to taking into consideration the characteristics specific to a

nationality in an education process, secondly, activities contributing to the coexistence of children from different national minorities and children from the majority population, thirdly, activities leading to understanding other cultures, and finally, activities promoting the literacy of children and pupils from various national minorities and the development of a positive attitude towards history, culture and towards the traditions of their region.

35 projects were submitted in response to the Education Ministry's call in 2016. The MESRSSH allocated EUR 20,000 for these development projects, and 12 projects were approved. In 2017, the MESRSSH allocated EUR 28,000 for projects, with a maximum of EUR 2,000 per project.

17 projects from five regions were submitted in response to the call in 2017. The Committee recommended the approval of 12 projects totalling EUR 20,790.

In terms of increasing tolerance towards the minority languages and culture of members of national minorities, progress has recently been made mainly with respect to the Roma community.

By Government Resolution No. 87/2017 of 22 February 2017, the Slovak Republic approved the Updated Action Plans for the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma until 2020 for the 2016–2018 period for the following fields: D.2.1 The field of education, D.2.2 The field of employment, D.2.3 The field of health, D.2.4 The field of housing, as well as the new Action Plan for D.2.5 The field of financial integration. In the first half of 2017, the OPGRC prepared a material for completing the Action Plans by incorporating the fields contained in the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma until 2020. In view of this, it prepared the addition of four main fields and one subfield, along with Action Plans for the fields of non-discrimination and approaches towards the majority population.

The main challenge of the Action Plan in the field of approaches towards the majority population called “Initiative for Roma Integration through Communication” is to de-ethnicise the public realm in order to create room for a debate free of prejudice and ethnic stereotypes. Communication with the majority population plays a key role here, and education aimed at increased tolerance and deeper understanding of the Roma issue and of the country's multi-ethnic composition must be an integral part of the media realm, public policies and education at all levels.

The Action Plan in the field of approaches towards the majority population – Initiative for Roma Integration through Communication for the 2017–2020 period defines specific steps for preparing and launching a long-term public education campaign. Its objective is to eliminate the Roma population's exclusion and the tendency to reduce its image only to the vulnerable groups, thereby contributing to understanding the Roma population and to its acceptance. The public education campaign will be based on the principle of presenting an inclusive image of the Roma population as a natural part of the Slovak society. Therefore, in contrast with the previous years, there will be a shift from the Roma communities' exclusion towards presenting an image of Slovakia as a country with a multi-ethnic and multicultural character.

Part I of the Charter (General Provisions of the Charter)

1.3. General issues arising from the evaluation of the report

1.3.1. Number of speakers of regional or minority languages

25. *The Committee of Experts urges the Slovak authorities to complement the results of the 2011 census by collecting, in co-operation with the speakers, data concerning the number of users of minority languages and their geographic distribution and to take such data into consideration when planning their action in the field of minority languages.*

Data from the latest census of population and housing in 2011, taking into account the number of members of national minorities, were included in the fourth report on the implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic, see the table:

Results of the Census of Population and Housing 2011 – Population by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Year 2011	
	In absolute	As percentage
	5,397,036	100.0
Slovak	4,352,775	80.7
Hungarian	458,467	8.5
Roma	105,738	2.0
Czech	30,367	0.6
Ruthenian	33,482	0.6
Ukrainian	7,430	0.1
German	4,690	0.1
Polish	3,084	0.1
Croatian	1,022	0.0
Serbian	698	0.0
Russian	1,997	0.0
Jewish	631	0.0
Moravian	3,286	0.1
Bulgarian	1,051	0.0
other	9,825	0.2
unidentified	382,493	7.0

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Data from the census are updated annually based on the results of demographic shifts (births, deaths, migration) before 31 December of the given year and at the level of municipalities. The latest table is from 31 December 2016:

Table - Ethnic composition of the Slovak Republic's population on 31 December 2016

Nationality	Year 2016	
	In absolute terms	As percentage
	5,435,343	100.0 %
Slovak	4,421,538	81.35%
Hungarian	454,912	8.37%
Roma	110,261	2.03%
Czech	39,260	0.72%
Ruthenian	31,081	0.57%
Ukrainian	9,639	0.18%
German	7,275	0.13%

Polish	6,341	0.12%
Romanian	4,983	0.09%
Russian	2,977	0.05%
Vietnamese	2,642	0.05%
Jewish	606	0.01%
Austrian	1,527	0.03%
Bulgarian	2,499	0.05%
Greek	460	0.01%
Other and unidentified	339,342	6.24%

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

Further more detailed data on the number of persons who claim to be members of national minorities in the Slovak Republic and on their geographical distribution will be included in the Sixth Report on the Implementation of the Charter on the basis of the results of the census of population and housing in 2021, which is currently being prepared.

With respect to the census in 2021, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic has set up a team of experts to prepare the National Action Plan for the Census of Population and Housing in 2021 for the 2017 – 2020 period (hereinafter referred to as the “NAPCPH 2021”), which involved the formulation of Strategic Objective No. 5: *To dedicate more attention to special population groups, whose census requires a special approach*. Besides other population groups, the citizens who are treated as those whose census will require such a special approach are also citizens identified in terms of their belonging to a national minority or ethnic group with respect to their mother tongue, including for the purposes of national legislation (particularly Act No. 184/1999 Coll.). Under Government Resolution No. 109 of 1 March 2017 regarding the NAPCPH 2021, the census will also include a methodology (currently under preparation) that will apply specifically to the census of citizens identified in terms of their belonging to a national minority or ethnic group with respect to their mother tongue, in line with the principle of involving members of national minorities in matters which concern them (i.e. their involvement in preparing the census of population and housing in 2021).

The Slovak Government, under Government Resolution No. 109 of 1 March 2017 regarding the NAPCPH 2021, has issued an instruction to ensure the completion of the activities arising from the NAPCPH 2021 in the context of the methodology being prepared to apply to a census of citizens identified as belonging to a national minority or ethnic group with respect to their mother tongue. The authority responsible for the working group mentioned above is the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. The office of the Plenipotentiary will continue, as it did in 2016, to carry out the tasks arising from the NAPCPH 2021 in line with the principle of involving members of national minorities in matters which concern them.

20% threshold

33. *The Committee of Experts reiterates that the Slovak authorities should determine what absolute “number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages” (Article 10) they consider sufficient to apply the undertakings under Article 10 to Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish in at least one municipality, respectively. They should also consider similar measures “according to the situation of each language” regarding other languages with a view to ensuring a consistent and stable implementation of Article 10.*

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to determine, in co-operation with the speakers, in what areas the regional or minority language speakers are traditionally present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the undertakings entered into by the Slovak Republic under Article 10, irrespective of thresholds, and to apply the undertakings ratified under Article 10 in those areas.

As for the recommendations regarding the 20% threshold applied to the use of the languages listed in Points 26 to 36, it is stated that the threshold applied to the use of languages of national minorities is specified in § 2, paragraph 1, of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of National Minority Languages as amended, which states that if the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority and are permanently resident in the given municipality represent, based on the results of two consecutive censuses, at least 15 % of the municipality population, they have the right to use their minority language in that municipality in official communication, and under § 7c, paragraph 1, of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages, two consecutive censuses are understood as censuses whose results were announced after 1 July 2011.

Regarding the Romani minority, it should be noted that the total number of members of the Romani minority is estimated to be approx. 350,000–500,000. However, this estimate does not automatically imply that all members of the Romani community speak Romani. The primary language of communication within the Romani communities in Slovakia is Slovak in its various dialect forms depending on their region, followed by Hungarian, with Romani being only their third most widely used language. However, this by no means reduces the need to protect and further develop the Romani language. Instead, it highlights its vulnerability to multiple marginalisation. The Roma in the south of Slovakia are an example of this, as they are at a disadvantage when entering the labour market not only due to their Roma ethnicity, but also due to their primary language being Hungarian. This is why, in the monitored period, the Office of the Plenipotentiary began to launch its own initiative aimed at preparing and publishing a language map. The intention is to map, using the existing Atlas of Roma Communities 2013, the languages of communication in marginalised Roma community settlements so that policies to support the Romani language are as targeted as possible.

See also the common information in Point 5 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Russian and Serbian languages in the Slovak Republic

35. According to the fourth periodical report, the representatives of the Russian and Serbian minorities have raised the issue of the application of the Charter to the Russian and Serbian languages in the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. The issue has been discussed with the authorities and the Slovak Republic is examining whether to update its instrument of ratification to include Russian and Serbian.

The process leading to the recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with the Charter continued in 2015. The recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with Part II of the Charter was approved by the Slovak Government on 18 November 2015 by Resolution No. 618 and was notified to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 25 November 2015. The declaration of the Slovak Republic was

registered by the Secretariat of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 27 November 2015. The Council of Europe then published the information on its website that the Slovak Republic had declared its recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with Part II of the Charter.

According to the official statistics, there are about 2 thousand Russians living in Slovakia. The Russians in Slovakia were granted national minority status in 2005. Approximately a half of the Russians living in Slovakia are citizens of the Slovak Republic. Most of them live in the Bratislava, Prešov and Košice regions. Union of Russians in Slovakia, a compatriot association, was founded in 1997. The union consists of 8 legally separate regional organisations of compatriots. There is the Union of Russians in Bratislava, Občina in Nitra, Považan in Považská Bystica, Ruslana in Martin, Union of Russians in Košice, Russophiles in Žilina, Union of Russians in Poprad and Initiative 21, a youth organisation of compatriots. All these associations are associate members of the Union of Russians in Slovakia, which represents Russian compatriots in international organisations. There is Rossija, an organisation of compatriots, and Molodaja Rossija, a youth organisation, in Banská Bystrica carrying out their activities outside the Union.

The Russian national minority is represented in the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups at the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality.

Based on the cultural-historical ties and the number of persons of Serbian ethnicity in Slovakia, the Serbs were granted national minority status in Slovakia in 2010. The Serbian national minority is also represented in the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups at the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality.

In addition, there are also Serbian citizens living in Slovakia who have come here to work or study or to stay with their families. At the end of 2016, there were 5,528 Serbian citizens living in Slovakia, of whom 400 were permanently resident in Slovakia. Most migrants in this group, as much as 90%, are holders of temporary residence.

Serbian migrants in Slovakia are relatively scattered. Most of them are concentrated in the Bratislava and Trnava regions, and the Košice region is also relatively attractive. The Bratislava region offers the most work opportunities. The increase in the number of Serbian migrants in the Trnava region was primarily due to the opening of the automotive production plants. New migrants coming to Slovakia arrive here with some knowledge about Slovakia, being aware of the benefits of language similarity. Serbian migrants have the best Slovak language skills of all of groups, with as many as 82% regarding their language skills as good or very good.

Serbian students form the largest group of all foreign students.

Cultural and social events dedicated to preserving the Serbian culture and language are organised by three not-for-profit organisations covering several areas. The Association of Serbs in Slovakia organises visual arts, musical, sports, professional and arts events. The female vocalist band Izvor is affiliated with the Association of Serbs in Slovakia. The Association is active in the field of preserving and promoting the culture of the Serbian national minority by organising events such as: a photography exhibition about the bombing

of Novi Sad and Serbia, the International Friendship Minifootball Tournament, the international Serbian-Slovak Relations Conference, various exhibitions, the Serbian Culture Festival in Košice, the Serbian Documentary Film Festival, etc.

Then there is the newly-established not-for-profit organisation the Serbian Culture-Information Centre, whose activities will focus mainly on setting up a library, a Serbian radio and on promoting the preservation of the Serbian language and writing through magazine and book publishing and translation work.

Finally, there is the Serbian-Slovak Friendship not-for-profit organisation, whose main activity is to support Serbia's construction of new bridges and reconstruction of bridges destroyed in the bombing of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In Slovakia, they also organise camps for Serbian and Slovak children.

Education in the Serbian language is not possible within the Slovak education system. The Lectorate of the Serbian Language at the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava was reinstated after 22 years in the academic year 2012/2013. It is also the only institution allowing teaching in the Serbian language in Slovakia. The Serbian language is taught as an optional subject (Serbian Language and Serbian Film) at the Department of Slavic Philology. Lectures within each subject are given once a week, with an average of 25 students enrolled in each semester. The Department of Slavic Philology also organises Serbian language courses for the public.

Part II of the Charter (Objectives and Principles of the Charter)

3.1 Evaluation in respect of Part II of the Charter

<p>44. <i>The Committee of Experts will focus on the provisions of Part II which were singled out in the previous evaluation reports as raising particular problems. It will therefore not comment in the present report on provisions where the Committee of Experts was satisfied with their implementation and for which it did not receive any new information requiring their reassessment. Under Part II, this concerns Article 7.1.a, e, h and i.</i></p>
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Article 7 – Objectives and Principles

Paragraph 1

In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

b) The respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question.

<p>47. <i>The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to comment on how Act No. 221/1996 on the Territorial and Administrative Organisation of the Slovak Republic, as amended, ensures that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute any obstacle to the promotion of minority languages.</i></p>

In the period after the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Charter in the Slovak Republic, no legal regulations or measures that would alter or affect the population ratios in areas with persons belonging to national minorities were adopted.

Act No. 221/1996 Coll. on Territorial and Administrative Arrangement of the Slovak Republic as amended, which specifies the administrative division of the Slovak Republic, remains in force. The two types of local administration units of the Slovak Republic are municipalities and higher territorial units, and its 8 regions and 79 districts are government administration units falling under the competence of government authorities. Act No. 221/1996 mentioned above does not provide for the use of languages of national minorities, hence its current wording does not present obstacles to the use of languages of national minorities. The use of languages of national minorities is governed by a specific legal regulation, Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. This legal regulation provides for the use of languages of national minorities with respect to individual municipalities. It is the number of national minority members in a specific municipality, rather than the number of national minority members in districts or other administration units that is decisive as to whether the right to use a national minority language can be exercised.

Also, Act No. 204/2011 Coll., which amends and supplements Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, allows for the possibility to use minority languages in official oral communication in municipalities which do not reach the 20% threshold. At the same time, the threshold for the use of the languages of national minorities has been decreased to 15 % based on two consecutive population censuses.

See also the information in Point 5 of this report

c) the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them.

50. *During the on-the-spot visit, however, the Committee of Experts was informed that there were considerable delays in receiving the funds granted for various projects and that for some activities, the funds received were very low. The project duration is also limited to one year. This affects the capacity of the minority associations to adequately plan and implement their activities. It is also very difficult to further develop various projects, since, for example, attracting young to-be-journalists to minority-language media is not possible in the current circumstances. The Committee of Experts is aware that the authorities are trying to reduce the delays in granting the funds. It underlines the importance of stable, predictable funding for the activities of national minorities.*

The purpose, conditions, scope and method of granting subsidies within the competence of the Government Office is laid down by Act No. 524/2010 Coll. on the Granting of Subsidies within the Competence of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic as amended. The method for allocating funds among the individual national minorities was based on a mathematical model of calculating financial resources which takes into account, in calculation of the amounts of funds to be allocated, several criteria aimed at ensuring transparent and fair allocation of funds. Annex No. 1 states the amount of funds allocated to the CNM Subsidy Programme in the 2015–2017 period.

Two calls were announced within the CNM Subsidy Programme in 2015. 1,960 projects were submitted in response to the two subsidy calls in the CNM 2015 programme. 1,240 projects submitted by 599 applicants totalling EUR 3,872,696 were recommended for approval by the review committees. 1,846 projects were submitted in response to the call in the CNM 2016 programme. The review committees recommended the approval of 1,231 projects within the call totalling EUR 3,879,250. 1,917 projects were submitted in response to the call in the CNM 2017 programme, and fifteen committees for reviewing projects in the CNM 2017 programme recommended 1,342 projects for approval totalling EUR 4,500,000, reaching the full amount of the funds available for allocation.

As it is stated in Point 10, the new concept of supporting the cultural and scientific activities of national minorities in Slovakia relies mainly on:

- the establishment of the Fund, established by Act No. 138/2017 of the National Council of 10 May 2017, effective as of 1 July 2017. The Fund shall guarantee the main financial instrument focused solely on promoting the cultural and scientific activities of minorities,
- defining the tasks and objectives of the Fund's promotion activities, and setting transparent rules for deploying its resources,
- ensuring independence and professionalism in decisions made by the Fund's key bodies,
- defining the purpose of deploying the Fund's resources and the mechanisms for controlling their deployment,
- defining the Fund's financial resources.

See also the information on the Fund in Point 10.

See also the information about the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period in Point 3.

See also the information about the Updated Action Plans for Integration of Roma until 2020 for the 2016–2018 period in Point 10.

d) the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;

For the sake of improving the services and the quality of measures provided by the facilities of socio-legal protection and social care, on 24 November 2016, the following task was included in the Strategy for Enforcement of Court Decisions at the Facilities of Socio-legal Protection of Children and Children's Social Care for the 2016–2020 period – Plan for Transformation and Deinstitutionalisation of Foster Care, approved by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic: “To ensure, when hiring employees delivering front-line services at the facilities of socio-legal protection and social care in regions with national minorities and ethnic groups, that the ability to speak a language other than Slovak is treated as an advantage”.

The use of languages of national minorities is also fully reflected in the national project called “Field Social Work”, which has been running in 220 Slovak municipalities since October 2015. The idea of the project is to improve the social situation of people at risk of social exclusion by means of field social work using field social workers and social workers providing assistance to socially deprived municipality residents, the unemployed, families with small children and to seniors, with a particular focus on segregated and socially excluded communities. The objective is greater engagement of disadvantaged and vulnerable

persons in the life of the community, improved job opportunities and improved access to the available services, as well as their full integration into the society. The implementation of the Charter prompts efforts to provide municipality residents belonging to national minorities the opportunity to communicate in their language. For this reason, field social workers or field social work assistants with a good command of Hungarian or Romani are preferred in areas of Slovakia with national minorities.

f) the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages

59. The Committee of Experts notes that efforts are being made by the authorities to prevent the unjustified enrolment of Roma children in special schools or classes. However, at present and in practice, there are still a disproportionately high number of Roma children in such classes.¹ During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was also informed that the diagnostic tests do not sufficiently take into consideration the specific cultural and linguistic background of these children. Moreover, many special schools are found in the neighbourhood of Roma settlements, which also leads to the enrolment of Roma children in such institutions.

The Committee of Experts urges the Slovak authorities to continue their efforts to abolish the practice of unjustified enrolment of Roma children in special schools or classes.

Act No. 188/2015 Coll., amending and supplementing Schools Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training, was adopted to introduce measures to abolish unjustified enrolments of Roma children in special schools or classes.

The above amendment to § 107 of the Schools Act directly stipulates that a child or pupil whose special educational needs arise exclusively from his development in a socially disadvantaged environment cannot be enrolled in a special school, special kindergarten class, special primary school class, or a special secondary school class. In practice this means that the enrolment of a pupil into a special school cannot be solely due to their socially disadvantaged background. The law explicitly and directly imposes the obligation to enrol children and pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in classes with other children and pupils. The number of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in special primary schools fell by 6,762 pupils in the academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

The project called “the National Project of INclusive EDucation” (hereinafter referred to as “PRINED”) was implemented in Slovakia in 2015, whose objective was to provide significant support for creating an inclusive environment that would help avoid unjustified placement of pupils in the special education system. Acceleration programmes aimed at stimulating Roma children improve the diagnostic procedures in kindergartens. Inclusion at primary schools is supported by setting up inclusion teams and by training them in the professional skills required for satisfying and developing specific educational needs of pupils from marginalised Roma communities.

The national project “School Open to All” has been running since February 2017 as part of the Education priority axis within the *Human Resources* operational programme, guaranteed by the MESRSSR (the amount for the whole project is EUR 25,400,340), and it

¹ See also Fourth Opinion on the Slovak Republic of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/OP/IV(2014)004, paragraphs 60-66.

includes support for pedagogical and specialist staff at schools, as well as for teaching assistants, school psychologists, special education teachers, social teachers and specialist staff at schools.

The project's objective will be to promote the model of inclusive education, whose essence is the right of every child to quality education, while emphasising the removal of barriers precluding equal access to education. Involving especially teaching assistants and professionally trained teachers and experts in psychology, special education and social education, who will form expert teams supporting children and pupils, as well as involving parents, will significantly contribute to this objective. The plan is to help create 500 new jobs for teaching assistants and specialist staff at kindergartens and primary schools as part of this national project. Informal education and a full-time education and training system will produce skills required for children and pupils to succeed in education.

The project is planned to run until 2020. The project builds on the results of previous successful projects: *MRK I – Towards the Inclusion of Marginalised Roma Communities through Training for Pedagogical Staff*, *MRK II - Inclusive Model of Education in Pre-Primary Education* and *PRINED - Inclusive Education Project*. The national project will be co-funded by the European Social Fund as part of the *Education* priority axis within the *Human Resources* operational programme.

In 2017, MPC-ROCEPO performed a comparative analysis of findings about the status of a child/pupil from a socially disadvantaged background in the Slovak Republic's training and education system, as well as observations of teachers in classes with children a pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and with socially disadvantaged children and pupils from marginalised Roma communities. It will use the results of the analysis to propose recommendations for improving the education and training process.

Further, on 30 December 2016, as part of the Education priority axis within the *Human Resources* operational programme, a call for submission of applications for a non-repayable financial contribution called "More Success at Primary School" was announced, with EUR 50 million available for allocation. The call is aimed at supporting inclusion at primary schools through the work of teaching assistants, pedagogical staff and inclusion teams (consisting of a school psychologist, special education teacher, and social teacher).

The objective of the call is to help reduce and prevent early school leaving rates and to promote access to quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including formal, informal and mainstream education, in order to achieve re-integration into education and preparation programmes. The call is expected to improve inclusion and equal access to quality education, and to improve children's results and skills.

The prohibition of all forms of discrimination and segregation is reiterated in the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions issued by the MESRSSH for the academic years 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. Further, the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions impose the following: to eliminate undesirable phenomena such as spatial, organisational, physical and symbolic exclusion or segregation of Roma children and pupils because of their ethnicity (often in combination with social disadvantage) from other children and pupils; to address the problems of children and pupils from marginalised groups that complicate their admission to mainstream schools and school facilities, their enrolment in regular classes, and

the education and training process itself; to create suitable conditions for their education in schools and classes together with the majority population.

Further, the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions for the academic year 2015/2016 impose the following:

- In kindergartens where teaching and training is conducted in a national minority language:
 - a) to promote children's active communication in standard Slovak by implementing innovative teaching procedures and through bilingual regular communication (in an integrated manner, in all organisational forms, by connecting mother tongue and the state language),
 - b) to proceed, in developing state language skills, in accordance with the Method Sheet for developing state language skills at minority language kindergartens published at www.statpedu.sk.
- To use the materials for the respective education stages published at www.statpedu.sk as a tool for integrating the Romani language and literature and Roma history and culture into school education programmes.
- When hiring teaching assistants at schools with a high proportion of children and pupils from marginalised communities, to take into account the assistants' command of the Romani language.
- To support teacher training in the field of intercultural education focused on the Romani language and culture.
- To inform secondary school pupils of the possibility to choose Romani Language and Literature as an optional subject for their school-leaving exam. To align the development of internal Romani Language and Literature school-leaving exams with the target knowledge and skills requirements for Romani Language and Literature exam candidates published at www.statpedu.sk.
- To inform the legal guardians of children from Roma communities about the possibility to have Romani Language and Literature teaching for their children. To provide education in the Romani language if there is interest on the part of legal guardians.
- To use, when planning Romani Language and Literature teaching, innovative Romani Language and Literature education standards for the respective education stages.

Further, the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions for the academic year 2016/2017 impose the following:

- To provide parents with information about their choice of schools which offer minority language instruction or a minority language subject, and to provide such education if there is sufficient interest.
- To implement inclusive education of children and pupils in all kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, i.e. public, private and church schools using specific teaching methods. Details – Official Journal of the European Union 24 December 2013 Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States.
- To carry out tasks arising from the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma until 2020, particularly:

- a) to actively promote engagement of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in pre-primary education for 4- to 6-year-olds,
 - b) to support kindergartens in introducing programmes directed at improving cooperation with Roma children’s parents, and in involving teaching assistants at kindergartens,
 - c) to strictly follow procedures for enrolling pupils in special primary schools,
 - d) to provide psychological diagnostic testing for children prior to commencing compulsory education, to be performed exclusively by a psychological counselling and prevention centre,
 - e) to promote the use of the Romani language in pre-primary and primary education and to survey interest of Roma children’s parents in Romani language teaching during enrolment in a primary or secondary school.
- To support teacher training in the field of intercultural education focused on the Romani language and culture. In this context, NIE runs the “Innovative Education for Pedagogical Primary School Staff to Improve their Intercultural Capabilities in the Process of Educating Roma Children” project, funded from the European Economic Area financial mechanism and from the Slovak Republic’s budget.

Further, the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions for the academic year 2017/2018 impose the following:

- To dedicate more attention to the preparation of pupils at minority language primary schools for Hungarian Language and Literature “Test 5”, and for Hungarian Language and Literature, Slovak Language and Literature and Ukrainian Language and Literature “Test 9”.
- We also recommend that in order to improve the quality of mother tongue and Slovak language teaching at schools with minority language instruction, more attention be dedicated to developing listening, speaking and reading skills, and that focus be on independent production of verbal expressions, on working with information and on the ability to produce arguments appropriate to the pupils’ age.
- To use the materials for the respective education stages published at www.statpedu.sk as a tool for integrating the Romani language and literature and Roma history and culture into school education programmes.
- To inform secondary school pupils of the possibility to choose the Romani Language and Literature as an optional subject for their school-leaving exam. To align the development of internal Romani Language and Literature school-leaving exams with the target knowledge and skills requirements for Romani Language and Literature exam candidates published at www.statpedu.sk.
- To inform the legal guardians of children from Roma communities about the possibility to have Romani Language and Literature teaching for their children. To provide education in the Romani language if there is interest on the part of legal guardians.

Compliance with legislation and internal regulations is monitored by the State School Inspection, which publishes the results of its inspection activities in its annual reports on the state and quality of education and training at schools and school facilities in

the Slovak Republic. It also forwards information about any education-related segregation practices it finds to the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights.

62. The Committee of Experts underlines that in many cases where general measures are taken, minority languages are particularly at risk. Special measures need to be put in place to ensure that these languages are not disproportionately affected. States may choose, for example, to accept a very low minimum number of pupils for minority language classes or to grant significantly higher subsidies to small schools in order to ensure their continued functioning

The Committee of Experts urges the Slovak authorities to take measures to ensure the teaching in or of minority languages at all appropriate levels.

Act No. 216/2016 Coll., amending and supplementing the Schools Act and effective as of 1 September 2016, amends the provision of § 29, paragraph 18, of the Schools Act, under which the prescribed minimum number of pupils in a class does not apply to primary school classes with minority language instruction. This amendment to the Schools Act allows national minority language schools to proceed with teaching even in the case of classes with a lower number of pupils and thus prevents such classes from being closed.

See also the common information in Point 6 and the information about financing schools in Point 64.

g) the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire.

64. The fourth periodical report reiterates that minority languages may be taught by any Slovak-language school, and majority pupils have therefore the possibility of learning them. In practice, Hungarian language courses are organised, for example, by the Academy of Education in Žilina; Ruthenian language courses are provided by an NGO in several municipalities with support from the Slovak authorities; free Romani courses have been provided by the Institute of Social Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice, in the framework of a cross-border cooperation project. The Committee of Experts asks the authorities to provide information also on the other languages covered by the Charter.

Minority languages can be taught at any school with Slovak language instruction. As of 1 September 2016, schools with national minority language instruction have a choice of two valid framework curriculum plans (hereinafter referred to as “FCP”):

- a) FCP for primary schools with national minority language instruction valid from 1 September 2015;
- b) FCP for primary schools with national minority language instruction valid from 1 September 2016 (supplement to the upgraded national programme of education and training for primary education).

On 11 May 2017, the MESRSSR approved Supplement No. 1, which modifies the FCP for primary schools where a national minority language is taught (valid from 1 September 2015), effective as of 1 September 2017 beginning with first grade.

At its meeting on 13 December 2017, the Slovak Government approved a new wording of Government Regulation No. 630/2008 Coll., which lays down details of a breakdown of budgetary funds to be allocated to schools and school facilities, and which provides for remuneration and operational rules for primary schools where children learn a national minority language or where they receive education in a national minority language. These new rules will have a positive impact on more than 30,000 pupils. This regulation entered into force on 1 January 2018.

The new wording of the regulation introduces salary bands and budgeting (for the primary school education and training process) with increased rates amounting to 113% for schools with a language of instruction other than Slovak.

It also introduces new budgeting rules increasing the budget for a pupil learning a national minority language in line with the FCP for primary schools where a national minority language is taught (i.e. a pupil who learns it as a compulsory subject) to 104%, and it will apply to schools where the Ruthenian, Romani, Ukrainian, Russian, German or Croatian language is taught.

Various Slavic language courses (such as Croatian and Serbian) for the public are provided by the Department of Slavic Philology at Comenius University in Bratislava in every semester. The offer of courses depends on demand and staff availability.

Other forms of minority language learning opportunities in the Slovak Republic have remained unchanged since the fourth report of the Committee of Experts.

Paragraph 2

The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.

65. *In the previous evaluation reports, the Committee of Experts noted that some amendments were necessary to the State Language Act, and that the law had been amended twice. The first amendment in 2009 even further limited the possibilities of using minority languages. With the second amendment of 2011, the use of minority languages was facilitated to a certain degree, and the sanction mechanism under the State Language Act was limited in its scope of application. The Committee of Experts will deal with these issues in further detail under Part III.*

See the more detailed information in the sections for the individual languages in Part III of this report.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the

objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.

69. The Committee of Experts reiterates that the extent to which a minority language is protected or promoted is linked to how it is perceived by majority language speakers. Awareness-raising with the majority is of the utmost importance and requires constant efforts in both the educational and the media field. The fundamental goal is to stimulate the majority population to value the fact that regional or minority language speakers form part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the State with their different languages and cultures.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to intensify efforts to promote awareness and tolerance in the Slovak society at large vis-à-vis minority languages and the cultures they represent.

See the common information in Point 10.

On 6 February 2015, the MESRSSR approved upgraded national programme of education and training (hereinafter referred to as “uNPET”) for the lower primary school stage and upper primary school stage.

The National Programme of Education and Training in the Slovak Republic is a binding document, specifying compulsory subjects within each area of education. History, Geography and Citizenship Education fall under the Man and Society area of education. Human rights education, prevention of racist, xenophobic and extremist views, education leading towards tolerance, respect for human rights, equality of men and women, and towards respecting nature and culture are an important part of the Man and Society area of education.

The main role of history is to cultivate historical awareness in pupils conceived as accomplished persons, and to preserve the continuity of historical memory in the sense of sharing historical experience, whether local, regional, national, European or global. History also guides pupils towards understanding and respecting cultural and other differences among people and among various diversified groups and societies. It should also teach pupils to embrace the set of values inherent in a democratic society. History also attaches importance to the democratic values of the European civilisation.

Cross-cutting themes spanning a number of areas of education are a compulsory part of curriculum content.

The overall objective of the “multicultural education” cross-cutting theme is to develop conscious cultural self-reflection in pupils, to encourage them to respect members of other cultures, thereby building the foundations of educated intercultural cooperation in the future, then to guide students towards cooperation with members of other cultures, to develop their ability to uncover basic stereotypes and prejudice, to prompt them to build fair relationships with people around them, and to motivate them to cooperate with people from other social groups.

Human rights education is enshrined in several provisions of the Schools Act (245/2008), such as in the case of § 3:

- c) under which education and training is based on the principle of “equal access to education and training, taking into account the needs of an individual and their shared responsibility for their education”,
- d) “prohibition of all forms of discrimination and of segregation in particular”,
- h) “freedom to choose education, taking into account the expectations and assumptions of children and pupils in line with what the education system allows”,
- j) “preparation leading to responsibility in life in a free society based on the principles of understanding and tolerance, equality of men and women, friendship among nations, national minority and ethnic groups, and religious tolerance”,
- l) “integration of the Slovak Republic’s education system into the European Education Area, bearing in mind its own experience and traditions”,
- o) “prohibition of providing or disclosing information and of abuse of information sources which may result in breaking the principles of morality or in inciting ethnic or racial hatred or to other forms of intolerance”,
- g) “to ensure and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms laid down in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”,
- h) “preparation leading to responsibility in life in a free society based on the principles of understanding and tolerance, equality of men and women, friendship among nations and ethnic groups, and religious tolerance”,
- k) “to get all information about children’s rights and to acquire the competence to exercise those rights”.

We should also note that secondary school pupils also receive systematic human rights education through the *Human Rights Olympics*. This occasion prompted the publication of *Selected Texts on Human Rights. The Human Rights Handbook* (Comenius University in Bratislava, Bratislava 2013, p. 168), which is intended not only for teachers but also for non-governmental organisations, experts and the lay public. It was published together with the *Dictionary of Human Rights*, an informative and explanatory tool for understanding the basic terminology, their content, human rights agreements and institutions.

Schools also still have the possibility to choose to be assigned a supplementary lesson as part of their School Education Programme, such as regional history, which would open a broad range of methodological-didactic possibilities for engaging in the history of a specific national minority extensively.

Paragraph 4

In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.

73. *The Committee of Experts encourages the Slovak authorities to take into consideration the needs and wishes of the minority language speakers, when determining their policy with respect to minority languages.*

Participation of members of national minorities in the conduct of public affairs is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and by international agreements. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups the right to participate in the conduct of affairs related to national minorities and ethnic groups.

All legal regulations which provide for the right to vote fully respect the provision of Article 30 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, according to which citizens have, under equal conditions, access to elected or public positions, and the right to vote is general, equal, and direct and shall be by secret ballot.

CNMEG is a permanent expert body at the Government Council in matters related to national minorities, ethnic groups and their members, and in the field of the implementation of the Charter under its Article 7, paragraph 4. It acts as a consulting body for matters related to the participation of national minorities and ethnic groups in the conduct of affairs related to national minorities and ethnic groups under Article 34, paragraph 2 c, of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The Plenipotentiary is the Chairman of CNMEG, and its members are representatives of all thirteen national minorities (Hungarian, Romani, Ruthenian, Czech, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Moravian, Russian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Jewish and Serbian minorities) and representatives of the relevant government authorities.

As part of its competence, CNMEG gives the Government Council recommendations for improving the standard of promoting, protecting and respecting the rights of members of national minorities; it participates in drawing up reports for the control mechanisms of international agreements on human rights and the rights of members of national minorities, and draws up annual evaluation reports in the key areas regarding members of national minorities, submitted to the Government Council for approval.

CNMEG has a special status among the Government Council committees. Members of CNMEG representing members of national minorities are elected directly by minority organisations. Until the end of 2017, voting rights in CNMEG were only held by representatives of national minorities according to the “one minority – one vote” principle, and by the CNMEG Chairman. Representatives of government authorities attended CNMEG meetings without a voting right. In February 2018, CNMEG’s statute was changed in such a way that CNMEG is now made up of a chamber consisting of members of national minorities and of a chamber consisting of central government authorities. The new statute now grants voting rights to representatives of government authorities. CNMEG itself can be regarded as a participative authority of national minorities, being independent and sovereign in making decisions about its own matters. It is not possible to address issues concerning a specific national minority in committee meetings without the participation of its representatives.

Under its statute, the Committee draws up an annual evaluation report on the promotion of cultures of national minorities, a report on the state of national minority education, and a report on the use of languages of national minorities (hereinafter referred to as “evaluation reports”), submitted to the Council for approval.

Evaluation reports, where national minorities address problems from their own perspective, are an opportunity to voice their own judgement about the current state, as well as their priorities and criticism. The process of preparing these reports is also an opportunity a debate about such priorities and views of national minorities with representatives of the relevant government authorities.

See also information regarding the Action Plan stated in point 3.

As for the field of the language rights of members of national minorities, CNMEG discussed and approved a proposal for recognising the Russian language and the Serbian language as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with Part II of the Charter. CNMEG also expressed its support for the demands of the Hungarian national minority calling for raising the quality of the educational and training process in schools with Hungarian language instruction, and requesting that these demands be taken into consideration also with respect to other national minorities.

We should also add, regarding CNMEG's activities, that four committee meetings took place in 2015, where 17 resolutions were adopted. The Committee draws up an annual assessment report on the promotion of the cultures of national minorities, a report of the state of national minority education, and a report on the use of languages of national minorities, submitted to the Council for approval. For the sake of ensuring that the process of preparing reports for 2014 was as efficient as possible, a temporary working group was set up to draw up the evaluation reports consisting of 13 members of the respective national minorities, who are experts on the given problems, appointed by committee members, and of 8 representatives of government authorities. The Government Council approved the evaluation reports at its 22nd meeting by Resolution No. 137 of 15 October 2015.

As for the field of the language rights of members of national minorities, CNMEG discussed and approved a proposal for recognising the Russian language and the Serbian language as minority languages in the Slovak Republic in accordance with Part II of the Charter. CNMEG also expressed its support for the demands of the Hungarian national minority calling for raising the quality of the educational and training process in schools with Hungarian language instruction, and requesting that these demands be taken into consideration also with respect to other national minorities.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary, in cooperation with CNMEG, engaged in the process of preparing the National Strategy for Human Rights Protection and Promotion. An expert working group was set up to draw up the part of the strategy concerning the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, and then to draw up the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. A draft of the Action Plan was presented to the public at three workshops in Banská Bystrica, Košice and Bratislava. The attending experts, representatives of national minorities and working group members expressed in a discussion their proposals and recommendations concerning the individual proposals of activities and measures, as well as their analyses of the strengths and weaknesses, and of the opportunities and threats associated with the status and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, which the temporary working group incorporated into the draft of the Action Plan. The resulting draft of the Action Plan was approved by the committee at its XIX meeting on 17 December 2015. Then the Office of the Plenipotentiary in coordination with CNMEG created conditions for drawing up the Action Plan.

See also information regarding the Action Plan stated in point 3.

We should also add, regarding CNMEG's activities, that four committee meetings took place in 2015, as well as in 2016, where 39 resolutions were adopted, all of which have been fulfilled. In 2017, the committee also held four ordinary meetings and one extraordinary meeting following its election. 16 adopted resolutions are either being fulfilled or have been fulfilled. The state of the CNM Subsidy Programme was regularly discussed at the committee

meetings, along with the process of approving the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period, and the process of preparing a draft of the law on the Fund. The law was prepared on the basis of the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the 2016–2020 period, which set the objective of ensuring systematic promotion of the cultural and art activities of all national minorities in the Slovak Republic.

In connection with this, the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic, who acts as Chairman of the Government Council for Culture of the Slovak Republic, set up a temporary working group to prepare a law on the Fund to support minority cultures. The Plenipotentiary was appointed as deputy head of the temporary working group. For the sake of achieving the broadest possible participation of representatives of minorities in preparing this key legislative measure, the Plenipotentiary set up, under his statute, a temporary working group for the period between 1 July 2016 and 30 September 2016 to prepare a law on the Fund. The working group consisted of the head of the working group, i.e. the Plenipotentiary, and ten members representing national minorities appointed by the Plenipotentiary. In line with the principles of its activities, the working group met three times in 2016.

In order to ensure that the government performs its public administration function in the field of education and training in national minority languages, the Section for National Minority Education and Training was set up within the Section for Regional Education in June 2016. The new section creates conditions for exercising the right to education in a national minority language and to national minority language teaching, draws up proposals of legislative measures including proposals for financing schools and school establishments.

The Unit for Creating and Developing National Minority Education Content has operated within NIE since 16 May 2016, managing the work of the following departments: Department for Hungarian Minority Education Content, Department for Romani Minority Education Content and Department for Ruthenian and Ukrainian Minorities Education Content.

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 regarding the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Paragraph 5

The Parties undertake to apply, mutatis mutandis, the principles listed in paragraphs 1 to 4 above to non-territorial languages. However, as far as these languages are concerned, the nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Charter shall be determined in a flexible manner, bearing in mind the needs and wishes, and respecting the traditions and characteristics, of the groups which use the languages concerned.

76. *The Committee of Experts recalls that the Charter requires a pro-active approach on the part of the authorities in promoting minority languages. It, therefore, encourages the Slovak authorities to take proactive steps to promote Yiddish, in co-operation with the speakers.*

Yiddish is still not taught in the network of schools and school facilities of the Slovak Republic licensed to carry out education and training under Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training. This is due to the lack of interest of the Jewish national minority in establishing a school with Yiddish language instruction or Yiddish language teaching.

The Lauder Gan Menachem private kindergarten in Bratislava offers Yiddish language teaching at the level appropriate to the age category. Its founder is the Chabad of Slovakia not-for-profit organisation. There are also classical and modern Hebrew (ivrit) courses, available at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava, the State Language School in Bratislava and Košice, and at several private language schools.

Promoting the Yiddish language is also the role of SNM – Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava, a specialised scientific-research, documentation and methodological museum institution with a mission to study the history and development of the material and spiritual culture of Jews in Slovakia.

On 7 September 2016, the Museum of Slovak National Uprising (hereinafter referred to as “SNU”) held a discussion in its Haviva Reik Garden entitled “the European Holocaust” with the President of the Association of Roma in Poland, Roman Kwiatkowski, as part of the SHOA – Dialogue on the Holocaust project. The main organisers of the event were: Cult-E European Culture not-for-profit organisation and the SNU Museum.

The Yiddish language was also the subject of talks between RTVS and representatives of Jewish organisations prior to 2015. However, they did not see any public demand for broadcasting in this language, so RTVS programmes for the Jewish minority are broadcast in Slovak. Nonetheless, if such public demand exists in the future, the public broadcaster is prepared to respond favourably.

PART III of the Charter (measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life)

3.2 Evaluation in respect of Part III of the Charter

77. The languages covered also by Part III of the Charter are Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Romani, German, Czech, Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish.

3.2.1 Hungarian

78. The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For Hungarian, these provisions are the following:

*Article 8.1.a.i; e.i;
Article 9.1.d; 9.2.a;
Article 10.5;
Article 11.2;
Article 12.1.a; b; c; d; e; f; g; 12.3;
Article 13.1.c;
Article 14.a.*

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

Primary and secondary school education

b)

i to make available primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages

c)

i to make available secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages

83. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings still fulfilled.*

The Committee of Experts urges the Slovak authorities to take special measures to support access to education in Hungarian for all pupils concerned, in co-operation with the speakers.

The material entitled “*Process and Possibilities of Founding a School with Instruction in a Language Other than Slovak*” was produced in February 2017. The informative material is available at the MESRSSR website <http://www.minedu.sk/vychova-a-vzdelavanie-narodnostnych-mensin/>, providing a brief summary of necessary information for founders about founding schools and school facilities.

Parents and children are also advised of the possibility of education in minority languages in the Pedagogical-Organisational Instructions for the academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

Data on the number of the individual types of schools with national minority language instruction or national minority language teaching is made available by 15 September every year.²

On 15 September 2016, the network of schools and school facilities comprised 28 primary schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 227 primary schools with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 29,077).

On 15 September 2017, the network of schools and school facilities comprised 28 primary schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 223 primary schools with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 29,236)

On 25 August 2016, the MESRSSR approved, as part of *the Upgraded National Programme of Education and Training (uNPET)*, a new FCP for primary schools with national minority language instruction valid from 1 September 2016. This FCP increases the number of lessons for the national minority language and literature subject in primary education from 21 to 24, with the number of lessons dedicated to a national minority language up from 5 to 8.

² See: Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information – Statistical Yearbooks, available at http://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka- kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia.html?page_id=9580.

As of 1 September 2016, schools with national minority language instruction have a choice of two valid framework curriculum plans to be followed in 1st and 2nd grades in the academic year 2016/2017:

1/ FCP for primary schools with minority language instruction valid from 1 September 2015;

2/ FCP for primary schools with minority language instruction valid from 1 September 2016 (supplement to the uNPET for primary education).

However, this dual-level model of education allows schools to add to their school education programme (hereinafter referred to as “SEP”) other subjects beyond the compulsory FCP, on condition that they secure their own resources to finance the additional subjects.

As of 15 September 2016, the network of schools and school facilities comprised:

- 29 secondary vocational schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 11 secondary vocational schools with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 6,537),
- 7 secondary grammar schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 18 secondary grammar schools with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 3,465),

As of 15 September 2017, the network of schools and school establishments comprised:

- 29 secondary vocational schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 11 secondary vocational with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 6,160),
- 7 secondary grammar schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 18 secondary grammar schools with Hungarian language instruction (number of students: 3,428)

See also the common information in Point 6.

Technical and vocational education

d)

i to make available technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages

86. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide more detailed information on the impact of the above-mentioned changes on the technical and vocational education in Hungarian. The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to ensure that technical and vocational education remain available in Hungarian.

In line with the Government Manifesto, the MESRSSH carries out activities to support vocational education and training at schools with national minority instruction, including vocational education and training in the dual education system. The national programmes of education for vocational education and training for the individual groups of study programmes and the individual education stages respect the specific nature of teaching at secondary vocational schools with national minority language instruction. All framework curriculum plans for vocational education and training (within general education subjects) allocate a specific number of lessons to national minority language and literature subjects. Vocational subjects are taught in a national minority language, but the content and scope of

vocational education and training is identical to the content and scope of education in the Slovak language.

As it was already stated in Article 8, paragraph 1 c, 29 secondary vocational schools with Slovak and Hungarian language instruction and 11 secondary vocational schools with Hungarian language instruction were registered in the Slovak Republic in the academic years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.

Universities: Higher education is governed by Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education as amended.

In the academic year 2015/2016 and in the academic year 2016/2017, higher education was provided by 35 universities, of which 20 were public universities, 3 were state universities and 12 were private universities. Higher education in national minority languages was provided mainly by the following universities:

- Selye János University;
- Comenius University in Bratislava;
- University of Prešov in Prešov;
- University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava;
- Catholic University in Ružomberok;
- Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra;
- Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica.

Adult and continuing education

f)

i to arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in the regional or minority languages

89. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to strengthen the offer of adult and continuing education courses taught mainly or wholly in Hungarian.*

The MESRSSR fully supports reinforcing adult education also in minority languages. There are numerous education institutions on the market providing adult courses based on a specific analysis of education needs in each region. Such education is mostly free of intervention by the MESRSSR and is provided on the basis of demand and supply and on the basis of arrangements between those demanding such courses and the providers. If there is interest in any minority language, it is entirely in the competence of those demanding the courses and the providers to make arrangements for such education to take place, where the providers can be secondary schools, universities or other educational institutions. However, the field of re-skilling is subject to some form of regulation in coordination with the relevant regional branches of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and according to regional needs.

Teaching of the history and the culture

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language

94. *The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of this undertaking. It requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the history and culture reflected by the Hungarian language are taught in practice.*

History textbooks, workbooks and reading books have been translated into the Hungarian language to cover the needs of pupils at primary schools with Hungarian language instruction with respect to history subjects.

An adapted education standard for history at secondary schools has been introduced to cover the needs of secondary school students of Hungarian ethnicity. A team of experts designed history textbooks for secondary school students with Hungarian language instruction. These textbooks are commonly used in the education process, with students also using Hungarian translations of Slovak secondary school history textbooks.

In order to improve cooperation with schools with Hungarian language instruction, the Central Subject Committee of NIE was extended in 2017 to include representatives of these schools, which gives them an opportunity to make requests, engage in discussions with Slovak historians, and to work with them towards a rational, objective and mutually acceptable interpretation of history. Schools also still have the possibility to choose to be assigned a supplementary lesson as part of their SEP, such as regional history, which would open a broad range of methodological-didactic possibilities for engaging in the history of a specific national minority extensively.

The 13th session of the Joint Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs was held on 3 November 2016 (hereinafter referred to as the “JSHCMA”). Following a JSHCMA meeting, the Slovak side undertook to ensure the availability of optional textbooks and study tools in the Hungarian language – several alternative textbooks and study tools shall be available for each subject. This provides the option to use textbooks and study tools written by Hungarian experts in Slovakia instead of using translated materials. Schools with Hungarian language instruction also have the possibility to use textbooks and study tools suitable for content restructuring.

Regarding the supplementary teaching material *National Minorities – Let’s Meet*, **see also Point 10.**

Basic and further training of teachers

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;

97. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.*

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

102. *The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify the tasks and role of the Advisory Council in monitoring minority language education, as required by the undertaking.*

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the part of comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice,

Under Act No. 382/2004 Coll. on Experts, Interpreters and Translators as amended, interpreters and translators are entered in a list of interpreters and translators kept by the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic. Interpreters and translators are entered in the list at their own request after they have met the qualification conditions under the Act. Under § 15, paragraph 1, of the Act cited above, it is possible, in court proceedings or proceedings before other public authority, to assign an interpreter or a translator who is not entered in the list, provided that they consent to such assignment and that there is no person for the relevant field or area entered in the list, or provided that a person entered in the list is not capable of performing the task, or provided that the performance of the task is associated with excessive difficulties or expenses. It is common practice to use university language departments for this purpose, such as the Department of Ruthenian Language and Culture at the University of Prešov, as the current list of interpreters and translators lacks an interpreter or translator into Ruthenian, Romani or Yiddish. Interpretation and translation is a liberal profession and the introduction of compulsory entry into the list of interpreters or of similar measures is not being considered at the moment. If civil or criminal proceedings require the assignment of an interpreter or a translator under the guaranteed rights, the court shall do so regardless of whether the interpreter or translator into the relevant language is entered in the list or not.

The numbers of interpreters and translators for individual minority or regional languages are stated in the table.

	Language	Number of interpreters entered	Number of translators entered
1	Hungarian	49	86
2	Ukrainian	15	31
3	German	54	267
4	Czech	4	16
5	Bulgarian	3	5
6	Croatian	1	15
7	Polish	10	33
8	Ruthenian	no linguists entered	no linguists entered
9	Roma	no linguists entered	no linguists entered

a) in criminal proceedings:

ii: to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or
iii: to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.

109. Bearing in mind a certain degree of practical use of Hungarian before courts in criminal proceedings, the Committee of Experts considers these undertakings partly fulfilled. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice. The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee in the legislation the right of the accused to use Hungarian in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in Hungarian, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

Criminal proceedings are governed by the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 301/2005 Coll.; hereinafter referred to as “CCP”), which makes no distinction between minority, regional or so-called foreign languages. If the accused does not understand the language in which their court proceedings are conducted, or does not speak the language, the court and law enforcement authorities are obliged to engage an interpreter (see § 28, paragraph 1).³ This is a general provision reflecting § 2, paragraph 20 CCP, according to which: „If the accused, their legal representative, a suspect, an injured party, a participant or witness declares that they do not speak the language in which their proceedings are conducted, they have the right to be provided with an interpreter.” It therefore applies to all languages, including minority ones, as the determining condition is that the accused does not speak the language in which their court proceedings are conducted. Moreover, § 28, paragraph 2, allows for engaging an interpreter (or a translator) in proceedings even if the accused declares that they understand the language, but during the course of the proceedings the authority performing the act finds that the person’s language skills are insufficient for them to duly exercise their rights in the language in which the proceedings are conducted. If there is no interpreter for the required language entered in the list, regardless of whether it is a regional, minority or other language, or if the matter cannot be postponed and the interpreters entered in the list cannot be reached, a law enforcement authority or the court shall provide an interpreter for the official language of the given person’s country of citizenship or residence, which they understand.⁴ The Code of Criminal Procedure also provides for cases (see § 28, paragraph 8) where an interpreter for a language which the accused understands cannot be provided. In such a case, unless fair trial cannot be guaranteed without an interpreter’s physical presence, interpretation can in justified cases be provided by means of technical devices used for video or audio transmission.

The absolute guarantee of the possibility to use a regional or minority language is included in the Charter as an alternative, and at the present time the Slovak Republic is not considering an amendment that guarantees interpreting to persons who fully and unreservedly understand the language of the proceedings. This would be a disproportionate financial

³ The provision of § 28 of the Code of Criminal Procedure contains new standards for interpreting and translation in compliance with Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the Right to Interpretation and Translation in Criminal Proceedings.

⁴ § 28, paragraph 3, of the Code of Criminal Procedure; this provision applies to the interpreter as appropriate.

burden for criminal proceedings and, in certain rare cases, a way to intentionally obstruct or delay proceedings.

A translator is engaged in proceedings in situations where it is necessary to translate a record of a testimony or other document in proceedings (see § 28, paragraph 4, first sentence, of CCP). The provision of § 28, paragraph 4, of CCP lists the documents for which translation into the language of the accused is compulsory. Moreover, § 28, paragraph 5, of CCP provides for the right of the accused to also request a translation of other documents in the proceedings, or such a translation may be requested by the authority conducting the proceedings, without a request from the accused, provided that this is necessary to duly exercise the rights of defence, to the extent determined by the authority conducting the proceedings. If the authority rejects the request, the accused has the right to appeal against the decision (file a complaint). The Code of Criminal Procedure provides for the possibility to interpret rather than translate the content of some of the documents, or its substantial portion, provided that this does not affect the fairness of the process (§ 28, paragraph 5, third sentence, of CCP). If a detained person or an arrested person declares that they do not understand the language of the proceedings or do not speak the language, an advice on their rights shall be translated. If a written translation is not available, the content of the advice shall be interpreted for them, although additionally, without undue delay, they shall be provided with a written translation.⁵ The court or a law enforcement authority shall translate any documents submitted by the accused for his proceedings (§ 28, paragraph 4, first sentence, of CCP).

The costs of engaging an interpreter and a translator are borne by the state and do not lead to additional expenses for the person concerned.⁶

b) in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii: to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

c) in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii: to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii: to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

112. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

As of 1 July 2016, court proceedings in civil and administrative matters are governed by three codes of procedure (the Civil Dispute Code, the Civil Non-Dispute Code and the Administrative Procedure Code).

⁵ § 28, paragraph 9, of the Code of Criminal Procedure

⁶ § 553, paragraph 1, of the Code of Criminal Procedure

In its § 155, the Civil Dispute Code (Act No. 160/2015 Coll.; hereinafter referred to as “CDC”) explicitly provides for the right to act in one’s own language. Under this provision applying to all civil dispute and non-dispute proceedings, everyone has the right to act before the court in their mother tongue or a language they understand. It also imposes upon the court the statutory obligation to provide equal opportunities for parties to exercise their rights, and the obligation to engage an interpreter, having regard to the nature and the circumstances of the matter (§ 155, paragraph 1, third sentence). CDC also explicitly provides that “*Costs associated with the fact that a party acts in its mother tongue or a language it can understand are borne by the state*”.

In its introductory provisions (§ 2, paragraph 1), the Civil Non-Dispute Code (Act No. 161/2015 Coll.) refers to the application of the provisions of CDC in cases where it itself does not provide otherwise. Due to the fact that this regulation does not contain provisions for the right to act in one’s own language, the provisions of CDC (§ 155) shall also be applied in non-dispute proceedings to their full extent.

In its § 53 and 54, the Administrative Procedure Code (Act No. 162/2015 Coll.) provides for the principle of equality of participants in proceedings and for the right to act in one’s own language. “*Participants in proceedings have equal rights and obligations in proceedings before the administrative court.*” The provision of § 54 mirrors the provision contained in § 155 CDC, i.e. the right of every person to act before the administrative court in their mother tongue or a language they understand; the obligation to provide equal opportunities for participants in proceedings to exercise their rights; engaging an interpreter, having regard to the nature and the circumstances of the matter, and the bearing of costs associated with the fact that a participant acts in their mother tongue or a language they can understand by the state.

The above procedural provisions clearly imply the right of every person to act in their mother tongue, or a language they understand, even if it is not their mother tongue. These provisions by no means preclude the right of a minority to use their language in proceedings, and hence they also apply to minority or regional languages. Interpreting or translation costs are borne by the state, i.e. do not lead to additional expenses for the person concerned.

Decree No. 543/2005 Coll. of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic on the Administration and Office Code for District Courts, Regional Courts, the Special Court and Military Courts (hereinafter referred to as the “Decree”) contains more detailed legislation for the process of engaging an interpreter or a translator (§ 51). The court shall engage an interpreter as necessary. The possibility to provide interpreting by means of an assistant (in all types of proceedings), or by means of the presiding judge or members of the judicial panel (except in criminal proceedings), is also provided for.

In the monitored period, the legislation for the process of engaging an interpreter (§ 51, paragraph 5, of the Decree) contained a restriction whereby an interpreter was engaged only after a participant who had submitted a document in a language other than Slovak or Czech failed to provide its translation at the court’s request. Although the latest amendment built on the original wording of CDC, the wording has been amended and altered so as to reflect the requirements that translation and interpretation costs be covered by the state. The latest amendment was introduced by Act No. 87/2017 Coll., supplementing Act. No. 160/2015 Coll. of the Civil Dispute Code, effective as of 1 May 2017. The amendment to the Decree reflecting the requirements of the new legislation, i.e. the text of the Decree no longer

contains the condition that the court shall arrange a translation only after a participant fails to provide a translation (of a document he has submitted) at the court's request within a specified period, was adopted on 16 June 2017 and entered into force on 1 July 2017. The full title and number of the decree introducing this amendment is: Decree No. 171/2017 Coll. of the MJSR, amending and supplementing Decree No. 543/2005 Coll. of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic on the Administration and Office Code for District Courts, Regional Courts, the Special Court and Military Courts as amended.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make available in the regional or minority languages the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of these languages, unless they are otherwise provided.

115. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled. It requests the Slovak authorities to provide information on how the amendments to the most important national legal texts are made available in Hungarian.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary continuously monitors the availability of the Slovak Republic's key legal regulations and of official specimen forms translated into national minority languages. It also established cooperation with the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia and with the Section of Editorial Activities of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic regarding the fulfilment of the operational objective of the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period aimed at improving the conditions of the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice, including arrangements to provide translated key legal regulations (of the Slovak Republic) and official specimen forms, to ensure unified technical terminology and to publish methodological guidance for local governments, municipal authorities and legal entities founded by municipal authorities on the application of the legal regulations related to the use of languages of national minorities.⁷

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:

a)

ii to ensure that such of their officers as are in contact with the public use the regional or minority languages in their relations with persons applying to them in these languages

123. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to ensure that their officers who are in contact with the public use Hungarian in their relations with persons applying to them in Hungarian, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

⁷ See the first activity of the operational objective 4 of the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period.

The Hungarian language is commonly used alongside the state language in a number of Slovakia's districts in linguistically mixed areas with Hungarian minority population. This is also true of government authorities and local authorities.

The town of Senec is among the municipalities where the citizens of the Slovak republic belonging to a national minority represent more than 20% of the municipal population. The District Office in Senec was not approached with any requests from citizens for communication in a national minority language in the monitored period. The district Office informs its clients about the possibility to communicate in a national minority language on its website.

The District Office in Dunajská Streda has 84 employees, with 79 being able to communicate with clients in a national minority language, i.e. Hungarian. It is common for the District Office clients to use their minority language rights in oral communication in Hungarian. No requests for decisions or other documents in a national minority language were recorded in the monitored period.

The town of Galanta is among the municipalities where the citizens of the Slovak republic belonging to a national minority represent more than 20% of the municipal population. The District Office in Galanta informs about the possibility to use a minority language on its official bulletin board, listing the names of employees who are authorised to interpret into a minority language at a client's request. In the 2016–2017 period, 14 clients used their right to communicate in a national minority language, mostly at the general internal administration section. After Act. No. 184/1999 Coll. came into effect; the District Office did not receive any reports of infringements of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. from natural persons or legal entities. The District Office recorded one submission in a national minority language in the monitored period.

The District Office in Levice, as a local government authority, does not apply Act No. 184/1999 Coll. due to the fact that the proportion of citizens belonging to a national minority does not reach the statutory percentage. The general internal administration section of the District Office in Levice has two permanent offices set up within its infringements unit, located in the towns of Šahy and Želiezovce. Both permanent offices provide information on the possibility to use a national minority language. Persons belonging to a national minority have not exercised their right implied in the provision of § 2, paragraph 3, of Act No. 184/1999 Coll., i.e. the right to use a minority language in written communication with a public administration authority at either of the two permanent offices. There was no decision or other document issued in a national minority language in the monitored period. The District Office in Levice has two client centres in the towns of Šahy and Želiezovce capable of providing communication in a national minority language.

In accordance with Act. No. 184/1999 Coll., the District Office in Nové Zámky communicates with citizens in a national minority language through a person employed to handle infringements in a national minority language if necessary, who has a command of a national minority language in terms of both speaking and writing. The bilingual official bulletin board of the District Office provides a list of employees speaking a national minority language. The District Office in Nové Zámky did not issue a decision or other document in a national minority language in the monitored period.

The District Office in Šaľa dedicates due attention to the implementation of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. in connection with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The District Office website provides information in both Slovak and Hungarian about the possibility to use a national minority language in official communication. It is common for the District Office employees speaking Hungarian to engage in official communication with citizens from the Hungarian national minority, who also have information available in a national minority language (e.g. information on the conditions of exercising their right to vote).

The District Office in Rožňava informs about the possibility to use a national minority language on its official bulletin board located in the District Office building. There was no request for the use of a national minority language recorded in the administrative area of the District Office in Rožňava in the monitored period, nor was there a decision or other document issued in a national minority language.

The District Office in Michalovce has an office set up in the town of Veľké Kapušany with a general internal administration section and a cadastral section. The general internal administration section has one employee at its unit for handling infringements who can speak Hungarian and communicates in this national minority language as necessary. The cadastral section has six employees who speak Hungarian and can use the Hungarian language in official communication during personal contact with clients as necessary. The District Office informs about the possibility to use a national minority language in official communication on its bulletin board, and makes public announcements with information in a national minority language on both its bulletin board and its website. The District Office did not receive any reports of infringements of Act. No. 184/1999 Coll. and there was no decision or other document issued in a minority language in the monitored period.

The District Office in Rimavská Sobota provides information on its official bulletin boards in a national minority language – Hungarian. If necessary, the District Office ensures that office staff who communicate with the public in person use a national minority language, provides national minority language interpreting in proceedings, and makes it possible for a national minority language to be used in making applications and issuing responses to applications. The District Office uses a national minority language during meetings with municipal mayors. Each section of the District Office has an employee speaking a national minority language. The District Office in Rimavská Sobota did not issue any decisions or other documents in a national minority language in the monitored period.

The District Office in Trebišov has an office set up in the town of Kráľovský Chlmec with a general internal administration section and a cadastral section. The general internal administration section has two employees at its unit for handling infringements who can speak a national minority language and communicate a national minority language as necessary. The cadastral section has ten employees who speak Hungarian and can use the Hungarian language in official face-to-face communication with clients as necessary. The District Office did not receive any reports of infringements of Act. No. 184/1999 Coll. and there was no decision or other document issued in a minority language in the monitored period.

Regarding the field of facilitating the possibility to use a national minority language in official communication, following the information regarding Point 3 regarding the Language Report, we present, in the following paragraphs, more detailed information on the results of a

questionnaire survey conducted for the Language Report. 512 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority were approached as part of the survey, with 486 returning a completed questionnaire. The survey also focused on determining the number of municipality employees with a command of a national minority language in terms of both speaking and writing. 5,074 (87%) employees of the total 5,843 employees in municipalities with the Hungarian national minority had a command Hungarian (73% in terms of speaking and writing and 14% in terms of speaking).

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., the municipalities specified in this act are obliged to facilitate the use of a minority language, and it is up to them how they will do so. 469 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority (97%) facilitate the exercise of the right to use a national minority language in oral and written communication through their own employees, 4 municipalities do so through interpreting and translation services, and 5 municipalities facilitate this possibility by other means.

Under § 2, paragraph 3, of Act No. 184/1999 Coll., a public administration can set its own time frame for handling matters in a national minority language. This must involve regular office hours during which a public administration authority facilitates the possibility of oral and written communication for the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority. The availability of such office hours should correspond to the actual requirements of the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority. These persons must also be informed of the office hours during which they can communicate with the given public administration authority in a national minority language. A public administration authority may also process documents submitted in a minority language outside its specified office hours. The results of the survey showed that 37 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority had set such a time frame.

Municipalities' obligations with respect to the use of languages of national minorities in official communication also include the obligation to publicise information about the possibility to use a national minority language in official oral and written communication in a visible place. The share of municipalities complying with this obligation was 49%. See the Language Report for more detailed information:

http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/data/files/6922_report-on-the-use-of-national-minority-languages-in-the-territory-of-the-slovak-republic-for-the-period-2015-2016.pdf .

Based on the information obtained in the survey, specific shortcomings were identified in the application practice of the use of a national minority language in the individual municipalities with the Hungarian national minority. The Office of the Plenipotentiary is currently reviewing the fulfilment of the above requirements by the municipalities concerned. Specific shortcomings were also identified in the application practice of the use of a national minority language on the part of government authorities. Detailed information, structured according to individual entities, is included in chapter 3.3.3 of the Language Report.

In order to remedy the identified shortcomings, the Plenipotentiary held bilateral talks with the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, the Financial Directorate of the Slovak Republic, the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing and the Presidium of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic.

The Plenipotentiary initiated measures in the field of language education of state employees in line with the Government Manifesto, in which the government undertook, based on an analysis of ethnically diverse areas, to create conditions for aligning actual practice with the law on the use of languages of national minorities. The original legislation did not explicitly include the possibility of education for state employees focused on improving their command of minority languages. Decree No. 126/2017 Coll. of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, which lays down the details of education for state employees, provides, among other things, that language competence education focuses on maintaining and improving the level of language skills of employees providing civil services in municipalities specified in a specific regulation. Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll., introducing the list of municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority represent at least 20% of the municipal population, is understood as the specific regulation for the purposes of the Decree.

Education of employees of local governments, municipal authorities and of legal entities founded by municipal authorities in the field of the rights and obligations arising from Act No. 184/1999 Coll. is also provided for by Government Resolution No. 15 of 11 January 2017 whereby the Slovak Government approved the Language Report and instructed the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic and the Plenipotentiary, in Task B.3, to produce an analysis in cooperation with ZMOS aimed at identifying the needs in the field of systematic education of these employees.

See also the common information in Point 5.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

a) the use of regional or minority languages within the framework of the regional or local authority.

129. In light of the existing practice, although limited, the Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is partly fulfilled for local authorities and not fulfilled for regional authorities. The Committee of Experts encourages the Slovak authorities to take measures to strengthen the use of Hungarian in the framework of local and regional authorities.

Act No. 184/1999 Coll. also facilitates the use of a national minority language in the official agenda (especially proceedings, resolutions, statistics, records, balances, information intended for the public and the agenda of churches and religious communities, except the registry office). The results of the survey showed that 21 municipalities (4%) used the Hungarian national minority language in the official agenda in addition to the state language, and 40 municipalities (8%) partially used the Hungarian national minority language in addition to the state language. These municipalities followed the official agenda mainly in the fields of civil registry, statistics, internal regulations and municipal council administration (resolutions, minutes and invitations).

Under Act No. 184/1999 Coll., municipalities can also maintain their registers in a national minority language. Municipalities with the Hungarian national minority used this opportunity as follows: 154 municipalities (32%) maintained their registers in both the state language and a national minority language and 39 municipalities (8%) partially maintained their registers in a national minority language in addition to the state language.

The survey also focused on the use of national minority languages in the municipal police, where a national minority language may be used in addition to the state language if those present so agree. Recent findings show that the Hungarian language was used in service communication in 30 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority in addition to the state language (the total number of municipalities with the Hungarian national minority which have the municipal police is 40). 82% of municipal police officers in these municipalities had a command of the Hungarian language in terms of speaking and 53% in terms of both speaking and writing.

b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages.

134. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled at local level and not fulfilled at regional level.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that Hungarian-speakers may submit oral or written applications in Hungarian to local and regional authorities wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The municipalities specified by the law are obliged to provide any official forms issued to citizens within the scope of their competence bilingually upon request. The results of the survey show that 86 municipalities (18%) with the Hungarian national minority provided all forms bilingually and 108 municipalities (22%) provided some of their forms bilingually. Bilingual forms were provided mainly by registry offices, civil registry offices, in the construction industry, in the field of local taxes and fees, and in the field of social affairs. Some municipalities provided bilingual forms also during elections.

Requests for issuing bilingual public documents (permits, authorisations, acknowledgements, statements and declarations) were delivered to 42 municipalities (9%) with the Hungarian national minority. 434 such requests were submitted in 2015, of which 297 were for various acknowledgements, 112 were for declarations, 16 were for permits and 9 were for statements. 265 such requests were submitted before 1 July 2016, of which 141 were for acknowledgements, 115 were for declarations, 7 were for permits and two were for statements. 33 municipalities issued bilingual public documents to citizens, which is 7% of the total number of municipalities that returned completed questionnaires. Requests for issuing bilingual birth certificates, marriage and death certificates were received in 112 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority, which is 23% of the total number. Municipalities with the Hungarian national minority issued 826 birth certificates, 308 marriage certificates and 214 death certificates in 2015, and 511 birth certificates, 219 marriage certificates and 146 death certificates before 1 July 2016.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., a decision of a public administration authority in an administrative procedure is, in addition to the state language, issued in a

national minority language either upon request, or if a procedure was initiated by a submission in a national minority language. 7 municipalities had this situation due to receiving submissions initiating administrative procedures in a national minority language, and 5 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority received requests for issuing bilingual decisions.

c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

137. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking in Article 10.1.c not fulfilled and the undertaking in Article 10.1. d partly fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to allow and encourage the publication by local and regional authorities of their official documents also in Hungarian, where there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

General public information provided inside municipal/town mayors' buildings or inside municipal/city councils' buildings was stated in both the state language and in a national minority language in 116 municipalities (24%) with the Hungarian national minority. 169 municipalities (35%) stated this information in the state language and partially in a national minority language.

A total of 5 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority received requests for information about generally binding legal regulations in a national minority language in addition to the state language. 3 municipalities received 8 such requests in 2015, and one municipality received 4 such requests before 1 July 2016. All 5 municipalities provided the requested information about generally binding legal regulations in a national minority language in addition to the state language. 5 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority provided information about generally binding legal regulations in a national minority language in addition to the state language.

6 municipalities (1%) with the Hungarian national minority issued and publicised municipal generally binding legal regulations in both the state language and in a national minority language. 26 municipalities (5 %) issued these regulations in the state language and partially in a national minority language.

f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State.

140. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the right to use Hungarian in debates of municipal assemblies is guaranteed where there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., a municipal councillor has a right to use a national minority language during municipal council meetings. The results of the survey showed that there were 311 municipalities (64%) with the Hungarian national minority where

municipal councillors used the national minority language during municipal council meetings, and 98 municipalities (20%) where municipal councillors used the state language and partially the national minority language. There were 306 municipalities (63%) with the Hungarian minority where mayors used the national minority language during municipal council meetings. There were 91 municipalities (19 %) where mayors partially used the national minority language in addition to the state language.

Municipal council meetings can also be held in a national minority language if those present so agree. There were 99 municipalities (20%) with the Hungarian national minority where council meetings were held in a national minority language, 246 municipalities (51%) where council meetings were held in both the state language and in a national minority language, and 127 municipalities (26%) with the Hungarian national minority where council meeting were held in the state language.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., other participants in a municipal council meeting may use a national minority language if all municipal councillors present at the meeting and the municipal mayor so agree, and interpreting shall be arranged by the municipality. The results of the survey showed that 20 municipalities (4%) with the Hungarian national minority provided interpreting by means of interpreting services, and 288 municipalities (59%) did so by other means, particularly by means of their municipal office employees.

The language in which materials for municipal council meetings are prepared also plays an important role in this field. In 26 municipalities (5%) with the Hungarian national minority, these materials were prepared in a national minority language. In 104 municipalities (21 %), these materials were prepared in the state language and partially in a national minority language.

g) the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

147. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to encourage the use of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Hungarian within the meaning of the present undertaking, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

Data collected in municipalities with the Hungarian national minority showed that 447 municipalities (92%) complied with the obligation to use national minority language place names on traffic signs marking the beginning and the end of municipalities, and that 13 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority partially complied with the obligation.

450 municipalities (93%) with the Hungarian national minority used municipality place names in both the state language and the given national minority language in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 16 (3%) municipalities failed to use place names in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll. 64 municipalities with the Hungarian national minority used national minority language place names under place names in the state language on train station or bus station signs, and 32 do so partially.

We should note in this respect that an initiative by the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic ended the practice of using national minority language place names on train station signs in the relevant municipalities, in line with one of the priorities of the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the 2016–2020 period. This applies to 55 train stations and this measure will be followed by further legislation designed to align the act on the use of national minority languages with the act on railways, as it is anticipated in the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

440 municipalities (91%) complied with the obligation to use a national minority language on signs marking public authority buildings. We may state, following the results of the previous survey that the number of municipalities using place names in accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll. has increased.

362 municipalities (74%) with the Hungarian minority used municipality place names on public authority buildings in a minority language alongside the state language, and 43 municipalities (9%) partially used minority language municipality place names on public authority buildings.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., the municipalities specified by the law may use a national minority language on street signs and other local geographical signs in their area. Data collected in the survey showed that bilingual street signs were used in 98 municipalities (20%) with the Hungarian national minority. At the same time, 37 municipalities (8%) used street signs in the state language. It is also important to note that street signs are not stipulated for all municipalities, so only municipalities where a stipulation applies were expected to answer the corresponding survey question.

As for local geographical signs, 30 municipalities (6%) with the Hungarian national minority used a national minority language on local geographical signs. 28 municipalities (6%) with the Hungarian national minority used the state language on local geographical signs.

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request and receive a reply in these languages; or

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| <p>150. <i>The Committee of Experts reiterates that this undertaking concerns public services such as railways, urban transport, electricity, water and gas, cleaning and sanitation, telephone services, refuse collection and disposal, sporting facilities or entertainment venues. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the use of Hungarian in practice in communication with such public services.</i></p> <p>151. <i>The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is partly fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to enable Hungarian-speakers to submit requests</i></p> |
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in Hungarian to public services wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

The results of the survey showed that 106 municipalities (22%) with the Hungarian national minority recorded written submissions from citizens in a national minority language in the monitored period. These were mainly requests and complaints concerning flats, subsidies, social affairs, enquiries about work opportunities in the municipality area, and conflicts between neighbours.

Legal entities founded by municipalities were also approached in the survey. The results of the survey showed that these legal entities did not receive any requests for information about generally binding legal regulations in a national minority language in addition to the state language. Nonetheless, one of these municipality-founded legal entities did provide information about generally binding legal regulations in a national minority language in addition to the state language. Act No. 211/2000 Coll. on Free Access to Information imposes an obligation upon legal entities with statutory authority to make decisions about the rights and obligations of natural persons or legal entities in the field of public administration to publicise important information in the municipalities specified by the law in a national minority language. This information was publicised by 9 municipality-founded legal entities (28%) on official bulletin boards and on the legal entities' websites. 7 municipality-founded legal entities (22%) publicised important information in the state language and partially in a national minority language.

See also the information regarding Point 123.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

a) translation or interpretation as may be required;

152. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered the undertaking partly fulfilled.

153. Since there have been no changes in the monitoring period and only municipalities in the List have the duty to "create conditions" for the use of minority languages, the Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is partly fulfilled.

See also the information in Point 123.

c) compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.

156. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples of cases where civil servants speaking Hungarian have been appointed, upon request, in the territory where this language is used.

See also the information in Points 123, 129, 134, 137, 140, 147.

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media,

a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages.

161. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled regarding radio and partly fulfilled regarding television.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the broadcasting time and the frequency of the time-slots allocated to the Hungarian language on public television.

In 2015, the public broadcaster RTVS broadcast 85 hours of content in the Hungarian language, reaching 105 hours in 2016. However, the figures include premieres and repeats. Television broadcasting for national minorities is showing signs of growth, as production of new programmes for national minorities has increased from 90 hours a year in 2010 to 114 hours a year in 2015 (from 59 to 66 hours in Hungarian), with the volume of production in the Hungarian language being the largest. The volume of production in Hungarian was 15% larger in the 2012–2015 period compared to the previous 2 years. At the present time, as a growing number of viewers prefer watching television programmes via streaming services or other on-demand audiovisual media services, using not just their television sets but also devices such as computers or mobile phones, figures referring to how many hours of content is broadcast (premieres and repeats) are losing significance, while the volume of production of new programmes, which can be watched repeatedly at any time, is becoming a primary indicator.

In 2015, national minority broadcasting made up 3% of all broadcasting time on Dvojka, and as much as 7–10% in the case of news and current affairs programmes, which proves that performing its public information duty is a key priority for RTVS. The overall reduction in national minority broadcasting seen in 2015, and to some extent in 2016, was due to major sporting and anniversary events. Increasing RTVS's budget and securing more broadcasting time is crucial for increasing the share of national minority broadcasting.

Broadcasting Hungarian programme formats faces the problem of shifting time slots and cancellations, but RTVS also encounters this problem with other genres. The fact that RTVS performs statutory duties means that public service programmes often conflict with each other, so it is necessary, albeit difficult, to find a compromise and include all genres stipulated by the law in the TV schedule.

See also the information in Point 9.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

164. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in Hungarian on private radio stations on a regular basis.

In 2017, the Fund was established by law. This transparent and efficient instrument for financing the culture of national minorities will also facilitate regular radio broadcasting in the Hungarian language or other minority languages.

See the information in Point 10.

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

169. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. The Committee of Experts encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in Hungarian on private television stations on a regular basis, for example by covering the costs of subtitling in Slovak.

According to the Report on the State of Broadcasting in 2015, there were 18 television broadcasters, including those broadcasting in the Hungarian language. There were 17 such broadcasters in 2016.

As for subtitling, we wish to stress that public funding available for subtitling programmes in national minority languages is also received by the public broadcaster to produce subtitles for national minority television broadcasting.

Establishing the Fund has also created opportunities for subtitling audiovisual works and television programmes in national minority languages, as promoting the identification and exploration of common cultural values and traditions and promoting the development of the use of national minority languages is among the areas supported by the Fund.

In connection with the practical application of Act No. 373/2013 Coll., amending and supplementing Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission and on amending Act. No. 195/2000 Coll. as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Broadcasting and Retransmission Act”), which allowed the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission to grant licences for regional broadcasting or local broadcasting exclusively in one or more official languages of the European Union other than the state language of the Slovak Republic, the MCSR requested information from the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission as to how many broadcasting licence applications had been submitted after the effective date of the Act (1 January 2014), in what languages, and how many licences had been granted. The Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission stated that it did not have a record of any such licence applications. Within that period, however, it granted two licences for countrywide broadcasting exclusively in a language other than the state language of the Slovak Republic: the first one was a licence granted to Golf Zone Slovakia, s.r.o. by decision No. TD/175/2016 of 5 September 2016 for the GOLF CHANNEL POLSKA broadcasting service in Polish and English. The second one was a licence granted to KABEL TELEKOM,

s.r.o. by decision No. TD/176/2016 of 11 October 2016 for the RÉGIO TV broadcasting service in Hungarian. The claim that “the authorities interpret this regulation as applying only to foreign broadcasters” is not true. In accordance with the Broadcasting and Retransmission Act, a legal entity with a registered seat abroad can be a licence applicant if it has an organisational unit in the Slovak Republic. Further, the Act does not state that a licence for broadcasting in one or more official languages of the European Union other than the state language of the Slovak Republic can only be granted to a legal entity with a registered seat abroad.

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages

173. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to further facilitate the production and distribution of audiovisual works in Hungarian.

The Audiovisual Fund (hereinafter referred to as “AVF”), within programme 2 “distribution and other presentation of audiovisual works for the public” (includes sub-programme No. 2.1 “distribution of audiovisual works” and sub-programme No. 2.2 “public cultural events featuring audiovisual works in the Slovak Republic”), also promotes the production of versions other than Slovak and the production of foreign audiovisual works. Subtitling is considered a justifiable budget item in projects submitted as part of funding applications. Subtitling, featured on DCP or DVD media, is then used for presenting Slovak audiovisual works abroad (or in Slovakia in minority languages), or for distributing foreign audiovisual works in the Slovak Republic. AVF, however, does not keep any separate statistical records that would keep track of the amount of funding for subtitling. The framework budget includes a breakdown of the requested amount into individual items, and, if approved, a breakdown of the funding to be provided. So it is possible to determine the amount of funding approved for the “dubbing and subtitling” item on the basis of individual projects. However, there is no aggregated database that would provide an overview of the total support granted to this budget item (and it is not possible at all to determine the amount of the support granted to the subtitling). The structure of AVF’s support activities is reviewed and adjusted according to current needs on an annual basis.

Further, we should also stress that AVF is not a public support mechanism specifically created to promote the culture of national minorities in the Slovak Republic. A separate subsidy programme has been set up for this purpose within the scope of competence of the Office of the Plenipotentiary, i.e. to promote the culture of national minorities, whose activities will be taken over by the Fund mentioned above.

We should also point out in connection with the support for audiovisual works that AVF does not keep special records that would monitor whether supported audiovisual works are produced in regional or minority languages. Therefore, it is not possible to specify whether supported audiovisual works are produced in regional or minority languages. Generally speaking, the support is intended primarily for professional production of Slovak audiovisual works, which does not exclude the possibility that some of these works, due to their theme or setting, will contain parts in some languages of the minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

Moreover, it is objectively impossible to produce statistical records with relevant information for the purposes of evaluating the implementation of the Charter. For example,

AVF, among other projects, supported films with minor involvement of a Slovak co-producer, which are in the language of the major producer (Poland or Hungary), but are primarily supported as works in the majority language in Poland or Hungary, not as “minority language” works in Slovakia.

Further, it is often the case that an audiovisual work is not primarily filmed in a minority language, but may contain a number of such scenes to reinforce the desired image of the depicted character or setting. For example, the characters in Gyorgyi Kristóf’s latest film “OUT” don’t speak just in Slovak, but also in Russian, Hungarian and Lithuanian. But it cannot be said that the work “was produced” in one of these languages. This phenomenon is rather common in European co-productions.

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages;

176. *Since newspapers in Hungarian receive support, the Committee of Experts maintains its conclusion that the undertaking is fulfilled at present.*

On 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MCSR comprised 45 titles of periodicals published in the Hungarian language. In addition, on 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals comprised 75 titles of periodicals published in the Slovak and Hungarian language. As for periodicity, there is a daily periodical published for members of the Hungarian minority (the ÚJ Szó daily), then the Új Nő monthly and the Vasárnap weekly. Besides these, 5 weekly, one fortnightly and 18 monthly periodicals for members of the Hungarian nationality are registered at the MCSR.

Common information regarding periodicals

The publishing of periodicals in a language of national minorities or ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic is not restricted. It is necessary to point out (as we did in the past) in connection with periodical publications that their existence does not rely exclusively on the system of financial support, rather, it depends mainly on the level of demand within the given minority and on its needs. In the past, newspapers published in regional or minority languages provided a rare source of information about the life of the respective communities, available in their own language. The rapid spread of information technology and digital media, especially the internet, has made it possible to interactively search and distribute information in virtually any language. As a result of this technological development, demand for print media in both the state language and national minority languages has declined. This striking trend is gaining ever greater weight. On the other hand, if demand for periodical publications exists, the government is prepared to deliver a mechanism to support it. The task of supporting the publishing of periodicals has been transferred to the Fund.

See the common information in Point 10 regarding the Fund.

f)

i to cover the additional costs of those media which use regional or minority languages, wherever the law provides for financial assistance in general for the media;

179. In light of the information presented under Article 11.1.c ii above, the Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify whether and how the additional costs of broadcasting media in Hungarian, such as those for subtitling, translation or re-transmission, could be covered by the authorities.

The entities concerned will be able to apply for reimbursement of costs by submitting an application for support from the newly-established Fund.

See the information in Point 10 regarding the Fund.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

183. The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of the minority languages speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.

The system of electing members of the RTVS Council, as it is currently set up, provides sufficient guarantees that the interests of national minorities are represented in this body. Nominations of candidates to be elected as RTVS Council members are submitted to the National Council of the Slovak Republic by legal entities operating in the audiovisual industry, media, culture, business, law, science, education, development and protection of spiritual values, human rights and environmental and health protection, representing the interests of national minorities or ethnic groups, other minorities, registered churches and religious communities. The current RTVS Council includes at least two members of national minorities. The Council consists of nine members elected and removed by the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Nominations for the members of the Council can be submitted to the National Council of the Slovak Republic by members of the Parliament, professional institutions and civic associations operating in the field of audio-visual affairs, the mass media, culture, science, education, sport, registered churches and religious societies and civic associations of citizens with disabilities. Just like in the case of the RTVS, the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission is also set up so that it allows members of national minorities to be represented. This fact is also demonstrated in actual practice, as the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission currently includes an expert on minority broadcasting, who is a member of a national minority.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 2

In respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

187. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.

Even though the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts states that this undertaking is fulfilled, the Slovak Republic provides further supplementary information regarding Article 12, paragraph 2:

The Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava (MHCS), which belongs to the organisational structure of SNM, is a specialised scientific-research, documentation and methodological museum institution that systematically examines the history and development of the material and spiritual culture of Hungarians in Slovakia. MHCS includes the following branches: Kálmán Mikszáth Memorial House in Sklabiná (Sklabiná No. 188) and Imre Madách Manor House in Dolná Strehová.

The University Library in Bratislava (hereinafter referred to as “ULB”) organised an active dialogue between two neighbouring countries in 2016, presenting an exhibition called *From Both Sides of the Danube/Dunán innen, Dunán túl – Slovak-Hungarian and Hungarian-Slovak Dialogues in Translation Literature/Dunán innen, Dunán túl Szlovák-magyar és magyar-szlovák párbeszéd a fordításirodalomban* (5 August – 25 August 2016) under the auspices of the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The exhibition premiered at the National Széchenyi Library, on the occasion of the Slovak Republic being the honorary host of the 23rd International Book festival in Budapest, 15 – 30 April 2016. The slogan of Slovakia’s hosting was *Good Books Make Good Neighbours*. The exhibition was organised by the Centre for Information on Literature, ULB, the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava and the National Széchenyi Library in Budapest. The author of the presentation concept of the Budapest exhibition was the translator and educator Ildikó Hizsnyai-Tóthová, who is based at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava. The exhibition was also open in the impressive interior of ULB exhibition hall for Slovak and international visitors. The exhibition presented a selection of Slovak-Hungarian and Hungarian-Slovak translation literature, and served as a testimony to multicultural collaboration of authors from both sides of the Danube. The exhibition included artistic portraits of Slovak writers and translators by the prominent photographer Lucie Gardin.

In extending its repository, ULB continuously acquires selected translation works from a national minority language into Slovak in line with the profile of the library’s repository. ULB provides access to unique databases of periodicals and information sources (biographical and bibliographical databases) in an electronic form. Notable databases include Library Press Display, providing online access to more than 6,200 periodical titles from 96 countries in 54 languages. All newspaper titles are published online in their original graphical form and format, including images, immediately after their publication in their country of origin. The range of titles and countries on offer continues to expand. Titles available in minority languages cover Hungarian, Czech, German and Ukrainian (19 titles in Hungarian, 11 titles in Czech, more than 50 titles in Ukrainian, more than 60 titles in German, and titles in other languages). Access is provided to full texts with a 60-day archive, whether at the library premise or via remote access. The equally remarkable Central and Eastern European Online Library with access to full texts is a platform for access to specialist and scientific journals in a digital form from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe focused on humanities and social sciences (1,440 titles including more than 40 in Czech, 36 in Hungarian, and in other languages). In addition to access at ULB premises, access for registered users is also provided via remote access: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-pramene/zoznam-pramene/>. Access is also made available to bibliographies – records of literary production in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Poland and in other European countries. References

to e-books and databases in minority languages are available via this link: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-kniznica/elektronicke-kniznice/e-knihy/>.

The State Scientific Library in Košice organised the following exhibitions: A Kassai Magyar Színháztársulat 200 éve/200 Years of the Hungarian Theatre Scene in Košice (the exhibition was held in Slovak and Hungarian); 200 Years of the Hungarian Theatre Scene in Košice (bilingual exhibition). Presentations: Ötvös, Anna: Márai Sándor kamaszévei barátjának, Mihályi Ödönnek írt levelei tükrében/The Bachelor Years of Sándor Márai Viewed through His Letters to His Friend Ödön Mihályi; Blašková, Eleonóra. Kassai folyóirat Színházi Ujság 1911–1923: Košice's Színházi Ujság Weekly 1911–1923 (presentation given as part of the 48th Kazinczy Days event in Košice); Kazinczy napok: the Scientific Symposium on the Hungarian Theatre Scene in Slovakia. Košice; Publication work: Blašková, Eleonóra. Éltre keltett történelem (Revived History). In Kassai Figyelő. Vol. 14, No. 6 (2016), p. 14–15.; Blašková, Eleonóra. Zenei remiszncenciák vagy Mi köti össze Vitéz Antal és Vitéz Sándor kassai könyvkereskedőket Bárdossy Ilona és Basilides Mária budapesti primadonnákkal (do zborníka Széphalom 2017). The library also arranged interviews with the media (about Sándor Márai) and has established long-term cooperation with these institutions: The National Archives of Hungary in Budapest, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest, the Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest, the Ferenc Kazinczy Society in Sátoraljaújhely, the Košice Civil Club, etc.

The Slovak National Library supports members of national minorities mainly in the fields of promoting, exhibiting and lending the literature published by national minorities. In 2016, there were 9 titles of national minority periodicals available in its universal study room (1 Russian, 1 Polish, 4 Hungarian, 1 Croatian and 1 title of the Ukrainian national minority). The organisation registers 30 periodical titles of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and 147 national minority monographs published in 2016.

Every year, the Matej Hrebenda Slovak Library for the Blind in Levoča strives to enrich its repository of books with titles in national minority languages. Its repository of books also includes 149 audio documents in the Hungarian language. The library cooperates (on the basis of contracts on the provision of library-information services for the blind, partially-sighted and persons with other disabilities) with the public libraries in Slovakia where work facilities for the blind have been set up. It regularly supplies libraries with audio documents in the form of circulation packs. Its special circulation packs are prepared in Hungarian, which it supplies to public libraries in Levice, Galanta and Nové Zámky.

Members of national minorities participate in competitions, public displays of casual art work, seminars and creative workshops held by the National Centre of Culture and Further Education, where they get the opportunity to work with those from the majority population to further develop their skills, while competitions and public display events give them an opportunity to reap the rewards of their effort and to present their cultural identity through public performances. For example, in 2016, representatives of national minorities attended the Summer Course for Choirmasters, an educational event in choir singing, organised by the Rimavská Sobota cultural centre between 6 and 11 July 2016 in cooperation with NOC. This was a series of training courses for leaders of folklore ensembles (leaders of Ruthenian and Hungarian folk ensembles), where representatives of the Romani and Ruthenian minorities attended events organised within the Traditional Culture Days project (Malí tanečníci, Muzičky, Primášikovia). Every year, the Východná Folklore Festival presents top amateur and professional folklore ensembles from Slovakia and abroad. Performances by national minority folklore ensembles are an essential part of the festival.

Folklore ensembles representing national minority cultures (Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian) also took part in the Little Wheel 2016 folklore festival, where the NOC cooperates at the technical level. The MCSEER has assigned the NOC the task of announcing the annual competitions and public displays of casual art work, in which members of all national minorities in the Slovak Republic participate. In 2016, these included the national qualification competition and public displays of solo folk dancers called “Šaffova ostroha”, the national qualification competition and public displays of folk music bands, folk vocalist bands and solo vocalists and instrumentalists called “Stretnutie s piesňou”, the national qualification competition and public displays of children’s folk music bands, folk vocalist bands and solo vocalists and instrumentalists called “Vidiečanova Habovka”, then CINEAMA (amateur films contest), AMFO (amateur photography contest) and “Mládež spieva” (a public display of children’s folk music bands).

The Slovak Central Observatory in Hurbanovo was visited by around 2,500 pupils from primary and secondary schools with Hungarian language instruction (around 30% excursions are in the Hungarian language). A complete programme in the field of astronomy is prepared for pupils and students. For its permanent museum exhibitions, the organisation also continuously works on making descriptions of exhibits available in the Hungarian language. The institution is developing close cooperation with the Hungarian Social and Cultural Union in Slovakia – Csemadok.

Two Hungarian national minority theatres operate in the Slovak Republic, namely the Jokái Theatre in Komárno, whose founding entity is the Nitra Self-Governing Region, and the Thália Theatre in Košice, whose founding entity is the Košice Self-Governing Region.

Both theatre ensembles also perform outside their home stage elsewhere in Slovakia when possible, and based on their achievements, they also appear at theatre festivals (such as “Divadelná Nitra”, “Dotyky a spojenia” in Martin). The plays and performances by these ensembles’ performers are also followed by the professional community of teatrology experts. For example, Tamás Gál, an actor from the Thália Theatre in Košice won the Actor of the Year award for the 2015 season at the most prestigious theatre awards event DOSKY. DOSKY is an award for creative work in the field of professional theatre in Slovakia (drama, opera, musicals, puppetry, ballet and contemporary dance), awarded to natural persons regardless of their citizenship for stagings premiered in the Slovak Republic in the past season.

Subsidies within the CNM 2017 Subsidy Programme were also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location. Subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area.

The field of CNM subsidies in individual regions also falls within the competence of self-governing regions. The scope of their founder’s competence also includes public educational centres, cultural centres, libraries, theatres, and regional museums and galleries. A self-governing region, in performing its regional administration function under Act No. 189/2015 Coll., founds or establishes, abolishes or merges a cultural and educational facility whose scope of competence covers a region or a self-governing region; further, it provides and coordinates the cultural and educational activities of cultural and educational facilities and designates cultural and educational facilities which provide expert advice and perform methodological and informational-documentation functions for other cultural and

educational facilities, legal entities and natural persons carrying out cultural and educational activities in the territory of its self-governing region. A self-governing region, in performing its regional administration function, also ensures the preparation and fulfilment of the self-governing region cultural development programme, creates conditions for the creation, presentation and development of cultural values, takes care of preserving the monuments fund, provides for the needs of its residents and for the development needs of the region itself, and develops cooperation with other countries' territorial units and authorities.

Therefore, the scope of their founder's competence also includes some professional theatres, whose main field of activity, under Act No. 103/2014 Coll. on Theatrical and Musical Activities as amended, is rehearsal of theatre and musical works and their public performance, also taking into account the needs of members of national minorities. Due to the fact that these are professional bodies, their status in the field of national minority culture is highly special. The activities of these theatres, i.e. specific projects for cultural and arts activities, are also subsidized from the CNM Subsidy Programme on a yearly basis. In the case of the professional Hungarian national minority art bodies Ifjú Szívek in Bratislava, the Thália Theatre in Košice and the Jókaiho Theatre in Komárno, such activities include rehearsals of new choreography and plays, and projects focused on these bodies' performances in regions.

See also Annex 2.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

191. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts (partially modified).

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language.³

193. *The Committee of Experts has not been informed of any such prohibitions laid down in Slovak legislation.*

194. *Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.

198. The Committee of Experts is aware that the use of Hungarian is possible to some extent, since the Hungarian-speakers naturally are present among the staff of social care facilities in the areas where the minority lives in substantial numbers. The Committee of Experts was, however, informed by the Hungarian-speakers of a case in Nové Zámky/Ěrsekújvár, where a patient was berated in the emergency room for not speaking proper Slovak and sent for examination elsewhere. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to comment on this information.

199. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities, such as hospitals or retirement homes, may receive and treat those concerned in Hungarian in all areas where the Hungarian-speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.

The Act on the Use of National Minority Languages originally did not regulate this issue. The amendment to the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 25 May 2011 (effective as of 1 September 2011) provides in § 5, paragraph 3 that: “A citizen of the Slovak Republic who is a person belonging to a national minority may use a minority language in communication with personnel at healthcare facilities and social service facilities or facilities of socio-legal protection and social care in a municipality referred to in § 2, paragraph 1. The healthcare or social service facility or facility of socio-legal protection and social care, as referred to in the preceding sentence, shall allow the use of the minority language under this Act and specific laws insofar as the conditions prevailing at the institution so permit.”

Actual practice in this field shows that clients living in social service facilities who are interested in communication in the language of a national minority can do so, since local personnel typically speak the language.

The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic did not receive any complaints in the 2015–2016 period concerning failure to provide medical care due to healthcare establishment personnel not having a command of a minority language. The use of a national minority language in a healthcare facility is facilitated for all patients and clients in the form of oral communication, particularly in Hungarian, Romani, Ukrainian and Ruthenian without distinction. For a healthcare facility it is sufficient if a member of medial personnel has a command of a national minority language which ensures that the communication does not require a qualified interpreter.

Following our communication with the hospital in Nové Zámky, where the incident mentioned in Point 198 allegedly happened, we can say that they have not received any

specific complaints or notifications as referred to in Point 198 in the past few years. On the contrary, hospitals in areas with significant use of a minority language try to pursue a policy of openness to all citizens without distinction when using any minority language.

They have not received any such complaints, instead, they primarily focus on taking care of clients/patients medically. The hospital in question tries to have Hungarian-speaking personnel at each ward as far as possible.

If such an incident happens in the future, it should be reported immediately, so that the hospital can investigate it and hold those responsible to account. Otherwise it is merely an individual's failure to act in the required way, which the hospital regrets, but it has no record of any such complaint.

Public healthcare authorities where a minority language is used (Hungarian): Regional Public Health Authority in Dunajská Streda, Regional Public Health Authority in Galanta, Regional Public Health Authority in Komárno, Regional Public Health Authority in Nové Zámky, Regional Public Health Authority in Rimavská Sobota, Regional Public Health Authority in Rožňava. A minority language (Hungarian) is used in face-to-face communication, on notices, on websites, information materials and other means of communication, depending on the capacities of each authority.

Employees at departments of socio-legal protection of children and social care mostly do have a command of the relevant regional or minority language and use it in communication with clients, mainly for the sake of efficiency in taking measures related to socio-legal protection of children and social care. However, the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family does not collect statistical data on the use of minority languages in communication with authorities for socio-legal protection of children and social care.

According to the internal standard IN -105/2015 "Applying measures related to socio-legal protection of children and social care of unaccompanied minors", a representative of an authority for socio-legal protection of children and social care, who is present at a hearing held by a border control unit regarding an offence committed by an unaccompanied minor, ensures that an interpreter is provided for a language which the minor can understand.

Facilities of socio-legal protection of children and social care accept minors from various regions of Slovakia, including regions where citizens communicate in a minority language. Placing a child in such a facility follows the principle that it is placed in the facility that is the nearest to its usual place of residence, in order to maintain and support contact with its family, which also improves its chances to be able to communicate in a language it typically used in its natural environment.

Minors who are speakers of the Hungarian minority language are placed in such facilities of socio-legal protection of children and social care which provide school education in the Hungarian language.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

b) *for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.*

202. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.*

Even though the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts states that this undertaking is fulfilled, the Slovak Republic provides further supplementary information regarding Article 14 (b):

Generally speaking, the promotion of cross-border cooperation is carried out also by means of intergovernmental commissions for cross-border cooperation formed on the basis of bilateral agreements. The Slovak Republic has cross-border cooperation agreements with all neighbouring countries and it supports, by means of intergovernmental commissions for cross-border cooperation, activities focused on developing cooperation between municipal authorities, relevant institutions and residents, including those belonging to national minorities. Cross-border cooperation is focused mainly on developing transport infrastructure, education, culture, agriculture, public services, healthcare and environmental protection. The Slovak Republic strives to develop cross-border cooperation in all fields.

The purpose of intergovernmental commissions is to implement valid bilateral agreements between countries where the same language is used and to facilitate cross-border cooperation not only between government authorities, but also between local and regional authorities in areas where identical or similar versions of the same language are used.

Cross-border cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Hungary is based on *Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of Hungary on Cross-Border Cooperation between Territorial Units or Authorities*, signed on 23 April 2001. The cooperation involves all joint activities of local and territorial authorities, other authorities and public administration entities engaged in these activities aimed at strengthening and developing good neighbourliness. Besides general activities, it aims to develop education in a national minority language and minority culture, to support cooperation between twinned schools, and to create partnerships with local and territorial authorities in areas with significant Slovak or Hungarian minority populations.

The next meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation should be held after an official exchange of notes between Hungary and the Slovak Republic on merging the Joint Intergovernmental Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation and the Joint Departmental Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Interior Affairs and subsequent modification.

Cross-border cooperation or the cross-border element in the field of national minority culture is supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme, divided into three sub-programmes:

1. the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities,
2. education and training regarding the rights of national minorities,
3. interethnic and intercultural dialogue and understanding between the national majority and national minorities and ethnic groups. Subsidies for cultural activities abroad and for international cultural activities are provided within sub-programme 1.7.

The most notable projects with a cross-border element supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme include:

- the *Anthology of Folk Dance* project by the children's folk ensemble (hereinafter referred to as "CFE") Kisbojtár. The ensemble has a long-term twin relationship with CFE Tulipán in the Romanian town of Baraolt, CFE Pöndöly in the Hungarian town of Komló, and CFE Hajdina in Novi Bečej, Serbia. In 2016, CFE Kisbojtár took part in the *Anthology of Folk Dance 2016* project organised by CFE Tulipán in Baraolt. The *Anthology of Folk Dance* project continued in 2017 in the town of Komló, with CFE Kisbojtár taking part again;
- the Komárno Chamber Orchestra organised the *8th Gyula Beliczay Violin and Chamber Music Competition* in 2016, and its 9th edition was held in 2017. The aim of the project was to attract young people to classical music and to allow music educators from the participating countries to exchange experience in training talented players. Contestants from Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and Germany enter the competition;
- the Pál Fecsó not-for-profit organisation organised an international visual arts camp called Visual Art Communication in 2016, whose aim was to facilitate collaboration among Hungarian minority visual artists from Slovakia, Serbia, Romania and Hungary in the field of visual communication, and to promote art work and presentation of shared values through visual art;
- Publication of periodical and non-periodical literature also contains a cross-border element to some extent.

No changes occurred during the monitored period compared to the report from the 4th monitoring round in terms of school activities and education that would go beyond cross-border cooperation, as the agreements with Hungary are older and continue to apply in this monitored period. The list of agreements regarding the countries stated in the report is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/medzinarodne-zmluvy-a-dohovory/>.

3.2.2 Ruthenian

203. *The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For Ruthenian, these provisions are the following:*

Articles 8.1.e.ii;

Article 9.1.d;

Article 10.5;

Article 11.2

Article 12.1.a; d; e; f; g; 12.2;

Article 13.1.c.

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

Pre-school education

a)

ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

209. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

On 15 September 2016, there were 2 kindergartens in the Slovak Republic with Ruthenian language instruction (20 children). On 15 September 2017, there were 3 kindergartens (Čabiny, Kalná Roztoka, Klenová) with Ruthenian language instruction in the network of schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic with 32 children.

Primary education

b)

ii to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

214. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

Secondary education, technical and vocational education

c)

ii to make available a substantial part of secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d)

ii to make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

217. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take measures to ensure that a substantial part of pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education is available in Ruthenian and that there is a continuous offer at all levels of education.

Adult and continuing education

f) ii Make it possible that these languages will become subjects of education of adults or a part of continuing education

220. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to strengthen the offer of Ruthenian in adult and continuing education.

Common information regarding Points 206–220 (applies to all provisions of Article 8, paragraph 1 a; b; c; d; e; f).

A working group was set up in 2016, in order to create conditions for supporting the training and education of primary school pupils in Ruthenian and to prepare the Approach to Developing Ruthenian Language and Culture Teaching in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools. At the end of October 2016, the working group drew up a material called the Approach to Developing Ruthenian Language and Culture Teaching in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools.

The Concept was approved by the MESRSSR on 21 March 2017 under No. 207-2455/7778:4-1010 and published on the MESRSSR website in April 2017, see <http://www.minedu.sk/vychova-a-vzdelavanie-narodnostnych-mensin/>.

The material entitled “Process and Possibilities of Founding a School with Instruction in a Language Other than Slovak” was prepared in February 2017. The informative material is available at the MESRSSR website, <http://www.minedu.sk/vychova-a-vzdelavanie-narodnostnych-mensin/>.

A questionnaire survey was conducted at kindergartens and primary schools with any form of Ruthenian language instruction between 16 and 20 September 2016 according to the Approach to Developing Ruthenian Language and Culture Teaching in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools material. It should provide feedback on the state and status of teaching of the subject.

There was one primary school with Ruthenian language instruction in 2015/2016, three primary schools with Ruthenian language instruction in 2016/2017 and two primary schools with Ruthenian language instruction in 2017/2018 (14 pupils). In 2017/2018 the network of schools and school facilities included a primary school with Ruthenian language instruction in Kalná Roztoka and Klenová (53 pupils).

29 evening schools with 36 classes and 34 teachers, teaching 374 children, were opened in 2015. 24 evening schools with 29 classes and 27 teachers, teaching 365 children, operated in the North East of Slovakia between January and June 2016. Each of the currently active Ruthenian language teachers has a sufficient amount of teaching materials prepared in an electronic form, which they have already used in the education process for the Ruthenian language.

The Approach to Developing Ruthenian Language and Culture Teaching in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools advises teachers to gradually incorporate the following competition activities within Ruthenian language and history:

- Duchnovičov Prešov – school, district and national rounds of a recital competition in poetry, prose and short scenes, categorized according to age
- Spevy môjho rodu – a song contest,
- Poznám svoju históriu (I Know My History) –annual knowledge competition in Ruthenian history and culture (folklore, ethnology),
- Sports Day – sporting competitions for pupils from schools with Ruthenian language instruction,
- Rusiniáda –Olympics-style knowledge competition based on the curriculum content in Ruthenian language and literature, categorized according to education stages.

Secondary schools:

In the academic year 2015/2016, the Education Section of the Prešov Self-Governing Region conducted a survey of interest in the use and the teaching of the Ruthenian language at schools within the founder' competence of the self-governing region. The result was that none of the approached schools had pupils or legal guardians interested in subjects taught in the Ruthenian language (information provided by school directors). Even in the following years, parents did not show interest in teaching in the Ruthenian language at secondary schools.

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language

224. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to strengthen the teaching of the history and culture reflected by the Ruthenian language.

Preparation of education programmes (intended for education in regional or minority languages).

Item No.	Name of EP	Type of EP
1.	Ruthenians in Slovakia	teacher training
2.	Ukrainians in Slovakia	teacher training
3.	Ruthenian language and literature in pre-primary education	teacher training
4.	Ruthenian language as a language of education for pupils' school clubs	teacher training

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;

229. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to provide basic and further training of teachers for Ruthenian-language education from pre-school to secondary education.

The number of teachers receiving teacher training related to the Ruthenian language.

Item No.	Name of EP	Type	Accreditation No.	Number of participants
1.	Methods and forms of using historical artefacts in teaching Ruthenian language and literature	continuing teacher training	1433/2014-KV	25
2.	Ruthenian language and its teaching at primary and secondary schools	continuing teacher training	1434/2014-KV	25
3.	Ruthenian history and culture and possibilities for their inclusion in the school education programme	continuing teacher training	1457/2015-KV	25

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public

234. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify the tasks and role of the Advisory Council in monitoring minority language education, as required by the undertaking.

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice,

a) in criminal proceedings:

*ii: to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or
iii: to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.*

239. The Committee of Experts considers these undertakings partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee in the legislation the right of the accused to use Ruthenian in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in Ruthenian, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

See the common information in Point 109.

b) in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

c) in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

242. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertakings are partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

See the common information in Point 112 and the common information regarding Article 9, paragraph 1.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make available in the regional or minority languages the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of these languages, unless they are otherwise provided.

245. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary continuously monitors the availability of the Slovak Republic's key legal regulations and official specimen forms translated into national minority languages, thereby fulfilling the tasks arising from the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period aimed at improving the conditions of the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice, including arrangements to provide translated key legal regulations of the Slovak Republic.

See the common information regarding Point 115.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible,

a)

iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages.

251. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the Ruthenian-speakers may submit oral or written applications to local offices of state authorities and receive a reply in Ruthenian wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

There are 8 municipalities in the Stropkov District with residents claiming to be members of the Ruthenian national minority. Since the effective date of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, no requests for issuing a public document in a national minority language have been received. Although the municipality residents claim to be members of the Ruthenian national minority, many of them are not familiar with the codified version of the language. It is rather a matter of their internal feeling and need to identify themselves with their ancestors and traditions. Within their communities, and sometimes in official communication, they talk in spoken Ruthenian and a dialect. Officers in contact with the public also use a dialect when approached in a minority language, if they themselves have a command of it. The regions residents have a command of the state language and mostly use this language in official communication with public administration authorities. In municipalities belonging to a national minority, members of a national minority can submit oral or written applications in a minority language. Although clients do use oral applications or oral communication in actual practice, a written application in a minority language has not been submitted yet and no one has requested a response in a national minority language. Official forms and public documents are requested exclusively in the state language. National minority language place names are used in addition to the state language place names on traffic signs marking the beginning and the end of municipalities, and on public authority buildings in the given municipality. Municipal council meetings and their outputs are in the state language. If Ruthenian is spoken in a municipal council meeting, it is only as a dialect.

The Medzilaborce office of the District Office in Humenné has not received any requests for issuing a decision in a national minority language, nor has it issued a document in a national minority language. Citizens using a national minority language show no interest in formal/written communication in a minority language. The state language is used in state administration in Svidník and Snina districts. No application (oral or written) has been submitted in a regional or minority language.

Regarding the field of facilitating the possibility to translate oral and written applications and to receive a response in a minority language, following the information regarding Point 3 regarding the Language Report, we present, in the following paragraphs, more detailed information on the results of a questionnaire survey conducted for the Language Report. 68 municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority were approached as part of the survey, with 64 returning a completed questionnaire.

Compliance with the obligations municipalities have in relation to the use of the Ruthenian language in official communication was also surveyed. The results of the survey in municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority showed that 199 employees (92%) of the total 216 employees had a command of the Ruthenian language, of whom 75 (35%) in terms of both speaking and writing and 124 (57%) in terms of speaking.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., the municipalities specified by the law are obliged to facilitate the use of a minority language, and it is up to them how they will do so. The results of the survey in municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority showed that 57 municipalities (89%) used the Ruthenian language in official communication, 1 municipality used the Ruthenian language through interpreting and translation services and 4 municipalities used the Ruthenian language by means other than interpreting or translation services. Act No. 184/1999 Coll. also provides that a municipality can set a time frame for

handling matters in a national minority language. The results of the survey showed that 9 municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority had set such a time frame.

Municipalities' obligations with respect to the use of languages of national minorities in official communication also include the obligation to publicise information about the possibility to use a national minority language in official oral and written communication in a visible place. 25 (39%) municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority complied with the obligation.

See also the common information in Point 5.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages.

254. The Committee of Experts considered this undertaking partly fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary legal and organisational measures so that Ruthenian-speakers may submit oral or written applications in Ruthenian to local and regional authorities wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

There were written submissions received from Ruthenian national minority citizens in the monitored period. However, there were no written submissions from citizens in the language of this national minority, and hence no responses to submissions in the language of the Ruthenian national minority. Chapter 3.3.3 of the Language Report contains analysed data on government authorities' application practice concerning the use a national minority language, structured according to individual entities. Municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority received 1 request for issuing a bilingual decision.

Bilingual forms in the Ruthenian language were provided mainly within the agenda of the registry office, civil registry, construction, local taxes and fees, and in the field of social affairs in 3 municipalities (5%) and partially in 11 municipalities (17%), and they were not provided in 46 municipalities (72%). Municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority did not receive any requests for issuing bilingual public documents, whether permits, authorizations, confirmations, statements, declarations, birth certificates, marriage certificates or death certificates, nor did they receive submissions initiating administrative procedures in the Ruthenian language.

c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

257. In view of the very limited practice, the Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertakings are not fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to allow and/or encourage the publication by

local and regional authorities of their official documents also in Ruthenian, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

General public information provided inside municipal/town mayors' buildings or inside municipal/city councils' buildings was stated in both the state language and in a national minority language in one municipality with the Ruthenian national minority. As far as requests for information about generally binding regulations in the Ruthenian language in addition to the state language are concerned, no such request was received. Likewise, municipal generally binding regulations in the Ruthenian language were not issued or publicised. Under Act No. 184/1999 Coll., municipalities can also maintain their registers in a national minority language. This also applied to the municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority, of which one municipality maintained its register in both the state language and the Ruthenian language and 5 municipalities did so in the state language and partially in the Ruthenian language.

f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State,

260. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

According to the survey in municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority, none of the municipalities used both the state language and the national minority language in their official agenda, 3 municipalities (5%) partially used the Ruthenian language in addition to the state language and 61 municipalities did not use the language of the Ruthenian national minority. According to the survey, there were 34 municipalities (53%) with the Ruthenian national minority where councillors used the Ruthenian language during municipal/town council meetings, 21 municipalities (33%) where the Ruthenian language was used only partially, 6 municipalities (5%) where the Ruthenian language was not used, and 3 municipalities (9%) did not answer the question. According to the survey, there were 33 municipalities (52%) with the Ruthenian national minority where municipal/town mayors used the Ruthenian language during municipal/town council meetings, 19 municipalities (30%) where the Ruthenian language was used only partially and 9 municipalities (5%) where the Ruthenian language was not used.

According to the survey, there were 14 municipalities (22%) with the Ruthenian national minority where municipal/town council meetings were held in the state language, 13 municipalities (20%) where meetings were held in the Ruthenian language, 36 municipalities (56%) where the Ruthenian language was used in addition to the state language.

According to the survey, there was 1 municipality (2%) with the Ruthenian national minority where materials for municipal/town council meetings were in the Ruthenian language, 4 municipalities (6%) where materials were only partially in Ruthenian, and 56 municipalities (88%) where materials were not prepared in the Ruthenian language. According to the survey, there were 4 municipalities (6%) with the Ruthenian national minority where the possibility to use the language of the Ruthenian national minority during municipal/town council meetings was facilitated by means of interpreting services, and 36 municipalities (56%) where this was done by other means.

g) the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

264. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to encourage the use of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Ruthenian within the meaning of the present undertaking wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.*

The results of the survey showed that all municipalities with the Ruthenian minority complied with the obligation to use municipality place names in the Ruthenian language on traffic signs marking the beginning and the end of municipalities. We should also note with respect to the Ruthenian language that 42 municipalities (66 %) used municipality place names in both the state language and the Ruthenian national minority language in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 15 municipalities (39 %) failed to use municipality place names in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 7 municipalities (11%) did not answer the question. Only 1 municipality (2%) with the Ruthenian national minority used Ruthenian language place names (with smaller letters) under place names in the state language on train station or bus station signs, and 46 municipalities (72%) did not use such municipality place names in the Ruthenian language.

61 municipalities (95%) used the Ruthenian language alongside the state language on signs marking public authority buildings, and 3 municipalities (5%) with the Ruthenian minority only used the state language on signs marking public authority buildings. 61 municipalities (95%) with the Ruthenian minority language used municipality place names on public authority buildings in the Ruthenian language in addition to the state language, 1 municipality (2%) did so partially, and two municipalities (3%) did not use such place names.

40 municipalities (63%) used the same size of letters for the Ruthenian language version and the state language version on signs marking public authority buildings, 15 municipalities (23%) used smaller letters for the Ruthenian version, and 9 municipalities (14%) did not answer the question. Two municipalities with the Ruthenian minority had street signs in the Ruthenian language in addition to the state language. It is also important to note that street signs are not stipulated for all municipalities, so only municipalities to which the stipulation applies were expected to answer the corresponding survey question. 61 municipalities with the Ruthenian minority did not answer the question. Only 1 municipality (2%) with the Ruthenian national minority stated that it used the Ruthenian language in addition to the state language on geographical signs, and 2 municipalities (3%) had geographical signs only in the state language.

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

- c) To allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.*

267. *The Committee of Experts reiterates that this undertaking concerns public services such as railways, urban transport, electricity, water and gas, cleaning and sanitation, telephone services, refuse collection and disposal, sporting facilities or entertainment*

venues. It asks the authorities to provide information on the use of Ruthenian in practice in communication with such public services.

268. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to enable Ruthenian-speakers to submit requests in Ruthenian to public services wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.*

Municipalities with the Ruthenian minority did not receive any written submissions in the monitored period. More detailed information about municipality-founded legal entities is included in part 3.2.1 of the Language Report. Chapter 3.3.3 of the Language Report contains analysed data on government authorities' application practice concerning the use a national minority language, structured according to individual entities.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

- a) translation or interpretation as may be required,*
- b) to gain and, as necessary, train office employees and other public service employees,*

270. *Since some undertakings in Article 10.1 and 10.2 are partly fulfilled, the Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled.*

See also the information in Point 123 (about the Plenipotentiary's initiatives in the field of education for state employees), Point 251 and Point 260 (concerning the possibility for a translation or interpreting if necessary).

- c) compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.*

273. *The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples of cases where civil servants speaking Ruthenian have been appointed, upon request, in the territory where this language is used.*

See also the information in Point 123 (about the Plenipotentiary's initiatives in the field of education for state employees), Point 251 and Point 260 (concerning the possibility for a translation or interpreting if necessary).

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

- a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:*
 - iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages.*

277. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled for radio and partly fulfilled for television.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the broadcasting time and the frequency of the time-slots allocated to the Ruthenian language on public television.

The public broadcaster RTVS recorded an increase in the number of hours of Ruthenian language radio broadcasting in 2015 and 2016 from 333 hours in 2014 to 342 hours in 2015 and 2016. The number of hours of television broadcasting in the language increased from 17 hours a year in 2014 to 20 hours in both 2015 and 2016. Production of new programmes in the Ruthenian language in 2014 was 8 hours a year, increasing to 9 hours in 2015 and 10 hours in 2016.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

280. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in Ruthenian on private radio stations and television channels on a regular basis.

The newly-established Fund will support national minority broadcasting in commercial radio and television programme services.

See the information in Point 10 on the Fund.

d) To encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages.

283. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to further encourage the production and distribution of audiovisual works in Ruthenian.

See the common information in Point 173.

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages;

288. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to take appropriate measures to enable at least one newspaper to be published in Ruthenian with sufficient frequency.

On 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MCSR comprised 3 titles of periodicals published in the Ruthenian language, 3 titles of periodicals published in the Slovak language and the Ruthenian language and 1 periodical title published in Slovak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Russian.

See also the common information in Point 176.

f)

ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages.

291. *Due to the lack of recent financial assistance to audio-visual productions in Ruthenian, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

See the common information in Point 173.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

294. *The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of the minority language speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.*

See the common information in Point 183.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

b) to foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in regional or minority languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities

297. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.*

The core promoter of the Ruthenian culture in the Slovak Republic is the Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov, which is part of the organisational structure of SNM. The Museum of Ruthenian Culture is unique and is the youngest museum in SNM's structure, with a nationwide reach. It is a documentation, scientific-research and methodological institution specializing in the history and culture of the Ruthenians living in Slovakia. The

mission of the specialised museum consists in the single-minded acquisition, protection, scientific and professional processing and making available museum collections that document the development of material and spiritual culture of the Ruthenians in the Slovak Republic and in the world.

On 29 August 2016, as part of the official programme to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of SNU, a memorial stone to the Ruthenian minority members who fought in SNU was unveiled in the tribute hall of the SNU Museum. The memorial stone was unveiled by the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic in the presence of representatives of Ruthenian associations.

The State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica extended its repository with documents in the field of national minorities, and non-periodical publications in national minority languages were made available in hard copy and in an electronic form, including periodical publications in national minority languages, published by national minority institutions in a minority or the state language. Periodicals in Hungarian, German, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Romani were also made available (32 periodicals). The NOC held a seminar in 2016 entitled Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Field of Culture dedicated to the cultural and language rights of national minorities in the Slovak Republic, focusing mainly on members of the Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian minorities working in the field of culture and cultural and educational activities.

In 2016, representatives of national minorities attended the Summer Course for Choirmasters, an educational event in choir singing, organised by the Rimavská Sobota cultural centre in cooperation with the NOC. This was a series of training courses for leaders of folklore ensembles (leaders of Ruthenian and Hungarian folk ensembles), where representatives of the Romani and Ruthenian minorities attended events organised within the Traditional Culture Days project (Malí tanečníci, Muzičky, Primášikovia). Every year, the Východná Folklore Festival presents top amateur and professional folklore ensembles from Slovakia and abroad. Performances by national minority folklore ensembles are an essential part of the festival. Folklore ensembles representing national minority cultures (Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian) also took part in the Little Wheel 2016 folklore festival.

There are two Ruthenian national minority theatres operating in the Slovak Republic – the Alexander Duchnovič Theatre and Poddukelský umelecký ľudový súbor (a folk art ensemble). Both theatres are within the founder's competence of the Prešov Self-Governing Region. Act No. 103/2014 Coll. on Theatrical and Musical Activities as amended applies to both of these art bodies. These art bodies also perform outside their home stage elsewhere in Slovakia when possible. Based on their achievements, they also appear at theatre festivals. The plays or performances by these art bodies' performers are also followed by the professional community of teatrology experts.

In 2015, the MCSR, as a subsidy system guarantor, supported within its Art programme a multimedia project to create an artistic presentation of a record by Andy Warhol's mother, Júlia Zavacká, who recorded original Ruthenian folk songs on LP in a Pittsburgh recording studio during her life in the U.S. in the 1950s.

Subsidies within the CNM Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location –

subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area.

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the Ruthenian national minority in the 2015–2017 period.

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Ruthenian national minority	294,032	294,032	340,650

Overview of the Ruthenian national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	Cultural diplomacy in 2015	Cultural diplomacy in 2016	Cultural diplomacy in 2017
Ruthenian national minority	125	122	116

Overview of regional professional theatres with activities in the field of Ruthenian national minority culture

Self-governing region	Theatre name	Website link
Prešov Self-Governing Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander Duchnovič Theatre • Poddukelský ľudový umelecký súbor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.divadload.sk • www.puls-slovakia.sk

The Alexander Duchnovič Theatre (hereinafter referred to as “ADT”) is a professional, cultural and art institution in the field of theatre activities and its role is to develop and promote culture for members of the Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities living in the Slovak Republic. In 2016, ADT staged 120 theatre performances, of which 4 were premieres in 2016. 1. Moskva – Petušky (Biblia alkoholika), 2. Krčma pod zeleným stromom, 3. Faraóni, 4. Posadnutí. The performances were in the Ruthenian language, with one in the Ukrainian language. 12 thousand theatre-goers saw ADT’s performances in 2016. The financial sum provided by its founder (Prešov Self-Governing Region) to cover ADT’s operational costs and costs associated with its activities was EUR 566,228. EUR 14,000 was provided from the CNM Subsidy Programme.

Poddukelský umelecký ľudový súbor (hereinafter referred to as “PULS”) is a donation-funded organisation within the founder’s competence of the Prešov Self-Governing Region, and the main activity of this folk art ensemble is vocalist and dance production, creation and presentation of folklore programmes of vocalist, dance and music production on stages in Slovakia and abroad, with a particular focus on developing the cultural life of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in the Slovak Republic. PULS performed one premiere in 2016, a programme called Ščedryj večur. The premiere had an audience of 809 people. Their successful programmes include Návraty, V objatí, Na dvore. PULS also performed abroad – in Český Těšín and at a folklore festival in Dolní Lomná in the Czech Republic. PULS’s total number of performances in 2016 was 136. Events and performances by the ensemble were seen by 56 thousand people. The financial sum provided by its founder (Prešov Self-Governing Region) in the last year to cover PULS’s operational costs and costs associated

with its activities was EUR 622,055. A sum of EUR 2,000 was provided from the Government Office within the CNM Subsidy Programme.

Radio broadcasting for national minorities is provided by RTVS through Rádio Patria, a separate programme service. Rádio Patria broadcasts at separate frequencies used by Rádio Regina in the Ruthenian language. The production team of national minority broadcasting Košice broadcasts 17 hours of content in six languages including Ruthenian. A certain portion of the broadcasting – 5 and a half hours – is dedicated to a daily information “flow” programme (“flow” refers to a long format without a fixed schedule) in Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Romani, with nationwide coverage via Rádio Regina. The remaining time is reserved for magazine and art formats in six languages, scheduled for weekend evenings with coverage via Rádio Regina’s Východ (East Slovakia).

Ruthenian broadcasting underwent the most extensive changes in 2016. New programmes were introduced, such as the news and information programme Rádio Noviny, which has been given an authentic character of the original news programme covering the areas with Ruthenian population, or a programme called My, Rusíni, an interactive “flow” presenting Ruthenian villages and towns. Ruthenian broadcasting was also the first to undertake to perform the secondary function of national minority broadcasting – presenting the national minority to the majority listener. Ruthenian broadcasting by RTVS is unique compared to other public broadcasters within the European Broadcasting Union in that it is the only daily Ruthenian broadcasting in the world.

The Centre for National Minority Broadcasting, within RTVS’s programme service Dvojka, prepares and broadcasts daily 30-minute slots for national minorities. A single slot includes both the Ruthenian Magazine and the Ukrainian Magazine. 16 Ruthenian magazines premiered on the Dvojka programme service in 2016. All magazines share the title *Sme doma* (We Are at Home), and bring reports on the community and cultural life as well as language of national minorities. A national minority news programme in the Ruthenian language is produced on a weekly basis. This approach to minority broadcasting by RTVS produces unique content. RTVS is the only broadcaster of Ruthenian television content in Europe.

Significant projects in 2015 include *Pamäti svedkov 20. storočia.*, a project by the not-for-profit organisation the Association of Ruthenian Elites, which maps – using oral history, a new interdisciplinary research method in history – historical events related to the history of Ruthenians living in Slovakia through direct reports of living witnesses.

In 2016, the Alexander Eckerdt Foundation introduced the *Láska nadovšetko - biskup Gojdič* project, a documentary film presenting a prominent figure of modern Slovak history, the ecclesiastical dignitary P. P. Gojdič. Bishop Gojdič openly identified himself as Ruthenian, and his activities contributed to saving human lives during the persecution of Jewish people. The documentary film will be in Slovak, English and Ukrainian. It is intended for those with a professional interest as well as for primary and secondary school students and university students.

In 2017, the Association of Ruthenian Elites produced a DVD documentary film entitled *V osídlach veľmoci*, presenting the history of Ruthenians living in Slovakia. The DVD comes with Ruthenian and English subtitles. The film is accessible to the general public in Slovakia and abroad. It reveals the broader context of how Sub-Carpathian Rus became part of Czechoslovakia, shows the significance of personalities such as Dobrjansky and Duchnovič, as well as the efforts of American Ruthenians led by Žatkovič.

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities.

299. The fourth periodical report refers to the Audiovisual Fund, which can be used for producing audio-visual works also in languages other than Slovak and for covering subtitling costs. However, no specific information on Ruthenian has been provided.
300. In view of the repeated lack of information, the Committee of Experts revises its previous conclusion and considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples of translation of literary works and dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling in Ruthenian of works produced in other languages.

See the common information in Point 173.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make appropriate provision, in pursuing their cultural policy abroad, for regional or minority languages and the cultures they reflect.

303. The Committee of Experts asks again the Slovak authorities to provide examples of how they make appropriate provision for Ruthenian in the cultural policy abroad.

See the information in Points 297 and 317.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

307. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language,

309. The Committee of Experts has not been informed of any such prohibitions laid down in Slovak legislation.

310. Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the

summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.

314. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities such as hospitals or retirement homes may receive and treat those concerned in Ruthenian in all areas where the Ruthenian-speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.

See the common information in Point 199.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

a) to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education.

316. The fourth periodical report does not contain any relevant information in this respect.

317. In view of the repeated lack of information, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

Cross-border cooperation or the cross-border element in the field of national minority culture is supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme. Arguably the most important project in this field is the 7th International Summer School of Ruthenian Language and Literature organised in 2016 and the 8th International Summer School of Ruthenian Language and Literature organised in 2017 by the University of Prešov in Prešov. The main goal of the *Studium Carpato-Ruthenorum* project was to provide an opportunity for its participants to acquire and broaden their Ruthenian language speaking and writing skills and to expand their knowledge of the history, culture and ethnography of Carpatho-Ruthenians with an emphasis on Ruthenians living in North East Slovakia. Another goal of the project was to provide opportunities for practical application of the newly-gained skills and knowledge in informal communication situations and in the authentic ethnic and cultural environment of Ruthenians in Slovakia. This project with international participation promotes and stimulates the development of Carpatho-Ruthenian studies as a “young” academic discipline, promotes the Ruthenian language and culture in an environment with a majority population and other ethnic populations, raises awareness among the majority population of the culture and the

specific ethnic characteristics of the third largest national minority in Slovakia, and supports the Slovak Republic's positive attitude towards its development.

3.2.3. Ukrainian

318. The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For Ukrainian, these provisions are the following:

Article 8.1.e.ii;

Article 9.1.d;

Article 10.5;

Article 11.2;

Article 12.1.a; d; e; f; g; 12.2; 12.3;

Article 13.1.c;

Article 14 a.

Article 8 – Education

Further comments in the text regarding the individual provisions of Article 8.

Common information regarding Points 319–333, i.e. regarding Article 8, paragraph 1 a; b; c; d.

Education of pupils in the Ukrainian language currently proceeds according to the Upgraded National Programme of Education and Training. To reflect this, education standards specifying education at schools with Ukrainian language instruction and Ukrainian language teaching were approved.

Due to the emphasis on future prospects, potential and interest with respect to the Ukrainian language, primary schools try to address demand for Ukrainian language teaching among parents and pupils. Most primary schools teaching a national minority language have seen interest among parents and children in national minority language teaching decline. The reason for the reduced interest is that there are very few areas of everyday life, if any, where a minority language can be used.

Extracurricular (informal education) Ukrainian language teaching is provided in the form of language courses for children at the Primary School on Karpatská ulica in Svidník and at the Regional Council of the Union of the Ruthenians-Ukrainians of the Slovak Republic in Košice.

The main objective of Ukrainian language and literature teaching in primary schools in the Slovak Republic is to form a nationally-aware and spiritually rich person able to use the expressive wealth of the Ukrainian language freely and correctly in a variety of language styles and genres and in all types of speech activity. The main objective of Ukrainian language and literature teaching is: to guide towards awareness of the need to learn mother tongue and towards embracing universal human values, to develop communication skills and habits as well as high-quality oral and written presentation skills, to share the nation's

knowledge and culture, to help pupils discover their own identity and to teach them to accept and tolerate the identity of other nations and ethnicities.

The main objective of teaching this language is: to develop an understanding of how many languages there are in Europe and an understanding of the communicative aspect of the Ukrainian language as it is used in different parts of the country and in various social groups, and to develop the ability to function in a multilingual environment based on how the national culture of Ukrainians is perceived.

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

Pre-school education

a)

ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

323. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled at present. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the number of kindergartens making available a substantial part of education in Ukrainian.

Locations of kindergartens with Ukrainian language instruction: Vyšný Mirošov, Jarabina, Prešov. 109 children attended a kindergarten with Ukrainian language instruction in the academic year 2016/2017. On 15 September 2017, 85 children were enrolled in three kindergartens.

See also the common information regarding Article 8 (education), chapter 3.2.3 (Ukrainian)

Primary education

b)

ii to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

327. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled at present. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the number of primary schools making available a substantial part of education in Ukrainian, as well as on the share of subjects taught in Ukrainian.

On 15 September 2016, the network of schools and school facilities comprised 1 primary school with Slovak and Ukrainian language instruction and 1 primary school with Ukrainian language instruction. The following classes with Ukrainian language instruction were opened at primary schools:

- at state schools there were 11 classes with 168 pupils, of which 6 classes with 85 pupils were in grades 0-4, and 5 classes with 83 pupils were in grades 5- 9;

There are currently these two schools in the Slovak Republic: A primary school

founded as an organisational unit of the Joint Taras Ševčenko School with Ukrainian language instruction in Prešov (142 pupils as of 15 September 2017) and Primary School and Kindergarten with Ukrainian language instruction (first stage) and Ukrainian language teaching (second stage – 38 pupils) in Jarabina.

The Ukrainian language as a teaching subject in schools with Ukrainian language instruction and Ukrainian language teaching is taught from 1st to 9th grade, and together with the state language, is a medium of studying all subjects. Special attention in teaching the Ukrainian language is dedicated to teaching Ukrainian pronunciation standards, as they differ from the pronunciation standards in the Slovak language.

See also the common information regarding Article 8 (education), chapter 3.2.3 (Ukrainian)

c)

ii to make available a substantial part of secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

330. The Committee of Experts cannot conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking. It asks the Slovak authorities to clarify the share of subjects taught in Ukrainian.

There is one secondary school with Ukrainian language instruction operating in the Slovak Republic: Taras Ševčenko Secondary Grammar School in Prešov. Pupils complete their programme with a school-leaving exam in line with the “Target Knowledge and Skills Requirements for Ukrainian Language and Literature Exam Candidates” material produced by NIE. The school had 168 students on 15 September 2016 and 138 students on 15 September 2017.

Technical and vocational education

d)

ii to make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages.

333. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

As of 15 September 2016, the network of schools and school facilities comprised 1 secondary grammar school with Ukrainian language instruction with 138 pupils: the Taras Ševčenko Secondary Grammar School in Prešov with 5 students with Ukrainian ethnicity and 15 students with Ukrainian citizenship.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the offer of pre-school, primary, technical and vocational education in Ukrainian and to ensure continuity of Ukrainian-language education at all levels of education.

Adult and continuing education

f)

ii to make it possible that these languages will become subjects of education of adults or a part of continuing education,

336. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion and considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to offer Ukrainian as a subject of adult and continuing education.

The situation compared to the 4th periodic report is unchanged.

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language.

339. The Committee of Experts has, however, not received any information on whether teaching about the Ukrainian history and culture takes place in practice.

340. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to strengthen the teaching of the history and culture reflected by the Ukrainian language.

National Minorities, Let's Meet – supplementary textbook for primary schools under preparation.

See also the common information in Point 10.

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party.

344. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to provide basic and further training of teachers for Ukrainian-language education from pre-school to secondary education.

The Ukrainian language is taught at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Prešov, and is part of the East Slavic Languages and Cultures programme at the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.

The MPC is a centrally managed organisation of the MESRSSH in accordance with § 14, paragraph 2 c, of Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government as amended. The MPC is currently preparing the “Ukrainians in Slovakia” education programme for accreditation. The MPC provides several continuing teacher training courses for Ukrainian language teachers. The local office of the MPC operates separate CTT (Continuing Teacher Training) for Ukrainian language and literature.

The MPC also carries out methodological activities, acting as a professional guarantor of continuing teacher training for teachers in areas with national minorities (Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian and Roma).

Continuing training for Ukrainian language and literature teachers is provided according to demand. 2 continuing teacher training programmes are focused on developing Ukrainian language communication skills:

- a) Development of communication skills through texts of various language styles in Ukrainian language lessons,
- b) Development of communication skills in Ukrainian language lessons.

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

349. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify the tasks and role of the Advisory Council in monitoring minority language education, as required by the undertaking.

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:

- a) *in criminal proceedings:*

*ii to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or
iii to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.*

355. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee in the legislation the right of the accused to use Ukrainian in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she also has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in Ukrainian, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

See the common information in Point 109.

- b) *in civil proceedings:*

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

- c) *in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:*

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

358. The Committee of Experts considered these undertakings formally fulfilled. It asks the Slovak to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

See the common information in Point 112.

See also the common information regarding Article 9, paragraph 1, chapter 3.2.1 (Hungarian)

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make available in the regional or minority languages the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of these languages, unless they are otherwise provided.

361. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary continuously monitors the availability of the Slovak Republic's key legal regulations and official specimen forms translated into national minority languages, thereby fulfilling the tasks arising from the Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of People Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016–2020 period aimed at improving the conditions of the use of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups in practice, including arrangements to provide translated key legal regulations of the Slovak Republic.

See the common information regarding Point 115.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

364. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recommended that the Slovak authorities “review the requirement that minority language speakers should represent at least 20% of the municipal population for the undertakings in the field of administration to be operational”.

See the information in Point 5.

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:

a)

iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages.

367. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that the Ukrainian-speakers may submit oral or written applications to local offices of state authorities and receive a reply in Ukrainian, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of thresholds.

See also the first 2 paragraphs as in Point 123 regarding Hungarian.

Regarding the field of facilitating the possibility to translate oral and written applications and to receive a response in a minority language, following the information regarding Point 3 regarding the Language Report, we present, in the following paragraphs, more detailed information on the results of a questionnaire survey conducted for the Language Report. 18 municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority were approached as part of the survey, with 8 returning a completed questionnaire.

Compliance with the obligations municipalities have in relation to the use of the Ukrainian language in official communication was also surveyed. The results of the survey in municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority showed that 13 out of 28 employees had a command of the Ukrainian language in terms of both speaking and writing and 6 in terms of speaking. According to the survey, 5 municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority used the Ukrainian language in official communication through municipality employees, 1 municipality used the Ukrainian language by means other than interpreting or translation services.

Act No. 184/1999 Coll. also provides that a municipality can set a time frame for handling matters in a national minority language. The results of the survey showed that none of the municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority had set such a time frame. One municipality publicised information about the possibility to use a national minority language in official communication.

See also the information in Point 370 regarding the possibility to translate oral and written information and to receive a response in the Ukrainian language.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages.

370. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled at local level and not fulfilled at regional level.*

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that Ukrainian-speakers may submit oral or written applications in Ukrainian to local and regional authorities wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The municipalities specified by the law are also obliged to provide other documents bilingually upon request. The results showed that none of the municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority had bilingual forms.

Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not receive any requests for issuing bilingual permits, authorizations, confirmations, statements or declarations, nor did they receive requests for issuing birth certificates, marriage certificates or death certificates, so they did not issue any bilingual public documents in the Ukrainian language.

The municipalities with the Ukrainian minority did not receive any submissions initiating administrative procedures in the language of the Ukrainian national minority, so they did not issue any decisions in administrative procedures in the Ukrainian language in addition to the state language. Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not receive requests for issuing a bilingual decision.

c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

373. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to allow and/or encourage the publication by local and regional authorities of their official documents also in Ukrainian, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not state general public information provided inside municipal/town mayors' buildings or inside municipal/city councils' buildings in the Ukrainian language. As far as requests for information about generally binding regulations in the Ukrainian language in addition to the state language are concerned, no such request was received. Likewise, municipal generally binding regulations in the Ukrainian language were not issued or publicised.

In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., municipalities can also maintain their registers in a national minority language. The result of the survey showed that none of the municipalities maintained its register in a national minority language.

f) The use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State.

375. The fourth periodical does not provide any specific information in this respect. According to the Authorities' Survey, in five municipalities Ukrainian is used in debates in the local council.

376. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

We should note with respect to the Ukrainian language that according to the survey, none of the municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority used the Ukrainian language

in its official agenda, although there were 3 municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority where municipal/town councillors used the Ukrainian language during municipal/town council meetings, 3 municipalities used it partially and 2 municipalities did not use the Ukrainian language. There were 3 municipalities where municipal mayors used the Ukrainian language during municipal council meetings, 3 municipalities used it partially and 2 municipalities did not use the Ukrainian language.

According to the survey, there were 3 municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority where municipal council meetings were held in the state language, 2 municipalities where meetings were held in the Ukrainian language, and 3 municipalities where the Ukrainian language was used in addition to the state language. None of the municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority prepared materials for municipal council meetings in the Ukrainian language. According to the survey, there were 5 municipalities with the Ruthenian national minority where the possibility to use the language of the Ruthenian national minority during municipal/town council meetings was facilitated by means other than interpreting services.

377. The use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

380. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to encourage the use of traditional and correct forms of place names in Ukrainian within the meaning of the present undertaking, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

The results of the survey showed that 5 municipalities with the Ukrainian minority complied with the obligation to use Ukrainian language municipality place names on traffic signs marking the beginning and the end of municipalities, and 3 municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not comply with this obligation. 5 municipalities used municipality place names in both the state language and the Ukrainian national minority language in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 1 municipality failed to use municipality place names in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 2 municipalities did not answer the question.

5 municipalities used the Ukrainian language alongside the state language on signs marking public authority buildings, and 3 municipalities with the Ukrainian minority only used the state language on signs marking public authority buildings. Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did have national minority language place names next to place names in the state language on train station or bus station signs.

3 municipalities used the same size of letters for the Ukrainian language version and the state language version on signs marking public authority buildings, 1 municipality used smaller letters for the Ukrainian version, and 4 municipalities did not answer the question. 4 municipalities with the Ukrainian minority language used municipality place names on public authority buildings in the Ukrainian language in addition to the state language.

None of the municipalities answered the question about using the Ukrainian national minority language on street signs. It is also important to note that street signs are not stipulated for all municipalities, so only municipalities where a stipulation applies were

expected to answer the corresponding survey question. Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not have bilingual geographical signs.

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.

384. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to enable Ukrainian-speakers to submit requests in Ukrainian to public services wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

Municipalities with the Ukrainian national minority did not receive written submissions from citizens in the Ukrainian language during the monitored period, nor did they provide a response in the Ukrainian language. More detailed information about municipality-founded legal entities is included in part 3.2.1 of the Language Report. Chapter 3.3.3 of the Language Report contains analysed data on government authorities' application practice concerning the use of a national minority language, structured according to individual entities.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

a) translation or interpretation as may be required,

386. In light of the very limited implementation of the undertakings in Article 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3, the Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is formally fulfilled.

See also the information in Point 123 (about the Plenipotentiary's initiatives in the field of education for state employees), Point 367 and Point 376 (concerning the possibility for a translation or interpreting if necessary).

c) compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.

389. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples of cases where civil servants speaking Ukrainian have been appointed, upon request, in the territory where this language is used.

See also the information in Point 123 (about the Plenipotentiary's initiatives in the field of education for state employees), Point 367 and Point 376 (concerning the possibility for a translation or interpreting if necessary).

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages.

393. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled for radio and partly fulfilled for television.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the broadcasting time and the frequency of the time-slots allocated to the Ukrainian language on public television.

The public broadcaster RTVS broadcast 11 hours of programme content in Ukrainian in 2015, with 10 hours in 2016.

See also the information in Point 9.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

396. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in Ukrainian on private radio stations and television channels on a regular basis.

The newly-established Fund will support national minority broadcasting in commercial radio and television programme services.

See the information in Point 10 on the Fund.

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages.

399. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to further encourage the production and distribution of audiovisual works in Ukrainian.

See the information in Point 173.

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages.

403. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take appropriate measures to enable at least one newspaper to be published in Ukrainian with sufficient frequency.

On 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MCSR comprised 2 titles of periodicals published in the Ukrainian language, 1 periodical title published in Slovak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Russian, 1 periodical title published in Slovak and Ukrainian, as well as one fortnightly and one monthly title.

See also the common information regarding periodical publications in Points 9 and 176.

f)

ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages.

406. Due to the lack of recent financial assistance to audio-visual productions in Ukrainian, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See the common information in Point 173.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

409. The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of the minority languages speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.

See the common information in Point 183.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

b) to foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in regional or minority languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities.

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities.

412. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to foster access in other languages to works produced in Ukrainian and vice versa.

The core promoter of the Ukrainian culture in the Slovak Republic is the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidnik (hereinafter referred to as the “MUC”), which is part of the organisational structure of SNM. The MUC documents the development of the material and spiritual culture of the Ukrainian national minority, i.e. the museum’s basic mission is to document and present the basic stages of the cultural, political and social development of Ukrainians in Slovakia from the most distant past until the present time.

In extending its repository, ULB continuously acquires selected translation works from a national minority language into Slovak in line with the profile of the library’s repository. ULB provides access to unique databases of periodicals and information sources (biographical and bibliographical databases) in an electronic form. Notable databases include Library Press Display, providing online access to more than 6,200 periodical titles from 96 countries in 54 languages. All newspaper titles are published online in their original graphical form and format, including images, immediately after their publication in their country of origin. The range of titles and countries on offer continues to expand. Titles available in minority languages cover Hungarian, Czech, German and Ukrainian (19 titles in Hungarian, 11 titles in Czech, more than 50 titles in Ukrainian, more than 60 titles in German, and titles in other languages). Access is provided to full texts with a 60-day archive, whether at the library premise or via online access.

The State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica extended its repository with documents in the field of national minorities, and non-periodical publications in national minority languages were made available in hard copy and in an electronic form, including periodical publications in national minority languages, published by national minority institutions in a minority or the state language. Periodicals in Hungarian, German, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Romani were also made available (32 periodicals).

The Slovak National Library supports members of national minorities mainly in the fields of promoting, exhibiting and lending literature published by national minorities. In 2016, there were 9 titles of national minority periodicals available in its universal study room (1 Russian, 1 Polish, 4 Hungarian, 1 Croatian and 1 title of the Ukrainian national minority). The organisation registers 30 periodical titles of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and 147 national minority monographs published in 2016.

Subsidies within the CNM 2017 Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location – subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area.

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the Ukrainian national minority in the 2015–2017 period.

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Ukrainian national minority	100,673	100,673	117,000

Overview of the Ukrainian national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	projects supported in 2015	projects supported in 2016	projects supported in 2017
Ukrainian national minority	19	21	23

Art bodies for the Ukrainian language – See information on ADT a PULS in Point 293 for the Ruthenian language.

Ukrainian radio broadcasting underwent a qualitative change in 2016. The Ukrainian *Rádio Noviny* gradually became a current affairs programme. The problem of Ukrainian broadcasting is a lack of production of original radio plays. However, Ukrainian broadcasting regularly presents literature and art in its art news programmes.

The Centre for National Minority Broadcasting within RTVS’s programme service Dvojka prepares and broadcasts daily 30-minute slots for national minorities. A slot with *the Ruthenian Magazine* and the *Ukrainian Magazine* is broadcast on alternate days, with the other days being reserved for magazines dedicated to smaller national minorities. 11 Ukrainian magazines premiered on the Dvojka programme service in 2016. All magazines share the title *Sme doma* (We Are at Home), and bring reports on the community and cultural life as well as language of national minorities.

The most notable projects include *the 8th and 9th Summer School of Ukrainian Studies*, organised by the PLAST Association of scouts of Ukrainian and Ruthenian ethnicity in 2015 and 2016, aimed at developing a basic grasp of the Cyrillic script, the Ukrainian language and the regional history of members of the Ukrainian and Ruthenian minorities. In the 2015–2017 period, the *Dukla* project by the Ukrainian Union of Writers of Slovakia continued to map and present to readers the literature and art of Ukrainians in Slovakia, introducing them to new works by Ukrainian writers living in Slovakia and to the current literary scene of Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

415. *As long as the legislation prescribes that Slovak is compulsory in certain documents related to economic and social life, while a minority language can only be used as a “copy with an equal content”, as an unofficial version, the Committee of Experts considers this as a limitation to the use of minority languages. In case of instructions for the use of products or installations, it is unclear whether the relevant information can be presented bilingually.*

416. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

The objection of the Committee of Experts as to the strict restriction of the use of a minority language with respect to the undertaking under Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter, imposed by the requirement which makes simultaneous use of the state language compulsory, is not substantiated since the use of a minority language is explicitly permitted under the State Language Act in areas defined in § 8 of the Act, thus it is not restricted by the obligation to make a text simultaneously available in a minority language and the state language. Using one language does not in itself restrict the use of the other language since both versions can be produced without restricting one another. The obligation to produce a document in the state language, while permitting a version in a minority language, does not lead to the conclusion that there is a strict restriction of the use of minority languages.

On the other hand, it is apparent from the non-discrimination principle that imposing the obligation of all persons to use the state language in certain specific documents where it is justified by considerations related to public order reasons and by the rights of persons speaking the state language (in fact, also by legal certainty of persons who prepare such documents) cannot be discriminatory because the obligation only applies to the state language and to all persons. Adding another language does not put anyone at a disadvantage. The prohibition and restriction of the use of a minority language is another criterion – prohibition and restriction were removed from legislation on 1 September 2009.

As of the effective date of the amendment to Act No. 318/2009 Coll. on the State Language – legislative amendments to § 8, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the State Language Act – restriction of the use of a minority language in documents related to social and economic life does not occur in the Slovak Republic.

The amendment introduced the possibility to produce and process employment-legal acts, financial and technical documentation, and statutes of unions, associations and companies in another language. Also, visitors to healthcare institutions and social institutions can use their language in communication during admission to and stay in such institutions. It is by no means the case that restrictions on the use of minority languages currently occur. The compulsory simultaneous use of another language is by no means considered a restriction of the use of a minority language. The legislation that makes it possible to prepare an employment contract in the state language and optionally in a minority language complies with all the guarantees of minority language non-prohibition and non-restriction.

See also the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language,

418. *The Committee of Experts has not been informed of any such prohibitions laid down in Slovak legislation.*

419. *Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

See also the common information in Points 297 and 415-416.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.

423. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities, such as hospitals or retirement homes, may receive and treat those concerned in Ukrainian in all areas where the Ukrainian-speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.*

See the common information in Point 199.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

b) for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.

426. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.*

Based on the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Cross-Border Cooperation* signed on 5 December 2000, the following took place:

- 12th session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation between 12 and 13 September 2016 in Uzhhorod,
- 13th session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation between 21 and 22 November 2017 at Zemplínska Šírava.

As for cultural activities, cross-border cooperation or the cross-border element in the field of national minority culture is also supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme. Arguably the most notable projects in this field include the scientific conference organised in 2016 by the Ruthenian-Ukrainian Initiative on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of SNM's activities, with the purpose to evaluate and present the 60 years of SNM's activities. The objective of this international scientific conference project entitled *Ukrainians in the History and Culture of the Carpathians* was to highlight the contribution of Ukrainians to the History and Culture of the Carpathians and to present Slovakia's culture and national minority policy.

The Karpaty Košice not-for-profit organisation implemented a project called *the International Presentation of the Ukrainian National Ensemble Karpaty* in 2016, whose aim was to present the work of the Ukrainian National Ensemble Karpaty abroad. The presentation was accompanied by a concert to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ensemble, which had also performed in Ukraine and Hungary. In addition to presenting its repertoire, the members of the ensemble also visited places of remembrance and cultural heritage sites associated with the rich traditions of the Ukrainian nation in Hungary.

The Taras Ševčenko Music and Drama Ensemble introduced the *110th Anniversary of the Birth of the Ensemble Founder Jurij Augustin Šeregij* project in 2017. The objective of the project was to present (Velykyj Byčkiv) a representative selection of the ensemble's activities to audiences in Slovakia and Ukraine, particularly the works directed by its founder J. A. Šeregij (1907–1990), a well-known Ukrainian theatre director and playwright. The Taras Ševčenko Music and Drama Ensemble is the only amateur collective specializing in opera.

No changes occurred during the monitored period compared to the report from the 4th monitoring round in terms of school activities and education that would go beyond cross-border cooperation, as the agreements with Ukraine are older and continue to apply in this monitored period. The list of agreements regarding the countries stated in the report is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/medzinarodne-zmluvy-a-dohovory/>.

See also the information in Point 202.

3.2.3 Romani

427. *The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For Romani, these provisions are the following:*

Article 8.1.e.ii;

Article 9.1.d;

Article 10.4.c, 10.5;

Article 11.1.f.ii; 11. 2;

Article 12.1.a; d; e; f; g; 12.2;

Article 13.1.c.

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

Pre-school education

a)

i to make available pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or

ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
iii to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient.

432. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to provide facilities for pre-school education in Romani and to raise awareness of the Romani-speaking population of their right to pre-school education in Romani, its availability and advantages.

The MESRSSR reviews the possibility of implementing bilingual digital education content in practice within a project called IKATIKA – Bilingual Digital Education Content for Kindergartens and Grade Zero.

Contributions in the IKATIKA publication are divided into three parts – Methodological Ideas for Teaching Staff Working with Roma Pupils, Methodological Ideas for Teaching Staff Working with the Ruthenian Minority and Methodological Ideas for Teaching Staff Working with the Hungarian Minority. Each part contains eleven topics linked to digital education content available at www.planetavedomosti.iedu.sk via a simple code system. It contains methodological ideas and recommendations for educational and training activities with the option to use bilingual digital content when working with pupils from Roma communities or national minorities.

This digital content gives children access to education and training content in their mother tongue and provides tools and stimulation for exploring and learning about the world around them. Its interactive activities for children feature instructions and audio tracks in the Slovak language and in their mother tongue. Children will be motivated and their cooperation among themselves and with teachers will improve. In addition to improving the standard of knowledge among children and pupils, the intense experience induced by this interactive teaching helps develop creativity and the emotional aspect of their personalities.

This form of innovative education presents a challenge for kindergarten grade zero teachers in terms of how to approach children in their mother tongue.

Primary, secondary, technical and vocational education

b)

iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum.

There are primary schools with Romani language instruction in the Slovak Republic: Private Primary School in Kremnica, Private Primary School in Košice-Nad jazerom (number of pupils in the academic year 2015/2016: 180, in the academic year 2016/2017: 147, in the academic year 2017/2018: 212)

See Point 64 – financing primary schools with a minority language teaching.

c)

iii to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum;

d)

iii to provide, within technical education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum;

The Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013 is an important document in preparing the Action Plan for education and in monitoring its fulfilment⁸. An equally important resource is provided by the MESRSSR's statistical data on children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (hereinafter referred to as "SDB") and on the education results of primary and secondary school pupils.

Monitoring of the fulfilment of measures respects the legislation providing for the SDB category of pupils and the methods of data collection. As the SDB category of pupils also includes children other than those of Romani ethnicity, data on marginalized Roma communities (hereinafter referred to as "MRC") will also be used in evaluating the fulfilment of the Action Plan.

The proposed measures and activities combine developing and enhancing the education infrastructure, creating favourable conditions for learning and teaching, reinforcing schools' personnel and specialist capacities, and reducing financial and facilities-related obstacles affecting individual educational opportunities. The specific measures 1.1 and 1.2 of the Action Plan focus on improving access and actual participation of Roma children in pre-primary education by supporting the development of pre-primary school infrastructure, by removing the financial barriers associated with attending these schools, and by improving conditions in terms of personnel, specialist staff and facilities.

The following measure 1.3 of the Action Plan supports variable programmes of early child care, including pre-primary preparation, which will take into account the specific living conditions of MRC. These programmes are desirable especially in areas where kindergartens are unavailable or have insufficient capacities.

In 2017, the OPGRC initiated the creation of the Romani Language Map. Collection of data proceeded in two stages focusing on the primary language of communication of children from the age of 6 in which they express themselves. If they communicate in more than one language, their first language of communication and their second language of communication needed to be identified. The first stage recorded the actual level of knowledge among OPGRC coordinators about the municipalities where the Romani language is used, with the secondary goal of adding information about unsurveyed municipalities with Roma Communities. A total of 1,137 municipalities were surveyed. Data collection identified 67 new municipalities with MRC not previously included in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013.

Data collection was conducted in the form of a questionnaire with the aim to collect data in three areas:

⁸ The resource was produced by UNDP in cooperation with the Institute of Romani Studies of Prešov University, OPGRC and ZMOS. The project was part of a joint UNDP and MESRSSR programme focused on monitoring the living conditions of the Roma population. Atlas 2013 serves as a resource for public administration as well as the not-for-profit and private sectors in setting public policies and programmes focused on improving the living conditions and social inclusion of the Roma population. More at <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/rodina-socialna-pomoc/socialne-sluzby/socialne-vylucene-spolocenstva/dokumenty.html>.

- The first area focused on identifying the presence and use of mother tongue in an MRC environment, such as Romani / Slovak / Hungarian / or other language. We should add here that the primary language of communication of Roma communities is Slovak in its corresponding regional form, then Hungarian, and Romani is only their third language;

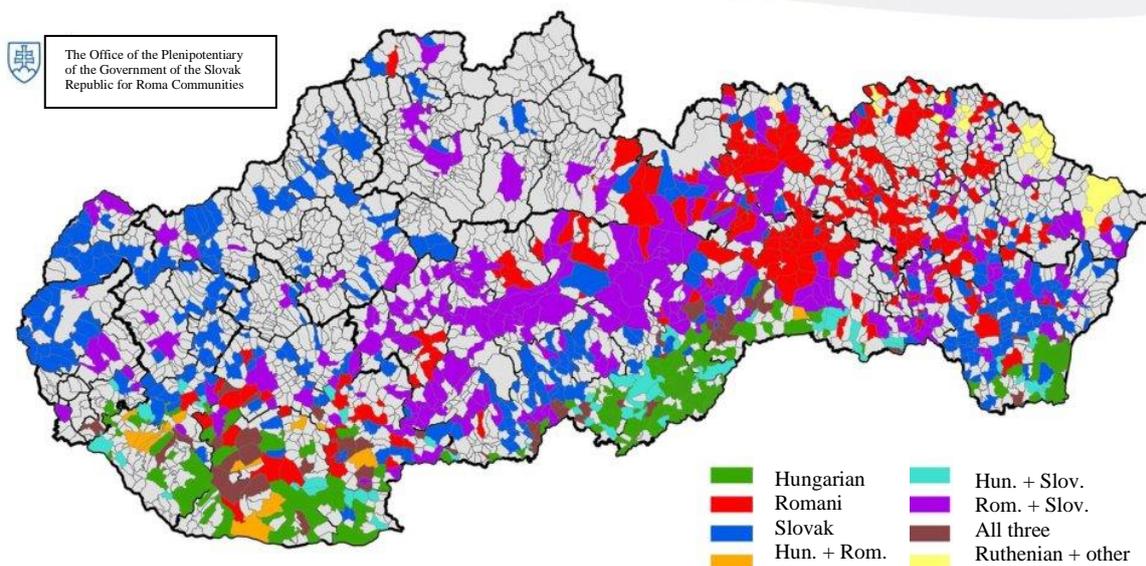
- The second area focused on the use of ordinary language in communication;

- The third area that was surveyed covered the language of instruction at primary schools with children from marginalized Roma communities as featured in their education process, and at schools where the majority of children are from such communities.

The Romani Language Map contains information about the active use of the Romani language in Slovakia with a view to utilizing the collected data in developing the Romani language in education and in applying bilingual methods at primary and secondary schools.

The findings delivered by the Romani Language Map represent significant progress in identifying the presence of the Romani Language at the level of municipalities. These findings provide a basis for a future increase in the number of schools, including kindergartens, and for raising the standard of incorporating the Romani language into teaching plans at primary and secondary schools. The quantitative findings from the regions indicate the need to introduce the Romani language in areas where a large number of children from MRC can be expected.

The Language Map of Roma Communities in Slovakia



435. *The Committee of Experts nevertheless considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide specific information on whether Romani is an integral part of the curriculum and the number of hours dedicated to Romani teaching.*

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to systematically introduce the teaching of Romani as an integral part of the curriculum in primary, secondary,

technical and vocational education, and to ensure continuity between the different levels of education.

We should stress in this point that Action Plans for the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma until 2020 for the 2016–2018 period were updated and approved by Government Resolution No. 87/2017 in January 2017 for the following fields: D.2.1 The field of education, D.2.2 The field of employment, D.2.3 The field of health, D.2.4 The field of housing, as well as a new Action Plan for field D.2.5 financial integration.

The objectives of the Action Plan will not be considered fulfilled on the basis of demonstrating that the relevant measures have been implemented, but on the basis of demonstrating an increased level of education among children prior to starting compulsory education, improved educational results of primary school children, reduced early school leaving rates, and increased numbers of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds completing secondary and higher education. Systematic improvement of these parameters is reflected in the stipulated measurable indicators. To give an example, we include some of the measures adopted in the Action Plan in the field of education:

- Measure 2.1 of the Action Plan focuses on supporting the education and training of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds within a proven full-time education and training system, which needs to be preserved and extended to other primary schools, providing the necessary personnel.
- Measure 2.2 of the Action Plan gives a “second chance” to young people who complete their compulsory education without completing lower secondary education.
- The intention of measures 3.1, 3.2. and 3.3 is to achieve more efficient targeting of educational support for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds at primary schools by increasing financial support for schools to support the personnel and professional capacities of teachers and teaching assistants. The impact of increased financial support and reinforced personnel and professional capacities will be reviewed through systematic monitoring of pupils’ educational results.
- The objective of measures 4.1 and 4.2 is to support smooth transition of pupils to secondary education through reinforced personnel and professional capacities of educational and career advisers and through supporting peer, mentoring and tutoring programmes.
- Measure 4.3 focuses on reducing the financial barriers associated with secondary school education and on motivating students to continue with their education by providing performance-based scholarships.

The applicable school legislation allows primary and secondary schools to teach the Roma language using a school education programme (as an optional supplementary subject). Schools that are interested in this subject will have access to the educational standards for Roma language and literature (for primary education, lower secondary education and higher secondary education) available on the NIE website. NIE has a subject committee for Roma language and literature and Roma history and culture. The committee works on innovating its educational standards and proposes alternative methods of Roma language teaching in schools.

The Romani language is taught as an optional subject at five secondary schools and pupils can choose it as their school-leaving exam subject.-There is no secondary school with

Romani language instruction in Slovakia. We should note in this respect that the Romani language is taught as a compulsory optional subject at Zefyrín J. Malla Private Secondary Grammar School in Kremnica, which in 2016 introduced a project called *the Romani Language – a Bridge between Us*, as part of the programme called *Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Support Social Inclusion*, co-financed from the European Economic Area financial mechanism and from the Slovak Republic’s budget.

List of schools in the Slovak Republic with Roma language teaching

Name	Registered office	Founder
Private Joint School – private primary school with kindergarten	Angyalova ulica 417/31 960 01 Kremnica	eMKLUB Kremnica, not-for-profit organisation
Private Primary School	Galaktická 9 040 12 Košice	“Good Roma Fairy Kesaj” Foundation
Octennial Private Grammar School of Zefyrin Jiménez Malla	Dolná 48/19, 967 01 Kremnica	eMKLUB Kremnica, not-for-profit organisation
Private Education and Social Academy	Požiarňická 1 04 022 Košice	Cultural Association of Citizens of Roma Ethnicity of Košice Region, not-for-profit organisation
Private Music and Drama Conservatory	Požiarňická 1, 040 01 Košice	Cultural Association of Citizens of Roma Ethnicity of Košice Region, not-for-profit organisation
Private Music and Drama Conservatory	Školská 31, Rimavská Sobota	Cultural Association of Citizens of Roma Ethnicity
Private Secondary Vocational School	Biela voda 901/2 060 01 Kežmarok	Carpe diem, not-for-profit organisation
Institute of Romani European Studies	Tatranská ulica 10, 974 11 Banská Bystrica	St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work, not-for-profit organisation

NIE continuously innovates its educational standards in Roma language and literature for primary and secondary schools, which are part of national programmes of education. As part of the pre-defined project “Together with Roma, We Will Achieve More”, financed from the European Economic Area financial mechanism and from the Slovak Republic’s budget, NIE published the following titles:

- 1) Romani-Slovak Reading Book,
- 2) Romani-Slovak Reading Book – Workbook,
- 3) Romani-Slovak and Slovak-Romani Dictionary for lower grade primary school teachers,
- 4) Fairy tales in Slovak and Roma language,
- 5) Amari Romaňi čhib/Our Romani – textbook and workbook for beginners,
- 6) History reading-book (we are searching for the past of the Roma).

NIE is currently a recipient of the international project “Towards Inclusive Education of Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds through Romani Language Teaching Procedures”, financed by the European Union within its Erasmus+ programme. The objective of the project is to innovate and implement Romani language at schools through teaching procedures according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The

following schools are involved in the project: 1) Private Education and Social Academy in Košice, 2) Private Joint School in Kremnica, 3) Jozef Adamovič Conservatory in Košice, 4) Private Music and Drama Conservatory in Košice, 5) Private Music and Drama Conservatory in Rimavská Sobota.

Adult and continuing education

f)

ii to make it possible that these languages become subjects of education of adults or part of continuing education.

439. The Committee of Experts cannot conclude to what extent Romani is taught in adult and continuing education. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide specific information on the offer of Romani in adult and continuing education.

The Institute of Ethnology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences organised the Academy of Roma Studies in November 2015 and in November 2016. The Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra offers a Romani language, history and culture course (introduction for assisting professionals).

The situation at the other institutions mentioned in the Fourth Monitoring Report remains unchanged.

Teaching of the history and the culture

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language.

442. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled, since the teaching of Roma history and culture is not ensured.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take steps to increase the teaching of Roma history and culture in mainstream education.

The MESRSSH and NIE guarantee continuous innovation of the educational standards in Roma history and culture for the second stage of primary school and for secondary schools based on requirements and comments from Roma history and culture teachers.

NIE introduced accredited innovative education for teaching staff at primary schools entitled “Intercultural Education in Primary Schools with Pupils from Roma Communities”. NIE is currently accepting applications for innovative education and is preparing a supplementary teaching material for the second stage of primary school entitled “National Minorities – Let’s Meet”, whose aim is to present the history, culture and traditions of the national minorities living in Slovakia including Romani.

The OPGRC is also engaged in the field of education for the Romani minority, having initiated the introduction of Roma history and culture in schools. A working group was set up at the OPGRC for this purpose in 2017. The objective is to provide access to education in Romani language and culture. The objective should be fulfilled by creating conditions for

teaching Romani history and culture at primary schools. Specific steps and fulfilment of this initiative is under preparation.

The OPGRC also initiated the formation of a second working group focused on developing training for Romani language teachers at universities to allow systematic preparation of future Romani language teachers. This working group focuses on the problem of systematic incorporation of Romani language into the education system at primary schools. The working group examines the conditions, criteria and barriers of integrating a school establishment into the national minority education network, and aims to address the need for Romani language teaching materials and systematic support in introducing Romani language into the education process or in introducing teaching in the Romani language. The working group also proposes systemic measures and initiates working meetings at an expert or institutional level.

The following institutions contribute to raising the level of education among Roma:

- The Institute of Romological Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra educates new Roma elites and all those (regardless of their ethnicity) who are interested in the available study programmes;

- St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work at its external facility The Z. Malla Institute in Košice teaches Roma history and culture and Romani language as support subjects within the relevant study programmes;

- St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work operates an external facility, the Institute of Romani European Studies of Sára de Marseille in Banská Bystrica.

The Institute of Romani Studies at the University of Prešov is also engaged in the field of Romani language, history and culture through science, research and education.

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party.

445. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled at present for basic training and partly fulfilled for further training. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to continue their efforts to provide basic and further teacher training for Romani.

The following steps are planned within the “Innovative Education of Teachers Aimed at Improving Their Intercultural Competence in the Education Process of Roma Pupils” project, financed from the European Economic Area finance mechanism and the Slovak Republic’s budget, with NIE as its recipient:

- 1) education of primary education teachers that will also include practical use of the Roma language as a support language in primary school education for pupils from Roma communities and

- 2) preparation of publications focused on Roma language for beginners.

In 2016, the MPC MESRSSH organised teacher training in the accredited education programme the Romani Language in Education. 74 teachers successfully completed the training.

As part of the “*Innovative Education of Primary School Teachers Aimed at Improving Their Intercultural Competence in the Education Process of Roma Pupils*”, NIE prepared limited-edition publications focused on the Romani language and culture. The following titles were published in hard copy and in an electronic form:

Bagalová, Ľ., Bizíková, Ľ., Fatulová, Z. Metodika podporujúca inkluzívne vzdelávanie v školách-2015,

Cangár, J., Kratochvíl, V. and Lužica, R. Dejepisná čítanka – Pátrame po minulosti Rómov-2016.

Facuna, J. Školská sociálna práca so žiakmi z marginalizovaných rómskych komunití-2016,

Facuna, J. and Lužica, R. Rómska kultúra-2017,

Facuna, J. et al. Rómsko-slovenský a slovensko-rómsky slovník-2016,

Facuna, J. and Lužica, R. Spolu s Rómami dosiahneme viac. Together with Roma, we will achieve more. Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie-2016.

Facuna, J., Mancová, M. Rómsko – slovenská čítanka pre 2. ročník základných škôl-2015,

Gašparová, E. and Lukáčová, I. Amari romaňi čhib. Naša rómčina-2016.

The Roma Educational Centre (ROCEPO) is an integral part of the regional office of MPC Prešov with a nationwide reach. Its main activities include provision of continuing education to teachers and professional staff at schools and school facilities with a high proportion of children and pupils from SDB and from MRC as well as provision of professional and methodological assistance to these schools and school facilities in the field of education and training.

Continuing education in 2016 comprised the following accredited programmes on the given topic:

Romani Language in Education,

Tackling Prejudice and Racism through Multicultural Education

The Formation of a Teacher Personality,

Global Education and its Application in an Education Process.

149 out of 152 candidates successfully completed the training.

ROCEPO also held professional seminars, workshops and methodology days in 2016 and participated in events presenting the activities of national minorities:

- professional seminar on teachers' positive experience in educational and training activities with children and pupils from MRC,
- final workshop for a project of mutual national minority inclusion – Kružlova Primary School,
- judge on the panel of judges at the Jakuboviansky slávik song contest,
- methodology day focused on reviewing the implementation of the Feuerstein method and the “Křížom krážom” method at the Podsadok Primary School,
- Apprenticeship Crafts Day in Kežmarok,
- opening event of an exhibition for the “Our Good Neighbours” project.

Other activities carried out by ROCEPO for Roma education and care:

- Zero Grade Teachers' Club
- Teaching Assistants' Club.

In 2016, ROCEPO conducted a survey on the status of children/pupils from SDB. The survey results are published at ROCEPO's Methodology and Pedagogy Centre website: <http://www.rocepo.sk> in the “Documents” section under: [Prieskum o postavení žiaka zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia v základnej škole – 2015.](#)

Through ROCEPO, the MPC MESRSSR established international cooperation with Babington Community College in Leicester, United Kingdom. The aim of the cooperation is to gain and apply the international partners' experience to an education process whose target group is pupils from SDB and MRC, which includes cooperation with these children's families.

Within the pre-defined project "With Roma, We Will Achieve More", financed from the European Economic Area finance mechanism and the Slovak Republic's budget, NIE trained 10 teachers teaching the Romani language, who successfully passed the state language exam in Romani language at the State Language School in Prague. At the same time, NIE introduced accredited innovative education for teaching staff at primary schools entitled "Intercultural Education in Primary Schools with Pupils from Roma Communities". NIE is currently accepting applications for innovative education.

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

450. The Committee of Experts asks the authorities to clarify the tasks and role of the Advisory Council in monitoring minority language education, as required by the undertaking.

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice.

a) in criminal proceedings:

ii to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.

455. The Committee of Experts considers these undertakings partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee in the legislation the right of the accused to use Romani in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in Romani, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

See the common information in Point 109.

b) in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

c) in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

458. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertakings are partly fulfilled. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

See the common information in Point 112.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:

a)

iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages.

464. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that Romani-speakers may submit oral or written applications to local offices of state authorities and receive a reply in Romani, wherever there is a sufficient number of a speaker for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

See also the common information in Point 5 and the information in 467.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages.

466. *According to the fourth periodical report, Romani is used orally in municipalities where the mayor belongs to the Roma national minority. The Authorities' Survey⁹ indicates that it is possible to use Romani in 22 municipalities. Three municipalities accept oral applications in Romani, while six make available some forms in Romani. Seven municipalities inform about the possibility of using the minority language in communication.*

467. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled.*

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary legal and organisational measures so that Romani-speakers may submit oral or written applications in Romani to local and regional authorities wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

More detailed information on facilitating the possibility of providing an oral or written translation and receiving a response in a national minority language is included in the results of the questionnaire survey conducted for the Language Report, produced by the Office of the Plenipotentiary. 57 municipalities with the Romani national minority were approached as part of the survey, with 45 returning a completed questionnaire.

Compliance with the obligations municipalities have in relation to the use of the Romani language in official communication was also surveyed. The results of the survey showed that 457 municipal employees in municipalities with the Romani national minority had a command of the Romani language, of whom 31 in terms of both speaking and writing and 15 in terms of (3%) speaking. In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, the municipalities specified by the law are obliged to facilitate the use of a minority language, and it is up to them how they will do so. The results of the survey showed that 10 municipalities (22%) used the Romani language in official communication by means of own employees and 17 municipalities did so by other means.

Act No. 184/1999 Coll. provides that a municipality can set a time frame for handling matters in a national minority language. The results of the survey showed that 1 municipality with the Romani national minority had set such a time frame. 7 municipalities with the Romani national minority complied with the obligation to publish information about the possibility to use the relevant national minority language in oral and written communication in a visible place.

c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

⁹ In the case of Romani, out of the 57 municipalities on the List, 44 replied to the questionnaire sent by the national authorities.

470. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to encourage the publication by local and regional authorities of their official documents also in Romani, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

The survey also focused on the use of a national minority language in the official agenda of a municipal office, and the results showed that municipalities with the Romani national minority did not use the Romani language in their official agenda. Municipalities with the Roma national minority did not issue or publish generally binding legal regulations in the Romani language, and did not receive any requests for issuing information about generally binding legal regulations in the Romani language in addition to the state language. Municipalities with the Roma national minority did not issue bilingual documents in the Romani language. Bilingual forms in the Romani language are available in 5 municipalities and partially in 2 municipalities.

A request for issuing a bilingual birth certificate, marriage certificate or a death certificate was received in 1 municipality with the Romani national minority. Municipalities with the Romani minority did not receive any requests for issuing bilingual public documents, whether permits, authorizations, acknowledgements or declarations, nor did they receive submissions initiating administrative procedures in the Romani language or requests for issuing bilingual decisions. In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., municipalities can maintain their registers in a national minority language, but municipalities with the Romani national minority did not maintain their registers in the Romani language, not even partially.

f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State,

473. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to encourage the use of Romani by local authorities in debates in their assemblies, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.

Following the information in Point 467, we should note that according to the survey in municipalities with the Romani national minority, none of these municipalities used the Romani language in addition to the state language. In accordance with Act No. 184/1999 Coll., a municipal councillor has a right to use a national minority language during municipal council meetings. The results of the survey showed that there was 1 municipality with the Romani national minority where municipal councillors used the national minority language during municipal council meetings, and 2 municipalities where municipal councillors used the state language and partially the Romani language. According to the survey, there was one municipality with the Romani national minority where the municipal/town mayor used the Romani language during municipal/town council meetings, and 2 municipalities where the Romani language was partially used.

None of the municipalities with the Romani national minority held their council meetings in a national minority language, there was 1 municipality where council meetings were held in both the state language and a national minority language, and 43 municipalities with the Romani national minority where council meetings were held in the state language. Materials for municipal/town council meetings were not prepared in the Romani language.

According to the survey, there were 2 municipalities with the Romani national minority where the possibility to use the language of the Romani national minority during municipal/town council meetings was facilitated by means of interpreting services, and 16 municipalities where this was done by other means.

- g) *the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.*

476. Based on this information, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking is not applicable to Romani.

We should note with respect to municipalities with the Romani national minority that municipality place names in the Romani language are, under Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., identical to municipality place names in the state language. 20 municipalities with the Romani national minority used municipality place names in both the state language and the Romani language in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll., and 3 municipalities did not use municipality place names in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll.

The survey showed that municipalities with the Romani minority did not have Romani language place names on train station or bus station signs in the Romani language. There was one municipality with the Romani national minority with a bilingual sign marking a public administration building. 1 municipality with the Romani minority language used municipality place names on public authority buildings in the Romani language in addition to the state language in accordance with the law. 2 municipalities used the same size of letters for the Romani language version and the state language version on signs marking public authority buildings, and 1 municipality used smaller letters.

Municipalities with the Romani national minority did not have bilingual street signs. It is also important to note that street signs are not stipulated for all municipalities, so only municipalities where a stipulation applies were expected to answer the corresponding survey question. Municipalities with the Romani national minority did not have bilingual geographical signs.

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

- c) to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.*

480. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to enable Romani-speakers to submit requests in Romani to public services wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds

Municipalities with the Romani minority did not receive any written submissions in the monitored period. More detailed information about municipality-founded legal entities is included in part 3.2.1 of the Language Report. Chapter 3.3.3 of the Language Report contains

analysed data on government authorities' application practice concerning the use of a national minority language, structured according to individual entities.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

a) translation or interpretation as may be required,

481. In light of the limited implementation of the provisions under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 the Committee of Experts maintains its conclusion that the undertaking is formally fulfilled.

Information is stated in Point 123, Point 467 and Point 473.

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages.

486. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the broadcasting time and the frequency of the time-slots allocated to the Romani language on public radio and television.

The public broadcaster RTVS broadcast 173 hours of radio programme content in the Romani language in 2015 and in 2016. There were 37 hours of television programme content broadcast in 2015 and 30 hours in 2016. Due to the fact that the Roma media centre has effectively ceased to exist, RTVS signed contracts in 2015 and 2016 for 2017 with new suppliers of Roma programmes, namely Romed, Gipsy Television and Jekhetane-Spolu. RTVS does not directly broadcast production for children, it does, however, cover children's literature and cultural events for children. RTVS does not have the capacities for its own children's production, and it is still looking for external production capacities.

See also the information in Point 9.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

489. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in Romani on private radio stations and television channels on a regular basis.*

The newly-established Fund will support national minority broadcasting in commercial radio and television programme services.

See the information in Point 10 on the Fund and the information in Point 501.

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages.

492. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to further encourage the production and distribution of audiovisual works in Romani.*

See also the information in Point 173.

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages.

495. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take appropriate measures to enable at least one newspaper to be published in Romani with sufficient frequency.*

As for periodical publications and Romani national minority publications, on 31 December 2016, the list of periodical titles maintained by the MCSR comprised 2 titles of periodicals published in the Slovak and Romani language, such as Romano nevo ľil – Rómsky nový list and Lulud'i.

See also the common information regarding periodical publications in Point 176.

Paragraph 3

498. *The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of the minority languages speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.*

See the common information in Point 183.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in

which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

a) to support the expressions and activities characteristic of regional or minority languages, and to support different approaches to works in these languages,

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities.

501. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings partly fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to further foster access in other languages to works produced in Romani and vice versa.

Museums and galleries play an important role in the field of national minority culture. Under Act No. 206/2009 Coll. on Museums, Galleries and on the Protection of Cultural Objects and amending Act No. 372/1990 Coll. of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Offences as amended, museums and galleries protect and present cultural objects as part of cultural heritage.

SNM, operating within the founder's competence of the MCSR, is the most significant national collection-generating, documentation, scientific-research, methodological and presentational museum institution ensuring comprehensive museum documentation of the development of the society and culture in Slovakia, including the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups that have lived in the Slovak Republic. The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin (hereinafter referred to as "MRCS"), an organisational unit of SNM, is in charge of documenting the development of the material and spiritual culture of the Romani national minority. MRCS's main field of activity is acquisition of items to extend its collection fund, its processing and the protection and presentation of Roma culture.

In terms of promoting the Roma culture and language, an important role within MRCS is played by the permanent all-year-round exhibition (since 2015) *Romano drom/A Roma Journey* – SNM (the Manor House in Blažovce, the Museum of the Slovak Village in Martin) – the exhibition presents the origin and history of Roma since their ancestors left their ancient homeland in India until their arrival in Europe. One of the museum's successful projects is the Gallery of Prominent Roma Figures (2010), with repeated exhibitions in cooperation with various cultural, educational and community institutions.

The Documentation and Information Centre of Roma Culture (hereinafter referred to as the "DICRC") is a professional institution (within the State Scientific Library in Prešov) with activities focused on documenting, mapping and building the database of objects in the field of Roma culture in Slovakia. Its facilities were constructed to serve as the national documentation and information institution with financial support provided by the European Union to implement the national project "Operational Programme Informatisation of Society, Priority Axis 2". A budget of EUR 212,000 was approved for DIRC's operation in 2016.

DIRC's activities are directed mainly at promoting the rights of the Romani national minority by documenting Roma culture and by making it available to the general public, then at creating and presenting digital cultural objects, particularly living Roma culture, which resulted in a collection of 112 digital cultural objects in 2016, available at www.portalsvk.sk, categorized as video, audio, image and scan.

The State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica extended its repository with documents in the field of national minorities, and non-periodical publications in national minority languages were made available in hard copy and in an electronic form, including periodical publications in national minority languages, published by national minority institutions in a minority or the state language. Periodicals in Hungarian, German, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Romani were also made available (32 periodicals).

The activities of the NOC are also important, as they contribute to the respect for human rights and to the diversity of cultural expressions, raising the level of culture and education of Slovakia's population and developing creativity as the fundamental culture-generating value in the society. The NOC is the expert guarantor and co-organiser of the nationwide competition the Colourful World – Coloriskeri luma, held by the Romano kher – Roma House. The competition is for children of Roma ethnicity and children from the majority population. The objective of the competition is to connect children from different communities through discovering Roma culture. The competition motivates pupils to form their own ideas and attitudes towards the co-existence of the Romani national minority and the majority population through literary and visual art activities. Number of authors: 316 (from 26 primary schools and 19 children's care homes), number of works entered: 323 visual art works and 3 literary works. In 2016, the NOC held a seminar called "Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Field of Culture", dedicated to the cultural and language rights of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic, focusing primarily on the Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian minorities (14 September 2016) for 20 professionals working in the field of culture and cultural and educational activity, with a number of contributions on protecting the rights of vulnerable groups (topics: human rights, national minorities, marginalized Roma communities, the holocaust, law enforcement, disinformation campaigns and working with objective information, etc.; lecturers: Tomáš Földes, Kálmán Petőcz, Jarmila Lajčáková, Monika Vrzgulová, Miroslav Tížik, Marica Pirošíková and others).

The *Národná osveta* (National Outreach) and *Sociálna prevencia* (Social Prevention) journals, published by the NOC, featured contributions reflecting upon the problems of protecting and promoting human rights, including the development of intercultural dialogue, the cultural rights of national minorities, ideas of understanding and mutual respect for cultural diversity, e.g. "The Cultural Rights of National Minorities (by Kálmán Petőcz, who is also Deputy Chairman of the Government Council), or "Education in the Romani Language: Dilemmas and Solution Possibilities" (by Jarmila Lajčáková, Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture).

Every year (since 2005), on the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, tribute is paid in the tribute hall of the SNU Museum to the victims of Roma holocaust (event organised by the in minorita not-for-profit organisation). 2016 was the year of the 12th edition (with the 13th in 2017) of the event held at the SNU Museum to commemorate the holocaust of Roma during World War 2 in Slovakia and the whole Europe (2 August).

Subsidies within the CNM Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location – subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area.

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the Romani national minority in the 2015–2017 period.

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Roma national minority	664,152	664,152	770,400

Overview of the Romani national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	number of projects supported in 2015	number of projects supported in 2016	number of projects supported in 2017
Roma national minority	170	152	142

In the field of promoting the culture of the Romani national minority, an important role is played by the professional theatre Divadlo Romathan, a budgetary organisation within the founder's competence of the Košice Self-Governing Region with a unique mission of national significance. Divadlo Romathan is a music and drama theatre, whose performances are a balanced combination of a verbal message, singing, music and dance.

As a minority Roma theatre, it plays an important cultural-artistic and social-educational role. In 2015 and 2016, most of Divadlo Romathan's activities were directed at children and youth. Divadlo Romathan brought three premieres onto the stage in 2015, staging 123 performances, of which 3 were abroad. Divadlo Romathan's performances were seen by 15,323 theatre-goers in 2015. In 2016, Divadlo Romathan rehearsed 2 premieres, *Kúzelný večer Romathanu* and *Kúzelný zvonček*, and performed 67 repeats besides other performances and activities. *Romathan v novom šate* and *Kúzelný zvonček* are among their most successful performances. Divadlo Romathan's performances were seen by nearly 9,000 theatre-goers in 2016. In 2016, Divadlo Romathan operated with a budget of EUR 385,816,73, having received EUR 368,002 from its founder to cover operational costs and costs associated with its activities, with the rest of its funding coming from the CNM Subsidy Programme of the Government Office (EUR 4,800), culture vouchers (EUR 3,843) and from its own activities (EUR 9,171,73).

Radio broadcasting for national minorities is provided by the public broadcaster RTVS via Rádio Patria, a separate programme service. The production team of national minority broadcasting Košice delivers 17 hours of programme content in six languages on Rádio Regina. A certain portion of the broadcasting – 5 and a half hours – is dedicated to a daily information “flow” programme (“flow” refers to a long format without a fixed schedule) with nationwide coverage in Ruthenian via Rádio Regina. Changes to the *Romani broadcasting* occurred in the second half of 2016, extending the regional reach of the *Rómske slovo* format. The arrival of new suppliers of news and reports resulted in an increased number of regions covered in news reports. In 2016, the production team sought to have Romani broadcasting moved from ordered supplier content to its own production. Its effort was successful and in 2017 the format was produced as own RTVS production. Romani broadcasting by RTVS is unique compared to other public broadcasters within the European Broadcasting Union. The principle that Romani broadcasting is predominantly in the Romani language is not common around the world. At the present time, Slovakia is the only country where the principle of minority broadcasting in a minority language is also followed in the case of the Romani language.

The Centre for National Minority Broadcasting within RTVS's programme service Dvojka prepares and broadcasts daily 30-minute slots for national minorities. The Roma

national minority is represented in this broadcasting by the Romani magazine format *Sme doma/Samkhere*. Significant changes occurred in the production of Romani formats in that the pool of suppliers was extended. The Romani magazine expanded not just its regional reach, but also its thematic reach. RTVS is gradually working towards forming a production team that would produce own Romani programmes, albeit with external suppliers of programme elements. All national minority programmes are prepared by members of the given minorities in a minority language and are mostly about the minorities themselves.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make appropriate provision, in pursuing their cultural policy abroad, for regional or minority languages and the cultures they reflect.

504. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.*

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

508. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language.

511. *Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

The objection of the Committee of Experts as to the strict restriction of the use of a minority language with respect to the undertaking under Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter, imposed by the requirement which makes simultaneous use of the state language compulsory, is not substantiated since the use of a minority language is explicitly permitted under the State Language Act in areas defined in § 8 of the Act, thus it is not restricted by the obligation to make a text simultaneously available in a minority language and the state language. The use of one language does not in itself restrict the use of another language, as both versions can be used simultaneously without one version restricting the other. The obligation to produce a document in the state language, while permitting a version in a minority language, does not lead to the conclusion that there is a strict restriction of the use of minority languages.

On the other hand, it is apparent from the non-discrimination principle that imposing the obligation of all persons to use the state language in certain specific documents where it is justified by considerations related to public order reasons and by the rights of persons

speaking the state language (in fact, also by legal certainty of persons who prepare such documents) cannot be discriminatory because the obligation only applies to the state language and to all persons. Adding another language does not put anyone at a disadvantage. The prohibition and restriction of the use of a minority language is another criterion – prohibition and restriction were removed from legislation on 1 September 2009.

It is possible to suppose that the claims that a minority language is restricted in employment-legal acts and in financial and technical documents originate in the previous reports, at which time restriction of a minority language may have occurred, as the legislation that was valid at the time did not allow producing these documents in a minority language in addition to the state language.

As of the effective date of the amendment No. 318/2009 Coll. to the State Language Act (September 2009) – legislative amendments to § 8, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the State Language Act – restriction of the use of minority language in documents related to social and economic life does not occur in the Slovak Republic.

Amendment No. 318/2009 Coll. introduced the possibility to produce and process employment-legal acts, financial and technical documentation, and statutes of unions, associations and companies in another language. It also introduced the possibility for persons admitted in healthcare and social care institutions to use their language during admission and stay. The claim made in the fourth evaluation report that the Slovak Republic has not fulfilled this undertaking is not justified after the amendment to the State Language Act from 2009, as the legislative amendments from September 2009 permit the use of a minority language in the areas covered by § 8 paragraphs 2 and 3. It is by no means the case that restrictions on the use of minority languages currently occur. This is clear from a past evaluation of the Committee of Experts, which stated that it expected an amendment to the State Language Act would comply with the undertaking in the Charter – not to prohibit, restrict and discourage the use of a minority language. Therefore, it is not possible to accept the conclusion in the fourth evaluation report, since after the last amendment to the State Language Act, the undertaking was fulfilled – all the previous objections were accepted by the Slovak Republic and incorporated into the legal system.

The compulsory simultaneous use of another language is by no means considered a restriction of the use of a minority language. Legislation which allows a simultaneous version of an employment contract in the state language and optionally in a minority language meets all the guarantees of non-prohibition and non-restriction of minority languages.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.

<p><i>515. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities, such as hospitals or retirement homes, may receive and treat those concerned in</i></p>
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Romani in all areas where Romani-speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.

As part of protecting and promoting the health of disadvantaged communities, public health institutions, as part of fulfilling tasks arising from the Strategy for Integration of Roma until 2020 within the Health priority, have established long-term cooperation with schools with a higher proportion of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and children from Romani communities. Pupils are regularly instructed in areas such as healthy life style and environmental protection, dental hygiene, first aid and injury prevention, education towards responsible marriage and parenthood, healthy diet, bodily care, harm caused by non-substance addiction, smoking, alcohol, prevention of parasitic infections and infectious diseases, adolescence and physical and mental changes.

As part of reducing the occurrence of infectious diseases, healthcare institutions ensure the control of selected infectious diseases by monitoring and evaluating the occurrence of epidemics of selected infectious diseases in persons living in an environment with low hygiene standards. As part of the European immunisation week between 24 and 30 April 2017, there were health-educational activities focused on raising awareness of vaccination as an important preventive measure.

If required, health-education materials are produced and distributed – leaflets, posters and brochures in the Romani language on these topics: How to Protect Yourself against Ticks, How to Avoid the Flu, Vaccination and other.

See the common information in Point 199.

Children placed in facilities of socio-legal protection and social care also include children speaking the Romani language.

Based on an initiative by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “MLSAFSR”), a leaflet with information about the National Helpline for Women in the Romani language – *Džuvl'ija šegitinen le džuvl'ijenge* was issued for Roma women. This material was supported by the European Social Fund from the operational programme Employment and Social Inclusion.

The Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities of the MLSAFSR uses a funding scheme to support Romani non-governmental organisations which aim to support Roma women in their inclusion in the civil society, and to support the use of mother tongue in gender-sensitive topics. The MLSAFSR perceives language as a bridge of understanding.

In raising awareness of Roma population in facilities of socio-legal protection and social care, the MLSAFSR or its subordinate organisations also cooperate with the following organisations:

No.	Not-for-profit organisation	Field of cooperation
1.	- o.z. Dlane	organising the Children’s Drama Festival for children from care homes and their friends Hviezdička pre teba
2.	EDUMA	raises awareness among professional parents and caretakers caring for children of Romani ethnicity

3.	eduROMA	organising camps and support of talents – dancing and singing
4.	Association for Integration of Roma in Slovakia	organising the Roma Festival, participating in a cultural-educational camp for Roma children from Gemer, so-called Khamóro
5.	- o.z. Nádej deťom	Mothers with children project, activities – reading books with understanding, library of toys, extra classes for children
6.	Union of Centres for Mothers	dancing, singing
7.	Not-for-profit organisation KEŽMARSKÝ HLAS	Roma ensemble Kesaj Tchave
8.	Evangelical Diaconal Centre Poprad	organising music events focusing on customs and ethnic Roma music
9.	Foundation – Roma Education Fund – an organisational unit of the foreign foundation Roma Education Fund – Roma Oktatási Alap (hereinafter referred to as “REF”).	The main goal of the Roma Education Fund is to support the development and implementation of educational policies contributing to Roma integration into education systems.
10.	Romani Pastoral – Community Centre from Hanušovce nad Topľou, through the Roma Renovabis project.	The main objective is to use education to prepare children from the most socially disadvantaged families for pre-primary grade and for first grade of primary school. They provide first communion and confirmation preparation
11.	The Romano kher organisation	in the field of Roma History and culture Participation in the FAREBNÝ SVET– Coloriskeri luma competition, whose aim is to attract children to drawing inspired by the Roma community
12.	Community Centre in Veľké Kapušany	in the field of music – children learn Roma songs and dance

Under § 9a of Act No. 544/2010 Coll. on Grants within the competence of the MLSAFSR, grants to support gender equality and equality of opportunities provided before 31 December 2016 were also provided for Romani not-for-profit-organisations: in minorita – EUR10,000, SAVORE – EUR 8,000. The projects implemented by these not-for-profit organisations were also used to support the use of the Romani language in closed communities where the Romani language is used as mother tongue.

The MLSAFSR actively cooperated with the OPGRC on the amendment to Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services and on amending and supplementing Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Trade Licensing as amended, which, in the amended form, softens the criteria in selecting candidates for the national projects of field social work and community centres. These projects are implemented within the competence of OPGRC. The amendment also softens the criteria for the national project “Support of Selected Social Services of Crisis Intervention” at the community level and for the national project “Field Social Work in Municipalities I”, implemented by MLSAFSR. The adjustment of qualification criteria, whose provisions are temporary, is intended to increase the number of workers in national projects who come from MRC or the Romani national minority. These softened qualification

criteria will contribute to increased employment participation of persons from MRC and the Romani national minority and hence to promoting the use of the Romani language.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

a) to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education.

518. *The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is partly fulfilled. It asks the Slovak authorities to clarify how agreements concluded with other states foster contacts between Romani-speakers living in various countries.*

The Romani language is not currently the subject of any international agreement documents within the competence of the MESRSSR, the MCSR, the MLSAFSR or other government authority in the Slovak Republic. However, cross-border cooperation for persons speaking the Romani language, or a cross-border element, is ensured in the field of national minority culture and is also supported by the CNM Subsidy Programme. A project called “Auschwitz Tour” was organised in 2016 by the not-for-profit organisation Cultural Association of Citizens of Roma Ethnicity of the Košice region within a sub-programme of the CNM Subsidy Programme called foreign cultural activities and international cultural activities, with the aim to introduce Roma pupils to the infamous chapter of the history of their ethnic group, the Roma holocaust. The output of the project was a series of lectures at primary and secondary schools in the Košice region with the Roma holocaust as its core topic.

3.2.4 German

519. *The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For German, these provisions are the following:*

*Article 8.1.e.ii;
Article 9.1.d;
Article 10.5;
Article 11.2;
Article 12.1.a; b; d; e; f; g;
Article 13.1.c.*

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

Pre-school education

a)

- i to make available pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or*
- ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or*
- iii to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient.*

525. *While welcoming the use of German at pre-school level, the Committee of Experts notes that the offer is very limited and only partly covers the areas where there is a sufficient number of German-speakers.*

526. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled.*

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to make available at least a substantial part of pre-school education in German to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient.

There is currently one kindergarten in the Slovak Republic with German language instruction – in Bratislava (it had 111 children as of 15 September 2017). The MESRSSR did not receive any other requests for German language teaching at pre-school facilities in the 2015–2017 period.

Primary education

b)

- iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum.*

528. *According to the fourth periodical report, the teaching of German as a minority language is possible under the “Framework Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools with the Language of Instruction of National Minorities”. This is offered by those schools qualified as “with instruction in German”, which means the possibility to teach German from the 1st to the 4th grade (21 hours), from the 5th to the 9th grade (23 hours), and to teach other subjects in German. Schools in Bratislava, Nitrianske Pravno, Kežmarok, Chmel’nica, Gelnica and Medzev provide extended teaching of German or of some subjects in German “if there is a suitable teacher”. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to specify in which schools extended teaching of German or teaching in German takes place in practice, as well as how many hours per week these options cover.*

529. *However, the offer of teaching German does not cover all areas where there is a sufficient number of German-speakers.*

There are two primary schools with German language instruction in the Slovak Republic: Private Primary School in Bratislava – it had 123 pupils as of 15 September 2017, and Primary School with Kindergarten – it had 34 pupils as of 15 September 2017.

Primary schools with German language teaching:

- Primary School, Hlboká cesta 4, Bratislava,
- Primary School, Nitrianske Pravno,
- Primary School Kežmarok,
- Primary School Medzev,

They had 747 pupils in the academic year 2015/216, 809 pupils in the academic year 2016/2017, and 861 pupils in the academic year 2017/2018 learning the German language.

On 9 March 2017, a working meeting was held at the MESRSSR focused on discussing the questions concerning primary schools with minority language instruction and schools with minority language teaching, particularly primary schools with German language teaching. The objective of this working meeting was to exchange information on the situation in training and education with German language teaching and German language instruction and to propose specific measures to optimise education with German language teaching and German language instruction.

It is also in the context of this meeting that supplement No. 1 was approved on 9 March 2017, modifying the Framework Curriculum Plan for primary schools with German language teaching (valid from 1 September 2015), effective from 1 September 2017 beginning with first grade, which modifies the State Education Programme for primary education. The MESRSSR approved it on 11 May 2017 under number 2017-7512/20194:1-10IO. The material is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/dodatky-k-rup-a-svp-pre-zs/> portal.

The teaching of German language as a minority language is ensured by the Framework Curriculum for Primary Schools and Secondary Schools with National Minority Language Instruction.

German language teaching is offered by schools which qualify as schools “with teaching the language of the German national minority”, which means that it is possible for them to teach the German Language in grades 1 – 4 (7 hours) and in grades 5 – 9 (12 hours). Primary schools in Bratislava, Nitrianske Pravno, Kežmarok and Medzev provide German language teaching from grade 1.

See Point 64 – framework curriculum plans for primary schools with a minority language teaching.

Secondary, technical and vocational education

c)

iii to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum.

d)

iii to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum.

533. <i>The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.</i>

<i>The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to provide for the teaching of German as an integral part of the curriculum at primary, secondary, technical and vocational education in all areas where there is a sufficient number of German-speakers and to ensure continuity between the different levels of education.</i>
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There was one secondary grammar school in the Slovak Republic in the academic year 2017/2018 with German language instruction in Bratislava with 127 students (110 students in the academic year 2016/2017).

The network of schools and school facilities of the Slovak Republic included two bilingual secondary vocational schools – business academies in Bratislava and Trnava. They had 348 students in the academic year 2016/2017 and 389 students in the academic year 2017/2018. There are other bilingual secondary grammar schools (Bratislava, Galanta, Nitra, Topoľčany, Poprad, Košice) with a total of 2,958 students in the academic year 2017/2018.

Adult and continuing education

f)

ii to make it possible that these languages will become subjects of education of adults or a part of continuing education.

536. *The Committee of Experts notes that these courses are not offered in the areas where German speakers are concentrated. Furthermore, the offer concerns rather specific professional fields and does not deal with German as a minority language. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

As part of its activities, the MPC MESRSSH provides continuing education to teaching and professional staff through accredited education programmes, organises professional seminars and workshops focused on exchanging proven experience, methodological support for teachers and professional staff and an attestation process. Two targeted teacher training programmes were implemented with respect to the German language:

1. From Antisemitism to Holocaust (presentation of a topic in German language teaching using interactive methods),
2. Multicultural Society in Germany.

Goethe Institute also organises German language courses in Slovakia.

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language

539. *The Committee of Experts has not received any information on how the history and culture reflected by the German language is taught in practice.*

540. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.*

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and culture which are reflected by the German language.

Educational standard from history for the relevant school level is a basic document for the teaching of history in elementary schools and secondary schools (especially grammar schools).

The educational standard, part called characteristics of the subject of history for elementary, as well as secondary schools, says that “...history leads pupils to the relation to

their own past through the prism of the presence as a part of the development, adjustment and preservation of their historical consciousness, in which the relation to other nations and ethnicities resonates. Also, to the understanding of and respecting cultural and other differences between people, various diversified groups and societies...”

Further, the educational standard from history itself includes the content and requirements for the pupil/student related to the past and the culture of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

The above starting point for the teaching of history can be further modified and adapted to the needs and possibilities of parents, pupils and schools depending on the environment in which the school operates. As to the teaching of history, it is possible to expand the teaching about the past of each national minority in the Slovak Republic. It can be done so that the number of lessons in the School Educational Programme will be increased or the topics related to the past and history of a national minority (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Polish, Croatian, etc.) will be included into the teaching of the subject of history.

See the common information in Point 10 and the relevant information regarding education in Part II, Article 7, paragraph 3.

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party.

<p><i>543. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to plan and provide basic and further training of teachers as required to implement the undertakings chosen by the Slovak Republic under Article 8.</i></p>

See the information in Point 536.

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

<p><i>548. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify the tasks and role of the Advisory Council in monitoring minority language education, as required by the undertaking.</i></p>
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See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:

a) in criminal proceedings:

ii to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.

553. The Committee of Experts considers these undertakings not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee in the legislation the right of the accused to use German in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in German, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

See the common information in Point 109.

b) in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

c) in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

556. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertakings are formally fulfilled. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

See the common information in Point 112.

See also the common information regarding Article 9, paragraph 1, chapter 3.2.1. (Hungarian language).

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:

a)

iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages.

561. According to the fourth periodical report, in municipalities with a large German minority it is possible to use the language orally, since there are employees speaking German. This is the case, for example, in Devínska Nová Ves. The Committee of Experts welcomes this information, since the number of persons belonging to the German minority in Devínska Nová Ves is very low. However, the Committee of Experts has not been informed whether German is actually used in practice in relations with any local branch of state authorities. Moreover, the undertaking covers also written communication.

562. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that German-speakers may submit oral or written applications to local offices of state authorities and receive a reply in German, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The village of Kunešov in Žiar nad Hronom District was the only municipality where Slovak Republic citizens belong to the German national minority. The municipality uses the language of the German national minority on its municipality place name sign, on its municipality office sign, on the municipal mayor's sign and on the municipal council's sign.

The municipality residents do not use the language of the German national minority in official oral or written communication, as the residents identifying themselves as belonging to the German national minority have died. The majority of the residents have been Slovakised and do not understand the German language. The original residents only come to the village to visit and communicate in Swabian, which hardly anyone in the village understands, so they need interpreters.

The village of Krahule is not in the list of municipalities where Slovak Republic citizens belonging to the national minority represent at least 20% of the municipal population, however, it uses the German language in its municipality place name and on the municipal office building. The municipality residents do not use a national minority language in oral or written communication, they use Slovak.

As for collecting data on the possibility to submit oral or written applications in the German language and to receive a response in this language, Kunešov was approached in the questionnaire survey in accordance with Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll., and returned a completed questionnaire. The municipality's answer was that none of the municipality's employees had a command of the German language (there was one employee with a command of the German language in terms of speaking between 2012 and 2014). A time frame for processing a matter in a national minority language had not been set, and information on the possibility to use a national minority language in oral or written communication was not published. According to the results of the survey, there were no written submissions from citizens in the German national minority language in the monitored period and no request for issuing bilingual public documents nor a request for issuing

bilingual birth certificates, marriage certificates or death certificates. Bilingual forms were not provided, as there was no request for their use.

See also the common information in Point 5.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages.

565. Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that German-speakers may submit oral or written applications in German to local and regional authorities wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The situation remains unchanged compared to the 4th implementation report.

See the information in Point 562.

c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages.

568. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to allow and encourage the publication by local and regional authorities of their official documents also in German, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The Slovak authorities do not have a record of any requests for publishing official documents in the German language.

See the information in Point 562.

f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State.

571. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to encourage the use of German by local authorities in debates in their assemblies, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, irrespective of any thresholds.

The Kunešov village did not hold its council meetings in the German language, nor did municipal councillors use the German language during their meetings. The mayor of the municipality with the German national minority did not use the national minority language during municipal council meetings, nor were materials for meetings prepared in the German language.

See also the information in Point 562.

g) the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

574. *The Committee of Experts reiterates its observations that the names in the minority language appear on separate and very small place-name signs. This does not meet the purpose of this undertaking, which is to give the minority language public visibility. The Committee of Experts underlines that the term “place-names” within the meaning of the present undertaking concerns not only the name of the municipality, but all topographical names in that municipality that can be officially used, for example in texts produced by the local authority (e.g. documents, forms, public relations material, websites) or in signage (e.g. street name signs, signposts and public transport signs, inscriptions for tourists).¹⁰*

575. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures to encourage the use of traditional and correct forms of place-names in German within the meaning of the present undertaking wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.*

The municipality with the German national minority used the municipality place name in the state language and the German national minority language in accordance with Government Resolution No. 221/1999 Coll. The results of the survey showed that the obligation to use a municipality place name in a national minority language on a traffic sign marking the beginning and the end of the village is not fulfilled. The municipality does not use its municipality place name in the minority language under a state language place name on train station signs or bus station signs. The municipality does not have the national minority language on signs marking a public administration building. The municipality uses a municipality place name in the national minority language next to the state language version on public administration buildings, however, signs marking public administration buildings in the national minority language were missing. The municipality with the German national minority language did not use the national minority language on street signs or geographical signs.

See the information in Point 562.

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or

¹⁰ See, for example, 2nd Report of the Committee of Experts on the Slovak Republic, ECRML (2009)8, paragraph 232, 1st Report of the Committee of Experts on Romania, ECRML (2012) 3, paragraph 156.

minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.

578. *The Committee of Experts reiterates that this undertaking concerns public services such as railways, urban transport, electricity, water and gas, cleaning and sanitation, telephone services, refuse collection and disposal, sporting facilities or entertainment venues. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the use of German in practice in communication with such public services.*

579. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to allow German-speakers to submit requests in German to public services wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers, irrespective of any thresholds.*

If the German speaking minority submits a request to use German language in official communication, Slovak authorities will deal with these requests by means of employees speaking German language or interpreters. Such a request has not been made.

See also the information in Point 562.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

a) *translation or interpretation as may be required;*

581. *In view of the lack of practical implementation of the undertakings in Article 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3, the Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is only formally fulfilled.*

There were no other requests from members of the German national minority. However, the results showed that the municipality with the German national minority does facilitate the use of the German language in official communication by means of interpreting or translation services.

See the information in Point 562.

c) *compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.*

584. *The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples of cases where civil servants speaking German have been appointed, upon request, in the territory where this language is used.*

The state and local government employ members of national minorities many of whom work in the departments that use the languages of national minorities, but their central registration (the registration of employees speaking regional or minority language) is not kept under this kind of categorisation.

See the information in Point 562.

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages.

587. The Committee of Experts notes that the presence of German in public service broadcasting remains very limited, which reduces the effectiveness and attractiveness of this broadcasting. The Committee of Experts reiterates the great importance of the electronic media, especially television, for the promotion of regional or minority languages in modern societies¹¹.

588. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Slovak authorities to increase the broadcasting time and the frequency of the time-slots allocated to the German language on public radio and television.

The public broadcaster RTVS broadcast 16 hours of radio programme content and 6 hours of television programme content in each year in the 2015–2017 period.

See also the text of the information in Point 9.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis.

591. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of programmes in German on private radio stations and television channels on a regular basis.

The newly-established Fund will support national minority broadcasting in commercial radio and television programme services.

See the information in Point 10 on Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund.

¹¹ See also 3rd report of the Committee of Experts on the Slovak Republic ECRML (2013) 1, paragraph 754.

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages.

594. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the production and distribution of audiovisual works in German.*

See the information in Point 173.

e)

i) to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages.

598. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take appropriate measures to enable at least one newspaper to be published in German with sufficient frequency.*

On 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MCSR comprised 6 titles of periodicals published in the German language.

See also the common information regarding periodical publications in Point 176.

f)

ii) to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages.

601. *Due to the lack of recent financial assistance to audio-visual productions in German, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

604. *The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of the minority language speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.*

See the common information in Point 183.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in

which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities.

607. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Slovak authorities to further foster access in German to works produced in other languages.

The entities concerned will be able to apply for reimbursement of costs by submitting an application for support from the newly-established Fund.

See the information in Point 10 on Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund.

Paragraph 2

In respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

610. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is fulfilled. It asks again the Slovak authorities for specific examples of cultural activities, such as festivals or cultural institutions promoting German, outside the territories where the language is traditionally used.

Subsidies within the CNM Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location – subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area. See tables below:

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the German national minority in the 2015–2017 period

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
German national minority	88,880	88,880	103,050

Overview of the German national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	number of projects supported in 2015	number of projects supported in 2016	number of projects supported in 2017
German national minority	14	10	11

As for cultural activities, we should highlight the significance of the activities of the Museum of Carpathian German Culture (hereinafter referred to as “MCGC”), which belongs to the organisational structure of SNM. The MCGC gathers, protects, professionally prepares and presents documentation of tangible and spiritual culture of Carpathian Germans. The collections cover areas of the life of Carpathian Germans: pieces of clothing, textiles,

domestic and craft production, industrial products, art works, sacred objects, the press. The MCGC has its exhibition in Nitrianske Pravno and in Handlová in the Houses of Carpathian German Association Meetings with a permanent exhibition focused on the history and culture of Hauerland. The MCGC also includes a documentation and information centre specialising in the history and culture of Carpathian Germans. Its core part is a library with periodical and non-periodical literature published in Slovakia and abroad. The MCGC is the most comprehensively equipped institution in Slovakia. The library is used by students and professionals from Slovakia and abroad. The MCGC publishes its own Acta Carpatho-Germanica series.

In extending its repository, ULB continuously acquires selected translation works from a national minority language into Slovak in line with the profile of the library's repository. ULB provides access to unique databases of periodicals and information sources (biographical and bibliographical databases) in an electronic form. Notable databases include Library Press Display, providing online access to more than 6,200 periodical titles from 96 countries in 54 languages. All newspaper titles are published online in their original graphical form and format, including images, immediately after their publication in their country of origin. The range of titles and countries on offer continues to expand. Titles available in minority languages cover Hungarian, Czech, German and Ukrainian (19 titles in Hungarian, 11 titles in Czech, more than 50 titles in Ukrainian, more than 60 titles in German, and titles in other languages). Access is provided to full texts with a 60-day archive, whether at the library premise or via remote online access.

In 2016 ULB held events organised by its individual sections and by ULB Multifunctional Cultural Centre: the Divided Memories (Rozdelené spomienky) exhibition. Czechoslovakia 1937–1948 (11 February – 9 April 2016) – the multimedia exhibition accompanied by a short film presentation reminded Slovak and foreign visitors of the Nazi oppression of Czechs and Slovaks and of the trauma experienced by the Germans when they were driven out after centuries of peaceful co-existence. Those who had experienced the Czechoslovak landscape of the 1937–1948 shared their memories in video recordings and in person – from the German, Jewish, Hungarian and other perspectives. The event was co-organised by Antikomplex.sk, o. z., the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, One Country – Two Stories (1 March 2016) – discussion about the Divided Memories exhibition; Divided Memories in German (8 March 2016) – screenings of short films in German. The screenings were attended by German and Austrian citizens living in Bratislava and in the neighbouring Austria; On Ethnic and Cultural Diversity (30 March 2016) – information-educational event for secondary grammar school students.

See also the common information in Point 10.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to make appropriate provision, in pursuing their cultural policy abroad, for regional or minority languages and the cultures they reflect.

611. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered the undertaking fulfilled. However, it requested specific examples concerning German.

613. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is fulfilled. It asks again the Slovak authorities for examples of how the German language and culture are reflected in the cultural policy abroad of the Slovak Republic.

Kino Lumière, the SFI cinema, showcases the Slovak, European and world audiovisual culture for the public; Slovak film, European cinematography and archive cinema are its programming priorities. It presents regular series, offers public displays and organises festivals. More than 90% of films screened at the cinema are subtitled original versions.

Everything else has remained unchanged compared to the 4th implementation report.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

617. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language,

620. *Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

The objection of the Committee of Experts as to the strict restriction of the use of a minority language with respect to the undertaking under Article 13, paragraph 1 a, of the Charter, imposed by the requirement which makes simultaneous use of the state language compulsory, is not substantiated since the use of a minority language is explicitly permitted under the State Language Act in areas defined in § 8 of the Act, thus it is not restricted by the obligation to make a text simultaneously available in a minority language and the state language. The use of one language does not in itself restrict the use of another language, as both versions can be used simultaneously without one version restricting the other. The obligation to produce a document in the state language, while permitting a version in a minority language, does not lead to the conclusion that there is a strict restriction of the use of minority languages.

On the other hand, it is apparent from the non-discrimination principle that imposing the obligation of all persons to use the state language in certain specific documents where it is justified by considerations related to public order reasons and by the rights of persons speaking the state language (in fact, also by legal certainty of persons who prepare such documents) cannot be discriminatory because the obligation only applies to the state language and to all persons. Adding another language does not put anyone at a disadvantage. The prohibition and restriction of the use of a minority language is another criterion – prohibition and restriction were removed from legislation on 1 September 2009.

It is possible to suppose that the claims that a minority language is restricted in employment-legal acts and in financial and technical documents originate in the previous reports, at which time restriction of a minority language may have occurred, as the legislation that was valid at the time did not allow producing these documents in a minority language in addition to the state language.

As of the effective date of the amendment No. 318/2009 Coll. to the State Language Act (September 2009) – legislative amendments to § 8, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the State Language Act – restriction of the use of minority language in documents related to social and economic life does not occur in the Slovak Republic.

Amendment No. 318/2009 Coll. introduced the possibility to produce and process employment-legal acts, financial and technical documentation, and statutes of unions, associations and companies in another language. It also introduced the possibility for persons admitted in healthcare and social care institutions to use their language during admission and stay. The claim made in the fourth evaluation report that the Slovak Republic has not fulfilled this undertaking is not justified after the amendment to the State Language Act from 2009, as the legislative amendments from September 2009 permit the use of a minority language in the areas covered by § 8 paragraphs 2 and 3. It is by no means the case that restrictions on the use of minority languages currently occur. This is clear from a past evaluation of the Committee of Experts, which stated that it expected an amendment to the State Language Act would comply with the undertaking in the Charter – not to prohibit, restrict and discourage the use of a minority language. Therefore, it is not possible to accept the conclusion in the fourth evaluation report, since after the last amendment to the State Language Act, the undertaking was fulfilled – all the previous objections were accepted by the Slovak Republic and incorporated into the legal system.

The compulsory simultaneous use of another language is by no means considered a restriction of the use of a minority language. Legislation which allows a simultaneous version of an employment contract in the state language and optionally in a minority language meets all the guarantees of non-prohibition and non-restriction of minority languages.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons.

624. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities, such as hospitals or retirement homes, may receive and treat those concerned in German in all areas where German-speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.

See the common information in Point 199.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

a) to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education.

627. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking fulfilled.

b) for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.

630. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide examples on how cross-border co-operation benefits the German language in the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia-Austria

Based on a cooperation agreement with Austria within the cross-border cooperation programme Slovakia – Austria 2014–2020 (Interreg V-A Slovak Republic - Austria for the programming period 2014–2020), several projects related to the development of the neighbouring Slovak-Austrian regions are implemented.

The Austrian national body for the cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovak Republic - Austria for the programming period 2014–2020 consists of three Austrian States: Lower Austria, Burgenland and Vienna. The Slovak governing body for the cooperation programme Interreg V-A Slovak Republic - Austria for the programming period 2014–2020 is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, where it also has a shared secretariat, and the secretariat's branch is located at the Vienna Magistrate.

Cooperation in the field of science and education between Slovakia and Austria is governed by the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Austria on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science, signed on 13 October 1999 in Vienna, and by the Protocol of the 4th Meeting of the Joint Slovak-Austrian Commission on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science for the 2013–2018 period, signed in June 2013 in Vienna.

One of the priorities is the promotion of German language teaching in Slovakia by sending 4 Austrian teachers to the Imrich Karvaš Business Academy in Bratislava and 5 lecturers to Slovak universities (Comenius University Bratislava, Economic University Bratislava, University of Prešov, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica).

Academic mobility between Slovakia and Austria is facilitated within the bilateral programme Austria- Slovakia Action – Cooperation in Science and Education. The programme provides scholarships for the following activities:

a) German language study and scholarships for a summer Slovak language course (SAS)

- b) study and research leaves for diplomats, doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers
- c) financial support for the implementation of joint research projects.

Slovakia-Germany

Cooperation in education is governed by the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on Cultural Cooperation, signed in 1997 and valid for 5 years with automatic renewal for another 5 years. The forms and scopes of cooperation are defined in the Record of the Meeting of Joint Slovak-German Commission in 2001.

As for academic mobility, Slovak candidates apply for scholarships from the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD, the largest provider of scholarships in Slovakia in terms of the number of scholarships awarded. German language teaching at Slovak schools is promoted by German teachers and German university lecturers. The number of these secondary school teachers and university lecturers in the academic year 2013/2014 settled at 27 and 5 respectively (Comenius University Bratislava, Economic University Bratislava, University of Prešov, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica).

Cross-border cooperation or the cross-border element in the field of national minority culture is supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme. The CNM Subsidy Programme supported several projects with a cross-border element in the 2016-2017 period, including, for example: a project by the Carpathian German Association in Slovakia entitled *My a naši krajanovia v regióne Bratislava* (We and Our Compatriots in the Bratislava Region) attended by guests from Austria and Germany in addition to representatives of the German minority. Another event within the project was *Medzinárodné stretnutie Prešporádkov* (International Meeting of Pressburgers), attended by many compatriots from Austria and Germany, and by notable guests from Slovakia and abroad.

Significant projects also included the Festival of Carpathian-German Youth with the aim to organise a meeting of German Youth from Slovakia and German Youth from abroad. *Sviatok kultúry a vzájomnosti* is one of the most important traditional events of the German national minority. The project is a continuation of an earlier tradition of showcasing the culture, customs and traditions of the German minority in Slovakia and in Europe.

3.2.6 Czech

631. The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage. For Czech, these provisions are the following:

*Article 9.1.a.ii; a.iii; b.ii; b.iii; c. ii; c. iii; d;
 Article 10.1.a.iii; 10.2.b; c; d; f; g; 10.3.c; 10.4.a; c; 10.5;
 Article 11.1.a.iii; 11.2;
 Article 12.1.a; d; e; f; g; 12.2; 12.3;
 Article 13.1.c; 13.2.c;
 Article 14 a, b.*

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

a)

to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or

iv if public authorities do not have direct competence in the field of pre-school education, to assist and/or support the implementation of these measures according to i; ii and iii,

b)

iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or

c)

to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or

d)

iii to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or

e)

ii to provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects; or

f)

ii to make it possible that these languages will become subjects of education of adults or a part of continuing education; or

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

632. The Committee of Experts considers that there is no need to conclude on the fulfilment of these undertakings as there was no demand on the part of the speakers for the teaching of Czech or in Czech at any level of education. The Committee of Experts will revisit the issue should a demand arise.

At present there is no education establishment with Czech language instruction in Slovakia. Under the applicable laws and inter-governmental agreements, Slovak secondary school and particularly university students can, if accepted, study at secondary schools and universities in the Czech Republic. The same also applies to Slovak Republic citizens belonging to the Czech and Moravian national minority, who do use the opportunity accordingly.

Article 11 – Media

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the

territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media,

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages;

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages; or

f)

ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages;

633. The Committee of Experts considers that there is no need to conclude on the fulfilment of these undertakings as there is no demand on the part of the speakers for Czech-language media. The Committee of Experts will revisit the issue should a demand arise.

As of 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MCSR comprised 8 titles of periodicals published in the Czech language and 30 titles of periodicals published in the Slovak and Czech language

Paragraph 3

634. The Committee of Experts considers that there is no need to conclude on the fulfilment of this undertaking. It will revisit the issue should a demand arise.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field,

b) to foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in regional or minority languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;

635. In the light of the mutual intelligibility of Slovak and Czech, the Committee of Experts considers there is no need to conclude on the fulfilment of this undertaking.

Subsidies within the CNM Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location – subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area. See tables below:

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the Czech national minority in the 2015–2017 period

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Czech national minority	229,815	229,815	266,400

Overview of the Czech national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	projects supported in 2015	projects supported in 2016	projects supported in 2017
Czech national minority	43	45	49

As for cultural activities, we should highlight the significance of the activities of the Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as “MCCS”), which belongs to the organisational structure of SNM.

The MCCS was founded in 1999 with the aim to gather, protect, professionally prepare and present material documents of the culture of the Czech national minority, and to study the Czech phenomenon in Slovakia. It is a specialised documentation and scientific-research museum institution with a global reach, whose profile is based on acquisition, methodological-professional and cultural-educational activities. The MCCS is located in a separate building in Martin, where it has its permanent exhibition as well as exhibition, work and depositary facilities.¹²

ULB registers 30 periodical titles of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and 147 national minority monographs published in 2016. Access is also made available to bibliographies – records of literary production in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Poland and in other European countries. References to e-books and databases in minority languages are available via this link: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-kniznica/elektronicke-kniznice/e-knihy/>. In 2016 ULB held events organised by its individual sections and by ULB Multifunctional Cultural Centre: the Divided Memories (Rozdelené spomienky) exhibition. Czechoslovakia 1937–1948 (11 February – 9 April 2016) – the multimedia exhibition accompanied by a short film presentation reminded Slovak and foreign visitors of the Nazi oppression of Czechs and Slovaks.

ULB provides access to unique databases of periodicals and information sources (biographical and bibliographical databases) in an electronic form. Notable databases include Library Press Display, providing online access to more than 6,200 periodical titles from 96 countries in 54 languages. All newspaper titles are published online in their original graphical form and format, including images, immediately after their publication in their country of origin. The range of titles and countries on offer continues to expand. Titles available in minority languages cover Hungarian, Czech, German and Ukrainian (19 titles in Hungarian,

¹² See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-cechov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>.

11 titles in Czech, more than 50 titles in Ukrainian, more than 60 titles in German, and titles in other languages).

Every year, the Matej Hrebenda Slovak Library for the Blind in Levoča strives to enrich its repository of books with titles in national minority languages. Users can currently choose from a collection of more than 230 Czech films containing an audio commentary for the blind. The library acquired most of its films with audio commentary as a gift from the APOGEUM not-for-profit organisation from Brno. Its repository of books also includes 38 audio documents in the Czech language.

Radio broadcasting for national minorities is provided by RTVS through Rádio Patria, a separate programme service. Rádio Patria broadcasts at the frequencies used by Rádio Regina in Czech. The production team of national minority broadcasting Košice broadcast 20 magazines in the Czech language in 2016. The Centre for National Minority Broadcasting prepares and broadcasts daily 30-minute slots for national minorities on the television programme service Dvojka. National minority magazines in the Czech language are broadcast once a week. In 2016, the programme service Dvojka premiered 32 national minority magazines, particularly for the German, Czech, Russian, Polish, Serbian and Bulgarian national minority. All magazines share the title *Sme doma* (We Are at Home), and bring reports on the community and cultural life as well as language of national minorities.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country: a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations;

636. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. However, it notes that this does not have any implications for the use of Czech.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language;

637. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. However, it notes that this does not have any implications for the use of Czech.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges:

Based on the *Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Czech Republic on Cross-Border Cooperation* of 2 November 2000 and the statute of the Slovak-Czech Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation, the following were held:

- 17th session of the Slovak-Czech Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation 27 November 2014 in Terchová
- 18th session of the Slovak-Czech Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation 26 November 2015 in Velehrad

- 19th session of the Slovak-Czech Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation 26 January 2016 in Trenčianske Teplice

This Intergovernmental Commission addresses the problems of cultural promotion, education and joint projects of Slovak-Czech border regions. There is no language barrier in promoting the Czech culture in Slovakia. All film, theatre, literary and television production is performed directly in the Czech language.

3.2.7 Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish

638. *The Committee of Experts will not comment on provisions which were regarded as fulfilled in the previous evaluation reports and for which it has not received any new elements which would have required a reassessment of its findings in its first report. It reserves, however, the right to evaluate the situation again at a later stage.*

639. *For **Bulgarian**, these provisions are the following:*

*Article 8.1.e. ii;
Article 9.1.d;
Article 10.5;
Article 11.2;
Article 12.1.a; d; e; f; 12.3
Article 13.1.c.*

640. *For **Croatian**, these provisions are the following:*

*Articles 8.1.e. ii;
Article 9.1.d;
Article 10.5;
Article 11.2;
Article 12.1.a; d; e f; g; 12.3
Article 13.1.c.*

641. *For **Polish**, these provisions are the following:*

*Article 8.1.e. ii;
Article 9.1.d;
Article 10.5;
Article 11.2;
Article 12.1.a; b; d; e; f; 12.3
Article 13.1.c
Article 14.a, b.*

Points 642 – 659:

Article 8 – Education

Paragraph 1

With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the

teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

a)

iii to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;

646. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to clarify how they support the Bulgarian kindergarten.

The Friends of the Christo Botev Bulgarian School, not-for-profit organisation is the founder of the Christo Botev Private Kindergarten, founded in 2002. As its founder, the organisation finances its operation and is responsible for its economic and legal framework. The Christo Botev Kindergarten- Частна детска градина Христо Ботев is attended by 50 children of Bulgarian, Slovak and other ethnicity.

647. The Committee of Experts considered the undertaking partly fulfilled for Bulgarian and not fulfilled for Croatian and Polish. It urges the Slovak authorities to support the provision of pre-school education in Bulgarian and to make available at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Croatian and Polish.

There is no kindergarten with Croatian or Polish language instruction in the Slovak Republic.

For the Bulgarian language see the information in point 646.

b)

iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or

c)

iii to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum

652. The Committee of Experts considers these undertakings partly fulfilled for Bulgarian and not fulfilled for Croatian or Polish.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to provide in the relevant geographical areas, within pre-school, primary and secondary education, for the teaching of Croatian and Polish as an integral part of the curriculum.

Support for national minority language teaching is ensured through FCP for Primary and Secondary Schools with National Minority Language Instruction and FCP for Primary Schools with National Minority Language Instruction or through supplementary lessons for teaching this subject. This is facilitated in the relevant geographical areas under the applicable legal regulations.

As part of the National Programme of Education for Secondary Grammar Schools valid from 1 September 2017, the MESRSSR approved FCP for four-year curriculum secondary grammar schools with national minority teaching and FCP for eight-year curriculum secondary grammar schools with national minority teaching, see:

<https://www.minedu.sk/ramcove-ucebne-plany-pre-gymnazia-s-vyucovanim-jazyka-narodnostnej-mensiny/>

Bulgarian

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Bulgarian Republic in Sofia is the founder of the Christo Botev Private Primary School and Private Secondary Grammar School. In Slovakia, it is included in the network of schools and education establishments as a private school with Bulgarian language instruction. The school is attended by pupils and students of Bulgarian, Slovak and other ethnicity not just from Bratislava but also from Nitra, Komárno, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice. This is the only school facility providing primary and secondary education in the Bulgarian language. The Christo Botev Private Primary School and Private Secondary Grammar School is currently attended by nearly 200 students.

The exact name of the school is Bulgarian Primary School and Secondary Grammar School of Christo Botev. A Bulgarian school was already founded in 1948 to allow Bulgarian children in Slovakia to learn Bulgarian. The school defines its goal as follows: preserving the Bulgarian spirit and cultural traditions in Central Europe. Teaching is in the Bulgarian language, and English language is taught as a foreign language. Slovak language is taught according to the curricula of the Slovak Republic, there is compulsory school-leaving exam in Slovak language and literature, Bulgarian language and literature, one compulsory optional subject, with another optional subject. Graduates are given secondary school leaving certificates in the Slovak and Bulgarian languages.

Books and study materials are provided by the Ministry of Education of the Bulgarian Republic, although the Friends of the Christo Botev Bulgarian School not-for-profit organisation, founded in 2002, is also involved in operating The Christo Botev Private Primary School and Private Secondary Grammar School. In November 2017, the school celebrated the 69th anniversary of its foundation.

Bulgarian language can also be studied at:

- The Department of Slavic Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Comenius University in Bratislava. A number of students with Bulgarian, Slovak and other ethnicity study at the department. In addition to Bulgarian language, they can choose other Slavic languages.
- at the University of Prešov, which has established long-term cooperation with the University of Episkop Constantine Preslavski in Šumen (Bulgaria),
- at the Bulgarian Cultural Institute offering other education opportunities for members of the Bulgarian national minority as well as Bulgarian language courses.

Croatian

There are no primary schools with Croatian language instruction in the Slovak Republic: Official Croatian language teaching at the secondary level can be provided at the Private Grammar School, Žitavská 1 in Bratislava and at the Department of Slavonic Studies of the Comenius University in Bratislava at university level. Official Croatian language teaching by a Croatian teacher is arranged for members of the Croatian national minority (especially children and young people). Teaching is provided once a week in every municipality where Croats live and attendance is voluntary. Costs associated with the course are covered by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Croatia. For those born in Devínska Nová Ves, there are additional voluntary Croatian language learning activities (through the CROats in SlovaKia and AusTria, implemented within the European Union programme for European territorial cooperation).

Every year, teachers who teach the Croatian language as part of leisure activities in the municipalities attend seminars held by “Hrvatska matica iseljenika” in Croatia.

Polish language

Education in the Polish language in Slovakia is provided exclusively by not-for-profit organisations. Language teaching for children and young people is provided by:

- 1) The Polish Saturday-Sunday School in Žilina based at the Romuald Zaymus Religious Primary School in Žilina. The Polonus Association acts as the schools’ initiator and administrator. Professional teachers from Bielsko-Biała in Poland teach at the school. Renata Rosovská, a quaestor at the Public Administration University in Bielsko-Biała is the school’s guarantor. The school is registered in the Polish school system and pupils are given Polish certificates. Lessons with teachers take place once or twice a month on Saturday and Sunday. Teaching takes place mainly in Žilina, but trips to a primary school in Bielsko-Biała are also organised for pupils. Subjects taught: Polish language and literature, history, civic education and music education.
- 2) The Polish Language Course at the Religious Leisure Time Centre in Nitra on Hviezdoslavova street. There is one 2-hour lesson a week teaching the basics of the Polish language. The Polish Club – Nitra Region acts as the initiator. The course is attended by pre-school children and lower-stage primary school pupils. Most children are of Polish descent with Polish as their mother tongue, but there are also children from Slovak families who treat Polish as a foreign language.
- 3) The School Consulting Centre at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Bratislava was established in 2003 for children of embassy workers and children of workers sent to Slovakia by Polish companies, as well as children from the Polish minority in Slovakia. The founder is the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Poland. Teaching takes place on Saturdays and is intended for pre-school education and for the lower stage of primary school.
- 4) Language teaching for adults is provided by the Interactive Academy of Polish Language and Literature in the form of online teaching. There are monthly meetings with teachers in Žilina. Its internet platform is administered by the Polonus Association and its lecturers are professional teachers from Poland. The technical equipment used in the school is owned by the Polonus not-for profit organisation. Textbooks and study materials are supplied with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.
- 5) The Department of Slavic Languages is established at the Faculty of Humanities of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. “Polish Language and Literature” also includes a master degree programme.

d)

iii to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum;

<i>654. According to the available information, there are no technical and vocational schools where Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish are taught as an integral part of the curriculum.</i>

<i>655. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled for Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish.</i>
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There is currently an insufficient number of students and insufficient interest of parents in opening classes at technical or vocational schools with Bulgarian, Croatian or

Polish language instruction.

f)

ii to offer such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education;

658. *Since there does not seem to be any support of the Slovak authorities for the offer, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the Slovak authorities to offer Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish as subjects of adult and continuing education.*

Various Slavic language courses (such as Croatian) for the public are offered by the Department of Slavic Philology at Comenius University in Bratislava in every semester. The offer of courses depends on demand and staff availability. These (Slavic) language courses are also offered by a number private language schools, whose activities and monitoring, however, do not fall under the competence of the MESRSSR.

The MESRSSR fully supports the idea of expanding the offer of Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish in adult education. However, according to regional analyses and needs, the provision of such courses is fully in the competence of various educational institutions, which respond to the level of interest or demand and supply, as well as arrangements between those who require education and those who provide educational programmes. If there is demand in regions for Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish teaching for adults, there are no obstacles to providing such teaching, and such education can be provided by secondary schools, universities or other educational institutions.

See also the information in Point 652.

g) to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;

661. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

The basic document for teaching history at primary and secondary schools (particularly secondary grammar schools) is the education standard in history for the given grade.

The education standard, in the part called characterisation of the subject of history, applying to both primary and secondary schools, states that "...history leads pupils to relate to their past through the prism of presence involved in developing, correcting and preserving their historical consciousness in which a positive attitude towards other nations and ethnic groups resonates. And, likewise, an attitude towards understanding and respecting cultural and other differences among people, various diversified groups and societies...".

Then the educational standard for history presents the content and requirements for pupils/students regarding the past and the culture of the national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

The above starting point for the teaching history can be further modified and adapted to the needs and possibilities of parents, pupils and schools depending on the environment in which the school operates. As to the teaching of history, it is possible to expand the teaching

about the past of each national minority in the Slovak Republic. It can be done so that the number of lessons in the School Educational Programme is increased or the topics related to the past and history of a national minority (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Polish, Croatian, etc.) are included into the teaching of the subject of history.

The educational and methodological material “National Minorities – Let’s Meet” dedicated to the culture and history of all national minorities living in Slovakia has been applied in teaching practice since 2017.

See also the common information in Point 10 and the information regarding education in Part II, Article 7, paragraph 3.

h) to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;

664. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It urges the authorities to provide the basic and further training of the teachers of Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish.

The situation has remained unchanged compared to the 4th Report of the Committee of Experts on the Implementation of the Charter.

i) to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

666. The Committee of Experts underlines that this undertaking requires a body that monitors, evaluates and analyses the measures taken and the progress achieved with regard to minority language education. Monitoring has to be reflected in published periodical reports. The reports should, among others, contain information on the extent and availability of teaching in minority language education, together with information on language proficiency, teacher supply and the provision of teaching materials.

667. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See also the common information regarding the Council of the Minister of Education for Minority Education in Point 3 of the comments by the Slovak Republic regarding the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

The State School Inspection has the competence to evaluate and control the standard of education practised at schools with minority language instruction. Its evaluation also applies to schools where the language of instruction is not a national minority language, but a minority language is one of the languages taught at the school.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded

by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice

a) in criminal proceedings:

ii to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or

iii to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language;

if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned;

672. The Committee of Experts considers these undertakings not fulfilled. The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to guarantee the right of the accused to use Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish in criminal proceedings irrespective of whether he or she has a command of Slovak and to provide in the legislation that requests and evidence may be produced in Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish, and that the use of interpreters and translations, where necessary, does not involve any extra expense for the person concerned.

See the common information in Point 109.

b) in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

c) in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

675. The Committee of Experts considers the undertakings formally fulfilled. The Committee of Experts asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on the measures facilitating the implementation of these undertakings in practice.

See the common information in Point 112 and the common information regarding Article 9, paragraph 1.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

Paragraph 1

Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible,

a)

iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages;

683. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to take the necessary measures so that the speakers of Bulgarian,

Croatian and Polish may submit oral or written applications to local offices of state authorities and receive a reply in these languages, wherever there is a sufficient number of speakers for the purpose of the present undertaking, and irrespective of any thresholds.

Members of the Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish national minorities have not used the opportunity to communicate with Slovak authorities in the language of minorities, as the closeness of their languages and the Slovak language means that they have a command of Slovak. The Croatian minority is the largest one, and Slovak authorities are ready to facilitate communication with members of this minority in the Croatian language through at least one of their employees. Slovak authorities did not receive a request for communication in the languages of these minorities.

Under § 2, paragraph 3, of Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities the act also applies to town areas of the capital of the Slovak Republic Bratislava, as well as Košice, which have in this sense a municipality status. Further, the Act states stipulates that in municipalities in which the citizens of the Slovak Republic who are persons belonging to a national minority and have their permanent residence in the given municipality account for at least 15 % of the total municipal population in two consecutive population censuses, such citizens shall have the right to use their minority language in official communication in this municipality.

Town areas with a significant number of members of the Croatian national minority (e.g. Devínska Nová Ves, Jarovce, Čunovo) constitute an organic part of Bratislava. None of these areas reached the 15% threshold. In these town areas, communication with members of the Croatian minority is facilitated by means of at least one employee speaking the Croatian language. The same applies to a municipality outside Bratislava (Chorvátsky Grob).

See the common information in Point 5.

Paragraph 2

In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage

- b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;*
- c) the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;*
- d) the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;*
- f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State,*
- g) the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.*

Paragraph 3

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.

Paragraph 4

With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

a) translation or interpretation as may be required,

c) compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.

688. *The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to assess where in the Slovak Republic there are sufficient numbers of speakers of Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish for the purpose of these undertakings and to take flexible measures regarding the implementation of the undertakings entered into by the Slovak Republic under Article 10 paragraphs 2 to 4 of the Charter.*

See the common information in Point 5.

Article 11 – Media

Paragraph 1

The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media,

a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages;

692. *The Committee of Experts notes that the presence of these languages on radio and television remains very limited and too low to have any impact on the promotion of the language. The Committee of Experts reiterates¹³ the great importance of the electronic media, especially television, for the promotion of regional or minority languages in modern societies. In particular, a regular and predictable presence of a regional or minority language on radio and television can considerably enhance its social prestige.*

693. *The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled for Polish and not fulfilled for Bulgarian or Croatian with regard to radio and not fulfilled for Bulgarian, Polish or Croatian with regard to television. The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Slovak authorities to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer radio programmes in Bulgarian and Croatian, to increase the frequency of the time-slots allocated to Bulgarian and Croatian and to increase the frequency of the time-slots allocated to Polish on public radio and television.*

In both 2015 and 2016, public broadcaster RTVS included Bulgarian and Croatian broadcasting in the programme schedule of Slovak Radio (which broadcast 5 hours of content

¹³ See 3rd Report of the Committee of Experts on the Slovak Republic, ECRML (2013) 1, paragraph 898.

in each language in both 2015 and 2016). There was also a moderate increase in television broadcasting in the languages of these two minorities, i.e. Bulgarian and Croatian. In the case of Bulgarian, the increase was from 2 hours in 2014 to 3 hours in 2015 and 2016. In the case of Croatian, one hour of television content was broadcast in 2014, with 2 hours in 2015 and 2016.

Slovak Radio broadcast 16 hours of content in Polish in 2015 and 2016, respectively. 3 hours a year were broadcast on television in the same period.

The public broadcaster's radio broadcasting for Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish relied mainly on Rádio Patria.

b)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;

c)

ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;

695. According to the fourth periodical report, commercial electronic media broadcasting does not receive any support from the authorities, irrespective of the language of the broadcast. Financial assistance is provided only to the production of programmes and audio-visual works. The Committee of Experts has not been informed of any private radio stations or television channels broadcasting programmes in Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish.

696. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

The newly-established Fund will support national minority broadcasting in commercial radio and television programme services. The entities concerned will be able to apply for reimbursement of costs by submitting an application for support from the Fund.

See also the information in Point 10 on Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund.

d) to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages;

699. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking partly fulfilled for Croatian and not fulfilled for Bulgarian or Polish. It encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the production and distribution of audiovisual works in Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish.

See the information in Point 173.

e)

i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages;

702. The Committee of Experts recalls that a "newspaper" within the meaning of the present provision has to be published at least once per week. Bearing in mind the numbers of the Croatian, Bulgarian and Polish speakers, it encourages the Slovak authorities to facilitate the regular publication of one periodical in each language, in accordance with the wishes of the speakers, which could develop into a newspaper over time.

703. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.*

On 31 December 2016, the list of periodicals maintained by the MCSR included:

- 1 periodical title published in Slovak and Bulgarian
- 1 periodical title of periodical published in Croatian
- 3 periodical titles published in Polish

See also the common information regarding periodicals in Point 176.

f)

ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages;

706. *The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled for Bulgarian or Polish. It asks for information about the support of authorities for productions in Croatian.*

The situation has remained unchanged compared to the 4th implementation report.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

709. *The Committee of Experts requests the Slovak authorities to clarify how the interests of minority languages speakers are taken into consideration within the bodies responsible for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media, when representation is not ensured.*

See the common information in Point 183.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Paragraph 1

With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field,

b) to foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in regional or minority languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;

c) to foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;

712. *The Committee of Experts considers undertaking in Article 12.2.b fulfilled for Polish and partly fulfilled for Bulgarian and Croatian and undertaking in Article 12.2.c not fulfilled for any of the languages.*

Subsidies within the CNM Subsidy Programme are also provided outside the areas where minority languages are traditionally used, as these projects are not limited by location – subsidies can be provided to projects with an international, national, transregional or local reach regardless of the share of minority population in the given area. See tables below:

Overview of funds allocated within the CNM Subsidy Programme for the Bulgarian, Croatian, Polish national minority in the 2015–2017 period.

	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Bulgarian national minority	35,504	35,504	41,400
Croatian national minority	48,064	48,064	55,800
Polish national minority	64,683	64,683	75,600

Overview of the Bulgarian, Croatian and Polish national minority projects recommended by the committee for approval

	Cultural diplomacy in 2015	Cultural diplomacy in 2016	Cultural diplomacy in 2017
Bulgarian national minority	11	8	11
Croatian national minority	7	8	9
Polish national minority	17	20	19

Within SNM’s organisational structure, documentation of the development of the tangible and spiritual culture of the Croatian national minority is carried out by the Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava (hereinafter referred to as the “MCRCS). The MCRCS is a documentation, scientific-research and methodology museum institution focused on the history and culture of the Croatian minority population from their arrival in Slovakia until now. The mission of the MCRCS is to systematically acquire, preserve, professionally produce and make available museum collections and funds documenting the roots, history and culture of the Croatians living in Slovakia or in other countries – (particularly the so-called “gradišćanski” Croatians).

In 2016, the State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica cooperated mainly with the Bulgarian national minority (with the Raduana not-for-profit organisations through cooperation with the Bulgarian Cultural Institute) in organising the Orfeica - Metamorfózy – plastic art by Nikola Kolev and Dončo Dončev’s graphic art exhibitions. The Slovak State Library currently has 9 titles of national minority periodicals (1 Russian, 1 Polish, 4 Hungarian, 1 Croatian and 1 title of the Ukrainian national minority). The organisation registers 30 periodical titles of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and 147 national minority monographs published in 2016. The Slovak National Library supports members of national minorities mainly in the fields of promoting, exhibiting and lending literature published by national minorities. In 2016, there were 9 titles of national minority periodicals available in ULB’s universal study room (1 Russian, 1 Polish, 4 Hungarian, 1 Croatian and 1 title of the Ukrainian national minority). The library conducted 28 literature searches focused

on the topic of Romani national minority. The organisation registers 30 periodical titles of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic and 147 national minority monographs published in 2016. Access is also made available to bibliographies – records of literary production in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Poland and in other European countries. References to e-books and databases in minority languages are available via this link: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-kniznica/elektronicke-kniznice/e-knihy/>.

Radio broadcasting for national minorities is provided by RTVS through Rádio Patria, a separate programme service. Rádio Patria broadcasts in the Polish language through Rádio Regina's frequency and in the Croatian, Serbian and Bulgarian language through Rádio Patria's FM frequency in Bratislava. The production team of national minority broadcasting in Košice broadcast programmes for small national minorities at the section for minority-ethnic broadcasting, where broadcasting time is divided equally and proportionately to the number a minority's members. These are magazine formats mapping the community and social life of minorities, partly covering literary and art content. 10 magazines were broadcast in the Polish language. Bulgarian and Croatian broadcasting is relatively new, as it only started in 2014. RTVS uses external suppliers to deliver content. In one year, 5 magazines were produced in these languages. They focus on the community and social life of the given national minority, primarily one which lives in or around Bratislava.

g) to assist and/or facilitate the creation of one or more institutions with the duty to gather, archive and present or publish works created in regional or minority languages,

715. The Committee of Experts maintains its previous conclusion that the undertaking is fulfilled for Croatian, partly fulfilled for Bulgarian and Polish.

See the common information in Point -703.

Paragraph 2

In respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

717. The fourth periodical report does not provide any relevant information in this respect.

718. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled. However, it again requests the authorities to provide specific examples of cultural activities, such as festivals, promoting Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish.

As the CNM Subsidy Programme is not limited to specific part of the Slovak Republic, all projects in this programme have a nationwide reach, including areas where a national minority language is not traditionally used.

The most notable cultural activities and events of the Bulgarian national minority traditionally include: Memorable Days of Bulgarian Culture and Writing, Traditional Bulgarian Evenings or Festival of Bulgarian Art.

The most notable cultural activities and events of the Croatian national minority traditionally include: Festival of Croatian Culture Devínska Nová Ves, the DOBRODOŠLI

Festival in Bratislava and HRVATSKI DANI – Croatian days in Croatian villages in Slovakia.

The most notable cultural activities and events of the Polish national minority traditionally include: Polish Culture Days in Košice, Dubnica Days of Friendship, Cooperation and Folklore, Polish Szanty on the Danube, Gathering of Youth with Polish Roots.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

Paragraph 1

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:

a) to eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations;

722. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See the common information in Point 4 of the comments by the Slovak Republic on the summary of the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts.

b) to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language

724. The Committee of Experts has not been informed of any such prohibitions laid down in Slovak legislation.

725. Therefore, the Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled.

See also the information in Point 620.

Paragraph 2

With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:

c) to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons;

729. The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Slovak authorities to adopt a structured policy aimed at ensuring that care facilities, such as hospitals or retirement homes, may receive and treat those concerned in Bulgarian, Croatian or Polish in all areas where the speakers are present in sufficient numbers for the purpose of the present undertaking.

See the common information in Point 199.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

a) to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education;

730. The Committee of Experts maintains its conclusion that the undertaking is partly fulfilled for Bulgarian and Croatian. It asks the Slovak authorities to provide information on how the agreements with states in which Bulgarian and Croatian are used foster contacts between the users of these languages in the states, beyond the field of education.

Cross-border cooperation or the cross-border element in the field of national minority culture is supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme. Several projects with a cross-border element were supported within the CNM Subsidy Programme in 2016.

- project of the Bulgarian Association entitled *Sanarodnik /Compatriot/*. The Sanarodnik magazine, builds on the long tradition of publishing periodicals in the Bulgarian national minority in Slovakia. The magazine is published 4 times a year and is distributed by a number of regional organisations of Bulgarians living in Slovakia to the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Austria. The magazine is available to teachers, pupils and their parents who are interested in learning about the life of the Bulgarian minority in Slovakia and about Bulgarian cultural traditions, art and personalities. The Sanarodnik (Compatriot) magazine has long been bringing useful and interesting information about the activities of Bulgarians in Slovakia, presents significant personalities who contribute to the development of Bulgarian-Slovak relations, maps the life and work of Bulgarian institutions in Slovakia, follows and brings news from Bulgaria, and contributes to preserving the cultural identity of the Bulgarian nation in the cultural environment of Slovakia;
- project by the Croatian Cultural Association in Slovakia entitled *the International Summer Camp for Children and Youth in Croatia*, whose aim was to improve Croatian language skills of children and youth born to members of the Croatian minority in Slovakia and to help them discover the land of their ancestors and build new contacts in Croatia which will strengthen their interest in the Croatian language and culture.
- project Polish Club – the Association of Poles and their Friends in Slovakia entitled *Outreach Training for Correspondents of Monitor Polonijny*, whose aim was to improve the quality of publications about cultural events organised in various towns in Slovakia, and to exchange experience among journalists from Slovakia and the neighbouring countries.

In the context of cross-border cooperation in relation to the Polish language, we should note that based on the *Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Poland on Cross-Border Cooperation* of 18 August 1994 and the statute of the Slovak-Czech Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation, the following were held:

- 20th session of the Slovak-Polish Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation 21 May 2015 in Stará Ľubovňa

- 21st session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Polish Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation between 24 November 2016 in Rzesow,
- 22nd session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Polish Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation between 12 and 13 December 2017 in Tatranská Lomnica

Annex No. 1

Amount of funds allocated for the culture of national minorities subsidy programme for the 2015–2017 period

Amount of funds allocated to individual national minorities

National minorities	Allocated funds in EUR		
	year 2015	year 2016	year 2017
Bulgarian national minority	35,504	35,504	41,400
Czech national minority	229,815	229,815	266,400

Croatian national minority	48,064	48,064	55,800
Hungarian national minority	1,955,296	1,955,296	2,268,000
Moravian national minority	30,489	30,489	35,100
German national minority	88,880	88,880	103,050
Polish national minority	64,683	64,683	75,600
Roma national minority	664,152	664,152	770,400
Ruthenian national minority	294,032	294,032	340,650
Russian national minority	53,377	53,377	62,100
Serbian national minority	28,706	28,706	33,300
Ukrainian national minority	100,673	100,673	117,000
Jewish national minority	52,825	52,825	61,200
Multiethnic and interethnic activities*	232,754	232,754	270,000
Total:	3,879,250	3,879,250	(4,500 000)

Annex 2

Overview of the amount of financial support for professional art bodies from the Hungarian national minority within the Culture of National Minorities Subsidy Programme

Name	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Thália Színház Theatre in Košice	€1,000	€650 (digitalisation of archive materials)	€4,000 (rehearsal of the Coony: Páratlan páros theatre play)	€31,650

	€5,000 (rehearsal and presentation of a new theatre play – Moliere: Mizantrop)	€5,000 (preparation of a studio performance Carlo Goldoni: Mirandolina)	€3,000 (preparation of 15 educational events)	
		€4,000 (preparation of performances at ten schools) €9,000 (XI. Festival Thalia)		
Jókai Theatre in Komárno – Komáromi Jókai Színház	€5,000 (preparation of a new theatre performance)	0	€5,000 (preparation of a new theatre performance – Anton Pavlovič Čechov: Ujo Váňa)	€10,000

List of abbreviations:

Action Plan – Action Plan for Protecting the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the 2016—2020

AVF – Audiovisual Fund

CDC – Civil Dispute Code

ADT – Alexander Duchnovič Theatre

CFE – Children’s Folk Ensemble

DICRC – Documentation and Information Centre of Roma Culture

CNM Subsidy Programme – Culture of National Minorities Subsidy Programme

Dvojka – the second RTVS television channel

Fund – Fund for the Promotion of the Culture of National Minorities

evaluation reports – evaluation report on the promotion of the cultures of national minorities, a report on the state of national minority education and a report on the use of languages of national minorities

Charter – European Charter for the Use Regional and National Minority Language
 uSEP – Upgraded State Education Programmes
 Language report – Report on the State of the Use of Languages of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic for the 2015–2016 period
 MCSR – Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic
 MCCS – Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia
 MCRCS – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava
 MCGC – Museum of Carpathian German Culture
 MHCS – Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia
 MPC – Methodology and Pedagogy Centre
 MLSASR – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
 MRC – Marginalised Roma Communities
 MRCS – Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin
 MESRSSH – Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
 MUC – Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník
 NAPCPH – National Action Plan for the Census of Population and Housing in 2021 for the 2017–2020 period
 NOC – National Centre of Culture and Further Education
 PRINED – National PRoject INclusive Education
 PULS – Poddukelský umelecký ľudový súbor (folk art ensemble)
 Government Council – Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality
 RTVS – Radio and Television Slovakia
 FCP – Framework Curriculum Plan
 SFI – Slovak Film Institute
 SNM – Slovak National Museum
 SNU – Slovak National Uprising
 Plenipotentiary – Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities
 SDE – Socially Disadvantaged Environments
 Schools Act – Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training as amended
 SEP – School Education Plan
 NIE – National Institute of Education
 CCP – Code of Criminal Procedure
 ULB – University Library in Bratislava
 ÚEUV – Centre for Folk Art Production
 Office of the Plenipotentiary – Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities
 Government Office – Government Office of the Slovak Republic
 OPGRC – Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities
 CNMEG – Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups
 EP – Education Plan
 decree – Decree No. 543/2005 Coll. of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic on the Administration and Office Code for District Courts, Regional Courts, the Special Court and Military Courts
 Act No. 184/1999 Coll. – Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities as amended
 Act No. 189/2015 Coll. – Act No. 189/2015 Coll. on Cultural and Educational Activities
 ZMOS – Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia
 JSHCMA – Joint Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Affairs