

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 22 April 2021

MIN-LANG (2021) IRIA 3

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

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

Submitted by Slovenia

on 22 April 2021

**Information on
the implementation of recommendations for immediate action from the Fifth Report of
the Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
(ECRML)**

**Chapter 2 Compliance of Slovenia with its undertakings under the European
Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and recommendations**

2.1 Croatian

**2.1.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and
promotion of Croatian in Slovenia**

I. Recommendations for immediate action

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| a. | Recognise Croatian as a traditional minority language and start dialogue with the Croatian speakers with a view to implementing Part II of the Charter. |
| b. | Promote awareness of the Croatian language and culture as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Slovenia in mainstream education and in the media. |

Ad a

The Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Status of National Communities of the Former SFRY Nations in the Republic of Slovenia was adopted in 2011 (including Croats) providing the basis for the establishment of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Issues of National Communities of Former SFRY Nations in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Council). The Council acts as a consultative body of the Slovenian Government which addresses the issues, requests and proposals of the members of these national communities. It serves as an institutional framework for conducting dialogue between the representatives of the Government and the representatives of these national communities.

Due to the prolonged coordination process related to the appointment of a representative of the Serbian community in the Council, the Council has not yet been formed during the term of office of the current Government. It is to be expected that the umbrella organisations of Serbs in Slovenia will coordinate their decisions as quickly as possible, so that the Council can be formed in the coming weeks.

Ad b

Croatian can be learned as foreign languages within the scope of compulsory optional subjects in primary school and in the form of supplementary mother tongue and culture classes for students of foreign nationalities. (see *Table I below*)

The Republic of Slovenia provides budgetary funds for individual programme media content in the public interest, including content that facilitates the exercise of the right to public information and to information for both national communities, the Roma community and other ethnic communities and groups.

The Ministry of Culture supported a cultural project from applicant *ZAVOD RADIO ŠTUDENT*, Urban Student Media-Educational Platform 2020 (EUR 99,220.00) in a public tender for media programme co-financing in 2020. As part of the project, the programme runs broadcasts with the participation of external associates and organisations representing certain ethnic communities, enabling them to be informed in their own language. These broadcasts include, among others, *Mali Granični Prijelaz* (Small Border Crossing) – a mosaic programme in Croatian, and the show *Jugosfera*.

Public radio and television broadcaster has a particular mission in this field. In accordance with the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, the broadcasting of radio and television programmes of the Italian and Hungarian national communities as well as radio and television broadcasts for the Roma ethnic

community and foreign audiences are defined as public service activities that Radiotelevizija Slovenija is obliged to carry out. In its programming, Radiotelevizija Slovenija must, among others, support the dissemination of knowledge of other cultures represented in Slovenia and their representatives. In this regard, it should also be noted that, in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant act, Radiotelevizija Slovenija has been granted institutional, programming and editorial autonomy, so the state cannot and must not interfere with its programme policy.

In September 2016, Radiotelevizija Slovenija launched a new half-hour radio show in accordance with the decisions of its Programme Board, intended for members of ethnic communities from the territory of the former Yugoslavia and all others who want to spread their knowledge about the functioning of these communities and their particularities. The show discusses current events in Slovenia related to the cultural and artistic creation of ethnic groups that have been active in Slovenia for a long time, and also highlights the problems that members of these ethnic groups face on a daily basis.

Radiotelevizija Slovenija broadcasts *Naglas!*, a show that is part of its information programme and targets ethnic communities from the former Yugoslavia living in Slovenia. It covers the life of first-, second- and third-generation immigrants. It is a mosaic programme relating cultural, scientific, sporting and other achievements of members of nations that originate from the former SFRY, who were born or live in Slovenia, and are successful in their fields.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture contributed budgetary funds for the programmes of Radiotelevizija Slovenija aimed at foreign audiences, which include *Alpe-Donava-Jadran*, *Podobe iz Srednje Evrope* (Alps-Danube-Adriatic, Images from Central Europe), a 25-minute mosaic programme (a cycle of ten 25-minute episodes) with the longest tradition in Europe. Since 1982, this programme is produced in cooperation with regional and national television centres from Bavaria, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia, and constitutes a unique project among European media. So far, the programme has featured more than 3,500 contributions presenting areas and their people, customs, specialties, and stories about what separates and what connects the inhabitants of the alpine, Danube and Adriatic areas. The programme is broadcast from six public television studios, i.e. the Croatian HRT, the Hungarian MTVA, RAI Friuli-Venezia Giulia, RAI Südtirol, the Bavarian BR, and the Television of Slovenia – TV SLO 2. The programme is broadcast in Slovene, Italian, German, Croatian and Hungarian. It is an example of good media practice confirming the important role of media in intercultural dialogue.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Culture has been holding public calls for proposals to select operations aimed at increased social and cultural inclusion of the members of vulnerable social groups under the auspices of the European Social Fund (hereinafter: JR ESS). Funding is provided for projects addressed at the members of ethnic communities (members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the Roma community, communities as defined in the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Status of National Communities of Members of Nations of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in the Republic of Slovenia, the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia, various other ethnic groups and immigrants) and people with disabilities. The JR ESS for 2018 and 2019 was implemented within the 2014–2020 operational programme. Funding was provided for projects that were intended for both Croatian and Serbian communities in the Republic of Slovenia and that contributed to the development, preservation and promotion of their culture and language.

Every year, the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia carries out a public call for the selection of cultural projects of different ethnic communities and groups as well as immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia (ETN), under which it also finances the cultural projects of communities listed in the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Status of National Communities of Members of the Nations of the Former SFRY. The ETN thus supports projects that contribute to the preservation of the language of the Croatian and Serbian communities in the Republic of Slovenia through projects such as literary workshops, theatre performances and theatre workshops, publishing poetry collections and magazines of communities and so on.

Today, public libraries are gaining ground primarily as a place where different cultures meet. Multicultural services are not special library services, but are integrated into an institution's basic programme, so when planning their work, libraries also provide special care for cultural and linguistic minorities. The core of any library is its collection, both physical and virtual. Libraries need to look at the characteristic needs of their users, so they can plan cultural activities that will include the protection of cultural diversity

and integration of different cultures, the educational activities, such as language education and training in the use of information technology, and various social activities that improve the quality of life of people in the area where the library operates (e.g. understanding intercultural content through book presentations, group readings, book exhibitions, intercultural relations in the form of interactive conversations, multilingual collections, respect for diversity, prevention of social exclusion, organisation of multilingual online information for ethnic groups, exchange of experiences between libraries, linking libraries, streamlining professional work, etc.). The programmes are financially supported by local communities.

The France Balantič Library in Kamnik, which has been building an intercultural library collection designed in 2015, is worth mentioning. The collection consists of library material in Bosnian, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian and Macedonian. The collection is part of the project Language: Mine, Yours, Ours, which is aimed at spreading interculturalism, language awareness and learning about good library practices and foreign language materials. The project was created out of the need to enable equal access to mother tongue book collections and materials for non-Slovenes. The collection currently comprises more than 1,000 items of books, newspapers, DVDs and CDs.

Croatian has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.2 German

2.2.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of German in Slovenia

I. Recommendations for immediate action

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| a. | Recognise German as a traditional minority language and start dialogue with the German speakers with a view to implementing Part II of the Charter. |
| b. | Promote awareness of the German language and culture as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Slovenia in mainstream education and in the media. |

Ad a

On 23 September 2020, the Ministry of Culture established a special working group for permanent dialogue with representatives of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia consisting of representatives of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia and of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The working group is tasked with dealing with the issues of members of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia related to the work areas of the participating ministries, including language and culture, in order to preserve and further develop linguistic and cultural diversity.

The working group held its first meeting on 10 March 2021. The representatives of ministries presented the measures and opportunities for members of the German-speaking ethnic group, and representatives of the Association of Cultural Societies of the German-Speaking National Community and the Association of Gottscheer Organisations presented the activities of their organisations. The working group will hold regular meetings, with representatives of the German-speaking ethnic group tabling proposals for topics to be put on the agenda.

Ad b

The Slovenian education system offers many opportunities for learning German, which is the second most widely taught foreign language in Slovenian primary and secondary schools. German can be learned as the first, second or third foreign language as part of both compulsory and elective programmes. The Ministry also co-funds the teaching of the German language and culture in the form of supplementary mother tongue classes for students of foreign nationalities. (see *Table I below*)

The Republic of Slovenia provides budgetary funds for individual programme media content in the public interest, including content that facilitates the exercise of the right to public information and to information for both national communities, the Roma community and other minority communities.

Public radio and television broadcaster has a particular mission in this field. In accordance with the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act, the broadcasting of radio and television programmes of the Italian and Hungarian national communities as well as radio and television broadcasts for the Roma ethnic community and foreign audiences are defined as public service activities that Radiotelevizija Slovenija is obliged to carry out. In its programming, Radiotelevizija Slovenija must, among others, support the dissemination of knowledge of other cultures represented in Slovenia and their representatives. In this regard, it should also be noted that, in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant act, Radiotelevizija Slovenija has been granted institutional, programming and editorial autonomy, so the state cannot and must not interfere with its programme policy.

The Republic of Slovenia ensures the enjoyment of individual cultural rights to members of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia.

In accordance with the Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria, the Ministry of Culture publishes an annual project tender for the selection of cultural projects within the programme intended for the members of the German-speaking ethnic community in the Republic of Slovenia. Its purpose is the preservation, development and promotion of the historical, linguistic and cultural diversity, and the cultural identity of the members of the German-speaking ethnic community in the Republic of Slovenia, as well as to achieve a higher level of their regional and sectoral cultural integration. The projects cover all areas of culture and are based on the needs of the German-speaking group in the Republic of Slovenia. In 2020, funding for cultural projects of the German-speaking ethnic group increased by 45 percent, allowing many more projects to promote language preservation to be prepared and approved. Funds were drawn from this project by the Cultural Society of German-speaking Youth and used to finance the publication of the German newspaper *Laibacher Zeitung* and the translation of ethnological literature at the Putscherle Institute. With the help of this tender, the Native Gottscheer Association will publish two issues of the bilingual newspaper *Bakh* (which has not been published for several years), and the Nesselstal-Koprivnik Institute will publish a brochure of Gottscheer geographical names (in Slovene, German and Gottscheer).

Every year, the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia carries out a public call for the selection of cultural projects of different ethnic communities and groups as well as immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia (ETN). Associations of the German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia are among the applicants for and recipients of funds based on this tender. (see *Table II below*)

Over the last 30 years, the Austrian Library has also contributed to the promotion of the German language and culture in Slovenia. The Library, which is part of the University of Maribor Library, is engaged in promoting Austrian literature, culture, art, and the German language, and also serves as a bridge between Austria and Slovenia. In terms of its organisation and location, the Maribor Austrian Library is part of the University of Maribor Library and financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

The Library collection of more than 12,500 units, including non-book material, daily newspapers, and professional periodicals, is supplemented annually with material donated by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Maribor Austrian Library is not only a classic library collection, but also provides a wide range of events, from literary evenings, exhibitions, topical lectures, international symposiums and consultations, organised with financial support from the Austrian Cultural Forum Ljubljana. All achievements have been the result of good cooperation with other institutions and libraries in Slovenia and abroad.

German has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.3 Hungarian

2.3.2. Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Hungarian in Slovenia

I. I. Recommendations for immediate action

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| <p>a. Strengthen the bilingual education system, including by providing adequate teacher training for teaching in Hungarian.</p> <p>b. Increase the duration and frequency of broadcasting in Hungarian on public television.</p> |
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Ad a

In the 2013–2015 and 2016–2020 periods, on the basis of the expressed need for additional training of teaching staff, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport financed the project Improving the minority language competences of teaching professionals in bilingual educational institutions in the Prekmurje and Raba regions. The funding of the project will continue in the 2021–2022 period.

In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport tasked the National Education Institute with preparing a platform for testing the command of Hungarian as a second language in bilingual schools in the ethnically mixed parts of Prekmurje and in the programme of the Bilingual Secondary School Lendava. The project will run for three years. The final report is expected to be submitted in December 2022.

In the framework of its expert and development work, the Institute for Ethnic Studies undertakes activities related to the implementation of supplementary mother tongue and culture classes for children of foreign nationalities. These activities are carried out on the basis of the Ministry's Decision on Financing (6039-6/2020/1) and the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2021-25, and they include the implementation of the established forms of supplementary mother tongue classes, and assistance in providing Hungarian classes outside the area where the Hungarian national community is settled.

Ad b

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Radio Televizija Slovenija Act (hereinafter: ZRTVS-1), the public service of RTV Slovenia has the obligation to create, archive and broadcast, among other things, one radio and one television programme for the autochthonous Hungarian national community.

In accordance with Article 4 of ZRTVS-1, RTV Slovenia must, among other things, ensure the rights of the Hungarian national community in its programmes that belong to the public service, by:

- ensuring credible and impartial information broadcasts whereby providing comprehensive information regarding political events at home and in neighbouring countries, important events in other European countries, especially the member states of the European Union, and important global topics such that the content broadcasted facilitates the objective public informing of the autochthonous Hungarian ethnic community in Slovenia;
- ensuring fulfilment of the constitutional rights of the Hungarian ethnic community regarding public information via public radio and television, and promote ties between the ethnic communities and their mother countries and incorporation of cultural and other achievements of the Hungarian nation into ethnic community channels;

- in accordance with international treaties and in cooperation with the public radio and television broadcasting corporations of neighbouring and other countries, support the creation and development of cross-border radio and television projects.

In this regard, it should also be noted that in accordance with the Slovenian Constitution and Article 2 of the ZRTVS-1, Radiotelevizija Slovenija has been granted institutional, programming and editorial autonomy, so that the state cannot and must not interfere with its programming policy.

The programming policy and consequently the decisions on the scope and quantity of programme content and broadcasts in Hungarian are primarily the competence of the Programme Board of RTV Slovenia as the highest body responsible for the broadcasting policy, where a representative of the Hungarian national community is also a member. Moreover, the Programme Board appoints the Programme Committee for the Hungarian national community programme, which has nine members and has the following competences (Article 23 of the ZRTVS-1):

- granting its consent to the appointment of respective commissioning editors for the national community programme, and to the scope and programme plan, programme standards and programme scheme, which must be appropriate to the financial capacities of RTV Slovenia and to the regulations governing its work;
- addressing the fulfilment of the programme plan and programme production plan, and also that part of the annual report of RTV Slovenia relating to the national community programme;
- addressing the comments and suggestions of viewers and listeners of the national community programme, and indicating its position in this regard;
- offering initiatives to the Programme board for dealing with issues in the area of the national community programmes;
- performing other tasks in the area of the national community programmes where so provided by the Statute.

RTV Slovenia provides national minority programmes as regional programmes for the Hungarian national community via the regional RTV centre in Maribor with the TV studio in Lendava; the national minority programmes, however, also comprise certain broadcasts on the national television channels. More detailed data and explanations can be provided by RTV Slovenia itself; data on the concrete implementation of the public service of providing programmes and programme content in Hungarian or for the Hungarian national community can also be seen from RTV Slovenia's annual reports, which are publicly available on its website <https://www.rtvsllo.si/rtv/kdo-smo/zakoni-predpisi-in-dokumenti/letni-naerti-in-porocila/471839>.

In the Republic of Slovenia, bilingualism is mentioned in the Librarianship Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 87/01, 96/02 – ZUJIK and 92/15; ZKnj-1), which regulates public library services and stipulates that public libraries in ethnically mixed areas must provide members of the Italian or Hungarian national communities with the option to communicate in their languages. Public libraries in such areas define their programme of activities in agreement with the representatives of national communities. Article 25 of Zknj-1 specifies that libraries located in ethnically mixed areas must provide, among other things, services to ethnic communities: in addition to the additional purchase of library materials, they also have to provide the communication in the library in the language of the respective national community, developing reading culture, training users, events in the language of the community, etc.

In accordance with Article 55 of Zknj-1, library activities for the Hungarian ethnic community are provided by the Lendava Library and Cultural Centre and the Regional and Academic Library in Murska Sobota. Public libraries in the bilingual area consistently observe bilingualism as stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (library material, inscriptions, communication, forms related to business, provision of general information and information about and from library material, website, events, etc.) in their operation and provision of services to users. An adequate command of the national community language is an employment requirement for jobs in public libraries. Every library's communication with the public in an ethnically mixed area in the language of the national community in practice includes the following: direct work with users in borrowing library materials, editing and updating the library website in the language of the national community, editing, translating and publishing all publicly available documents and library notices in the language of the national community, making lists of novelties and other informative material in the language of the national community and their publishing, editing, writing and translating invitations, bulletins, proceedings, exhibitions and library events in bilingual editions or

in the language of the national community, editing and updating the library's social networking applications in the language of the national community (e.g. blogs).

The Murska Sobota Regional and Academic Library also increases the accessibility of library materials and information to users of the Hungarian national community with a mobile library.

We wish to highlight the *Kamra* Local History Studies Portal, intended for the project of digitising local history materials, which is available in Slovene, Italian, Hungarian and English. Libraries in ethnically mixed areas have in their collections a lot of ethnographic material in the languages of national communities, which is gradually being digitised and published on the portal.

Hungarian has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.4 Italian

2.4.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Italian in Slovenia

I. Recommendations for immediate action

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| a. Ensure sufficient resources for the provision of radio and television programmes in Italian at least at the present level. |
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Ad a

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Radio Televizija Slovenija Act (hereinafter: ZRTVS-1), the public service of RTV Slovenia has the obligation to create, archive and broadcast, among other things, one radio and one television programme for the autochthonous Italian national community. In accordance with Article 30 of ZRTVS-1, the activity of the public service, including the programmes for the Italian national community, is financed from RTV licence fees. Moreover, the part of the national community programmes not financed from licence fees is financed by funds from the state budget.

In this regard, it should be noted that in accordance with the Slovenian Constitution and Article 2 of ZRTVS-1, Radiotelevizija Slovenija has been granted institutional, programming and editorial autonomy, so that the State cannot and must not interfere with its programming or financial policy.

The programming policy and consequently decisions on the scope and quantity of programme content and broadcasts in Italian fall primarily within the competence of the Programme Board of RTV Slovenia as the highest body responsible for the broadcasting policy, a member of which is a representative of the Italian national community. Moreover, the Programme Board appoints the Programme Committee for the Italian national community programme, which comprises nine members and has specific statutory competences (Article 23 of ZRTVS-1). Financial issues and supervision of financial operations are the responsibility of the Supervisory Board of RTV Slovenia which must also report its findings to the Programme Committee for RTV programmes for the Italian national community in writing.

RTV Slovenia provides national minority programmes as regional programmes for the Italian national community via the regional RTV centre in Koper; the national minority programmes, however, also comprise certain broadcasts on the national television channels. The participation of the Italian national minority in programme management is fully provided for, to a great extent also through staff members coming from the Italian national community. More detailed data and explanations can be provided by RTV Slovenia itself; data on the concrete implementation of the public service in the field of providing programmes and programme contents in Hungarian or for the Italian national community can also be seen in the annual reports of RTV Slovenia, which are publicly available on its website <https://www.rtvlo.si/rtv/kdo-smo/zakoni-predpisi-in-dokumenti/letni-nacrti-in-porocila/471839>.

Article 25 of Zknj-1 specifies that libraries located in ethnically mixed areas must provide, among other things, services to ethnic communities: in addition to the additional purchase of library materials, they also have to provide the communication in the library in the language of the respective national community, developing reading culture, training users, events in the language of the community, etc.

In accordance with Article 25 of Zknj-1, library activities for the Italian national community are carried out by the Central Library Srečko Vilhar Koper, the City Library in Izola and the City Library in Piran. Public libraries in the bilingual area consistently observe the bilingualism as stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (library material, inscriptions, communication, forms related to business, provision of general information and information about and from library material, website, events, etc.) in their operation and provision of services to users. An adequate command of the national community language is an employment requirement for jobs in public libraries. Every library's communication with the public in an ethnically mixed area in the language of the national community in practice includes the following: direct work with users in borrowing library materials, editing and updating the library website in the language of the national community, editing, translating and publishing all publicly available documents and library notices in the language of the national community, making lists of novelties and other informative material in the language of the national community and their publishing, editing, writing and translating invitations, bulletins, proceedings, exhibitions and library events in bilingual editions or in the language of the national community, editing and updating the library's social networking applications in the language of the national community (e.g. blogs).

The central Srečko Vilhar Library in Koper also increases the accessibility of library materials and information to users of the Italian national community with a mobile library.

We wish to highlight the following: the *Kamra* Local History Studies Portal, intended for the project of digitising local history materials, which is available in Slovene, Italian, Hungarian and English. Libraries in ethnically mixed areas have in their collections a lot of ethnographic material in the languages of national communities, which is gradually being digitised and published on the portal.

Accessibility of e-books in Italian: The Srečko Vilhar Central Library provides the Italian national community throughout Istria with direct access to e-books in Italian through the MLOL portal – *La biblioteca digitale italiana in Istria*. The main objective of the Italian Digital Library in Istria is to bring the e-book closer to all members of the Italian national community in Istria, both Slovenian and Croatian, and thus contribute to the preservation of the Italian national community and its linguistic and cultural identity throughout Istria.

Italian has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period of 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.5 Romani

2.5.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Romani in Slovenia

I. Recommendations for immediate action

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| a. Start teaching Romani as a subject at all appropriate levels and develop a scheme for the training of teachers able to teach Romani. |
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Ad a

Slovenia is the only country in Europe with an umbrella law on Roma who enjoy protection at the constitutional level. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, together with the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, strives to introduce the Romani language as home language and culture classes for members of the Roma community, which is one of the many activities included in a wide scope of measures aimed at increasing the social and cultural capital of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia. In the 2017–2020 period, the National Education Institute did not introduce the teaching of Romani as a home language, so in 2021, this task was transferred to the Institute for Ethnic Studies, which will endeavour to introduce a pilot project of teaching Romani as a home language in 2021. To increase the social and cultural capital of Roma, the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the 2021–2030 Period foreseeing the introduction of Romani classes into primary schools is under coordination.

In the framework of its expert and development work, the Institute for Ethnic Studies undertakes activities related to the implementation of supplementary mother tongue and culture classes for children of foreign nationalities. These activities are carried out on the basis of the Ministry's Decision on financing (6039-6/2020/1), the National Programme of Measures for Roma and the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2021-25, and they include implementing the established forms of supplementary mother tongue classes, and providing professional support for continuing with the introduction of supplementary Romani classes, which is still at the pilot project level. In addition, it has to convene an expert meeting of all supplementary class teachers, which will focus on the provision of remote schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

A member of the Roma community, Ms Samanta Baranja, is actively involved in the process of introducing Romani language teaching in primary schools. The recruitment of female Roma assistants, native speakers of individual dialectal variants of Romani, who will take over teaching Romani, is currently at the stage of selection. Special attention will be dedicated to training the recruited teachers and planning the syllabus and didactic material (in the form of notes), which will serve as the base for teaching. The pilot teaching programme is expected to run in two groups of pupils of the first triade of primary schools, one from the Prekmurje and one from the Bela Krajina regions from September 2021. An evaluation of the performance and (already noticeable) effects of Romani classes will follow.

II. Further recommendations

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| b. Promote awareness of the Romani language and culture as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Slovenia in mainstream education and in the media. |
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The Ministry of Culture supported a cultural project from applicant *ZVEZA ROMOV SLOVENIJE*, the Roma Union of Slovenia, 2020 (EUR 19,782.31) in a public tender for media programme co-financing in 2020. The project involves stories that counter prejudices against the Roma community and present their problems, life, habits and culture. The broadcasts are in Slovene and partly in Romani. (*see Table II below*)

According to the Librarianship Act, public libraries operating in areas with Roma community members are obliged to carry out library activities for Roma as a group of users with special needs. This involves the principle of multiculturalism of general libraries, implemented through adapted organisational approaches and adapted work methods. Special programmes/projects for the Roma community are

financed by local communities as a part of the public library service and are not defined separately. The programmes and projects are designed comprehensively and take into account local needs for the integration of different target groups, including those with special needs (including Roma). They are financially supported by local communities.

In 2019 and 2020, two public calls for proposals financing the cultural projects for the Roma community were carried out, within which the activities in the language of the Roma community or bilingual projects and projects promoting literacy were given priority support. In 2019, 26 projects were co-financed to promote the preservation and learning of the Romani language and the publication of literature in the Romani language and bilingual editions. Projects implemented: publishing various newspapers, books, and books for children, literary competitions, evenings and literary workshops, radio broadcasts, the Romani language courses, and many other literary activities aimed at preserving, developing and promoting the Romani language. In 2020, 32 such projects were to be implemented. So far, two poetry collections for children have been published, a bilingual fairy tale, a database and the stories of the Pušča settlement, a poetry collection, a personal confession and a Roma *kamišibaj*; a Roma reading badge competition was also carried out. (see Table II below)

Romani has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.6 Serbian

2.6.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Serbian in Slovenia

I. I. Recommendations for immediate action

- a. **Recognise Serbian as a traditional minority language and start dialogue with the Serbian speakers with a view to implementing Part II of the Charter.**
- b. **Promote awareness of the Serbian language and culture as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Slovenia in mainstream education and in the media.**

Ad a

The Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Status of National Communities of the Former SFRY Nations in the Republic of Slovenia was adopted in 2011 (including Serbs) providing the basis for the establishment of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Issues of National Communities of Former SFRY Nations in the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Council). The Council acts as a consultative body of the Slovenian Government which addresses the issues, requests and proposals of the members of these national communities. It serves as an institutional framework for conducting dialogue between the representatives of the Government and the representatives of these national communities.

Due to the prolonged coordination process related to the appointment of a representative of the Serbian community in the Council, the latter has not yet been formed during the term of office of the current Government. It is to be expected that the umbrella organisations of Serbs in Slovenia will coordinate their decisions as quickly as possible, so that the Council can be formed in the coming weeks.

Ad b

Serbian can be learned as foreign languages within the scope of compulsory optional subjects in primary school and in the form of supplementary mother tongue and culture classes for students of foreign nationalities.

The Serbian language is included in the Slovenian education system as a compulsory elective subject in the third educational cycle of primary school. It is based on the syllabus approved by the Council of Experts for General Education of the Republic of Slovenia in April 2007.

In 2020, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia has, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, sent 8 teachers to Slovenia to teach Serbian as home language. In the 2020/2021 school year, they are involved in the program of supplementary home language and culture classes for children of foreign nationalities in educational institutions of the Republic of Slovenia. 232 children from 15 primary schools in Slovenia have been included in the program. (see Table I below)

The Ministry of Culture supported a cultural project from applicant *SKC DANILLO KIŠ*, Radio Show in Serbian *Kontrola Leta* (Flight Control) (EUR 6,138.70) in a public tender for media programme co-financing in 2020. *Kontrola Leta* is the only Serbian radio broadcast in Slovenia. It addresses the situation, culture and needs of the Serbian community, as well as other communities from the former Yugoslavia.

The Ministry of Culture also supported a cultural project from applicant *ZAVOD RADIO ŠTUDENT*, Urban Student Media-Educational Platform 2020 (EUR 99,220.00) in a public tender for media programme co-financing in 2020. As part of the project, the programme runs broadcasts with the participation of external associates and organisations representing certain ethnic communities, enabling them to be informed in their own language. One of these broadcasts is *Jugosfera*, a show broadcast by the members of ethnic communities of the former Yugoslavia. (see Table II below; see also the answer to recommendation 2.1.2 I.b.)

An example of good practice is a project implemented in the framework of the co-financing of operations under public tenders aiming to increase the social inclusion of members of vulnerable social groups in cultural endeavours under the European Social Fund in the period 2019–2019, which, in the implementation of activities in a new and innovative manner, contributed to the preservation and promotion of Serbian and was completed on 31 December 2019. Danilo Kiš Serbian Cultural Centre *#MANJŠINENAMREŽI* (*#MINORITYNERWORKS*): The project's main outcome was the creation of an online medium by vulnerable groups, about vulnerable groups, addressing vulnerable groups and the general public. With the creation of such online medium, as well as through other project activities, more than 50 media announcements about the project were made in the main Slovenian media, such as Radio Televizija Slovenija, the MMC portal, and in minority, professional and alternative media such as Radio Študent, Primorske Novice, and RAI Friuli Venezia Giulia; this improved the visibility of minority languages in the public space. In this way, vulnerable groups were given a voice. After all, the activity contributed to the diversity of the media landscape in Slovenia, both in terms of content (interculturalism, multilingualism, criticism) and to innovative media forms (multimedia, cross media, citizen journalism). At the same time, the members of vulnerable groups within the project had the opportunity to train in the use of ICT aimed at high-quality intercultural minority journalism (development of skills of vulnerable groups), in order to resist discrimination by participating in cultural production and innovative, technological solutions, to resist marginalisation and to include their culture in equal dialogue and continuous interaction with other cultures and with the culture of the majority population.

Today, public libraries are gaining ground primarily as meeting places for cultures. Multicultural services are not special library services, but are integrated into an institution's basic programme, so when planning their work, libraries also provide special care for cultural and linguistic minorities. The core of any library is its collection, both physical and virtual. Libraries need to look at the characteristic needs of their users, so they can plan cultural activities that will include the protection of cultural diversity and integration of different cultures, the educational activities, such as language education and training in the use of information technology, and various social activities that improve the quality of life of people in the area where the library operates (e.g. understanding intercultural content through book presentations, group readings, book exhibitions, intercultural relations in the form of interactive conversations, multilingual collections, respect for diversity, prevention of social exclusion, organisation of multilingual online information for ethnic groups, exchange of experiences between libraries, linking libraries, streamlining professional work, etc.). The programmes are financially supported by local communities.

The France Balantič Library in Kamnik, which has been building an intercultural library collection designed in 2015, is worth mentioning. The collection consists of library material in Bosnian, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian and Macedonian. The collection is part of the project Language: Mine, Yours, Ours, which is aimed at spreading interculturalism, language awareness and learning about good library practices and foreign language materials. The project was created out of the need to enable equal access to mother tongue book collections and materials for non-Slovenes. The collection currently comprises more than 1,000 items of books, newspapers, DVDs and CDs.

Serbian has been and will be included in national language policy programmes (the previous ones for the periods 2007-2011 and 2014–2018, while a new resolution for the period 2021–2025 is currently in the parliamentary procedure) through measures to preserve, develop and promote the languages and cultures of minority communities within the framework of language education and infrastructure.

2.1.2, 2.2.2 and 2.6.2

I. Recommendations for immediate action referring to Croatian, German and Serbian

Recognise Croatian, German and Serbian as traditional minority languages and start dialogue with speakers of these languages with a view to implementing Part II of the Charter.

The Committee of Experts has acknowledged the high level of protection of minorities enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the progress achieved in many areas. However, the above recommendations concern an issue that is subject to different interpretations of the Charter by the Committee of Experts on one hand and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the other. This is the issue of languages to which the Charter applies in Slovenia.

In this regard, it needs to be underlined that the Fifth Report of the Committee of Experts does not adequately take into account the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia submitted upon the ratification of the Charter (4 October 2000) and which is based on the Slovenian Constitution. The latter refers to two national minorities – the Italian and Hungarian national community – and the Roma community as the constitutional categories. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national minorities have been granted special collective rights. To a certain extent, special collective rights are also provided to the Roma community (Articles 64 and 65 of the Constitution).

With regard to the application of Part II of the Charter, Slovenia has, upon its ratification, submitted the Declaration which reads as follows:

"The Republic of Slovenia declares that the Italian and Hungarian languages are considered as regional or minority languages in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In accordance with Article 2, paragraph 2, of the Charter, the Republic of Slovenia will apply to these two languages the following provisions of the Part III of the Charter ..."

"In accordance with Article 7, paragraph 5, of the Charter, the Republic of Slovenia will apply *mutatis mutandis* the provisions of Article 7, paragraphs 1 to 4, also to the Romani language."

Slovenia's Declaration, submitted upon the ratification of the Charter, has limited its application in Slovenia to languages which are according to its Constitution recognised as minority languages in areas where these communities traditionally live (the Italian, Hungarian and *mutatis mutandis* the Romani languages).

The Declaration forms part of the Law on the Ratification of the Charter and is binding on the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. According to the Declaration deposited by Slovenia with the Depository (Secretary General of the Council of Europe), Slovenia has limited the application of ECRML on its territory to two national communities recognised by its Constitution (Italian and Hungarian), with certain provisions applying *mutatis mutandis* also to the Romani community. In this sense, the wording of the Declaration is very clear and it would not be justified to argue that Slovenia has been the only one to understand it as such.

Under the international treaty law the admissibility of the reservation or interpretative declaration (having the nature of a reservation) is considered by the contracting parties to the treaty. Should the contracting parties consider a reservation or interpretative declaration by an individual contracting state inadmissible (i.e. incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty), they can object to it. Unless a contracting state raises an objection to it within 12 months, the reservation or interpretative declaration is deemed to have been accepted by other contracting parties meaning that the latter have accepted the legal effect the contracting state making the reservation or interpretative declaration wanted to achieve.

According to our information, no objection has been raised to Slovenia's Declaration, therefore it should be deemed that other ECRML contracting states have accepted the scope of the application of ECRML in Slovenia as specified in its Declaration. Thus, Slovenia firmly believes that the Charter cannot apply to other languages without its consent and contrary to its legal order.

The Committee of Expert's evaluation that Croatian, German and Serbian fall under the definition of regional or minority languages in accordance with Article 1 of the Charter (traditional use of these languages) is thus contrary to the view and legal order of the Republic of Slovenia regarding the scope of application of the Charter as set out in Slovenia's Declaration upon the ratification of the Charter. Consequently, the views expressed by the Committee of Experts in its Fifth Report and its recommendations that the Charter be applicable also to Croatian, German and Serbian are, in Slovenia's view, questionable both from a legal as well as factual point of view.

Furthermore, Slovenia addresses matters concerning the protection and promotion of Croatian, German and Serbian languages in the context of bilateral agreements with the Republic of Croatia, Republic of Austria and Republic of Serbia, respectively. Such cooperation in culture is based on individual rights which are, in accordance with Articles 14, 61 and 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, enjoyed by the members of other ethnic communities, including the Croatian-, Serbian-, and German-speaking ethnic groups. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia guarantees to everyone equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin (Article 14); the right to freely express affiliation with their nation or national community, to foster and give expression to their culture, and to use their language and script (Article 61); and the right to use their language and script in a manner provided by law in the exercise of their rights and duties and in procedures before state and other authorities performing a public function (Article 62).

As already mentioned above, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia addresses these issues in the context of the institutional dialogue with the members of the Croatian and Serbian ethnic communities (the Council) and with the members of the German-speaking ethnic group (the working group for permanent dialogue).

Slovenia attaches great importance to the rights of national minorities as one of the fundamental human rights provided for by its democratic political system, which lays down the conditions for their exercise. Special rights of national minorities and members of other ethnic communities and groups reflect a pluralistic society and lay the foundations for inclusion and understanding between people.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia is fully determined to continue with the efforts to raise and promote the awareness of the languages of its national minorities and other ethnic communities and groups in the Republic of Slovenia and to address the issues where there is room for improvement, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and its Declaration submitted upon the ratification of the Charter.

Table I – Educational programmes

Supplementary home language and culture classes for students of foreign nationalities – number of students per language and funds granted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport per school year

	German		Croatian		Croatian	
	Number of students	EUR	Number of students	EUR	Number of students	EUR
2010/11	46	2070.00				
2011/12	46	2070.00			72	
2012/13	60	2700.00	35	1575.00	72	
2013/14	59	2655.00	5	225.00	66	
2014/15	67	3,015.00	8	360.00	112	
2015/16	85	3,825.00			90	
2016/17	90	4050.00	7	315.00	90	
2017/18	90	4,050.00			76	
2018/19	75	3,375.00			79	
2019/20	74	3,330.00	4	180.00	69	
2020/21	61	2,745.00	232	10,440.00	35	

Supplementary home language and culture classes for students of foreign nationalities are carried out in cooperation with the ethnic communities in question or with the countries of origin. Classes, generally taking place in Slovene primary schools, are co-financed by the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS). Some ethnic communities organize their supplementary home language classes every year, some from time to time. They are encouraged by the MESS to continue their efforts in providing the home language classes regularly. Some ethnic communities organizing classes regularly, for instance the Croatian, have not requested the MESS co-financing. In 2020, the Serbian Ministry of Education sent 8 teachers of Serbian language to Slovenia. They have started to teach Serbian as home language in 15 Slovenian primary schools.

Table II – Cultural programmes

1. The cultural programme of the Hungarian national community and activities to preserve the Hungarian language

Year	Funds granted (in EUR)
2018	420,142.27
2019	421,341.00
2020	424,098.00
2018–2020	1,265,581.27

2. The cultural programme of the Italian national community and activities to preserve the Italian language

Year	Funds granted (in EUR)
2018	289,927.00
2019	203,795.00
2020	319,284.00
2018–2020	813,006.00

3. Co-financed cultural projects of members of the Croatian and Serbian communities on the basis of a public tender for the selection of cultural projects of different ethnic communities and groups as well as of immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia published by the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia

a) Co-financed cultural projects of members of the Croatian community in the Republic of Slovenia

Year	Number of co-financed projects	Funds granted (in EUR)
2016	35	25,100.00
2017	37	26,150.00
2018	32	22,800.00
2019	29	20,823.00
2020	22	16,042.00
2016–2020	155	110,915.00

b) Co-financed cultural projects of members of the Serbian community in the Republic of Slovenia

Year	Number of co-financed projects	Funds granted (in EUR)
2016	90	58,300.00
2017	75	53,771.19
2018	78	48,879.00
2019	85	57,502.00
2020	49	50,416.00
2016–2020	377	268,868.19

4. Co-financed cultural projects of the German-speaking ethnic group on the basis of a public tender for the selection of cultural projects of the programme intended for the German-speaking ethnic group in the Republic of Slovenia and a public tender for co-financing cultural projects of different ethnic communities and groups published by the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia

a) Public tender for the co-financing of cultural projects based on the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Austria on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science

Year	Number of co-financed projects	Funds granted (in EUR)
2016	22	22,108.00
2017	21	22,108.00
2018	25	22,108.00
2019	18	22,108.00
2020	20	32,108.00
2016–2020	106	120,540.00

b) Public tender for co-financing of cultural projects of different ethnic communities and groups carried out by the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia

Year	Number of co-financed projects	Funds granted (in EUR)
2016	2	1,500.00
2017	4	2,000.00
2018	4	2,600.00
2019	2	1,150.00
2020	3	1,613.00
2016–2020	15	8,863.00

5. Co-financed cultural projects of the Roma community in the Republic of Slovenia

Year	Number of co-financed projects	Funds granted (in EUR)
2016	83	92,115.00
2017	75	92,115.00
2018	57	92,115.00
2019	71	92,115.00
2020	59	92,115.00
2016–2020	345	460,575.00

The amount of resources allocated for the cultural program of the Hungarian and Italian national communities and the amount of resources allocated for public tenders for cultural projects of other ethnic communities and groups are determined according to the budget of the Republic of Slovenia and in accordance with the expressed cultural needs of members of the national communities and other ethnic communities and groups.

