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THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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Articles 1–3

a) The Italian and Hungarian national communities belong to the category of the traditional minority communities. This means that their special rights can be mostly exercised in the areas traditionally settled by the respective minority communities, i.e. the ethnically mixed area, which is composed of settlements within a municipality in which members of the autochthonous Italian or Hungarian national community reside. The size of ethnically mixed territories is precisely defined in the statutes of individual municipalities.

The autochthonous settlement area of the Italian national community comprises the ethnically mixed areas in the following settlements in three coastal municipalities:

- Koper/Capodistria Municipality with the settlements Ankaran/Ancarano, Barizoni/Barisoni, Bertoki/Bertocchi, Bošamarin/Bosamerino, Cerej/Cerei, Hrvatini/Crevatini, Kampel/Campel, Kolomban/Colombano, Koper/Capodistria, Prade/Prade, Premančan, a part of the settlement Spodnje Škofije/Val-marin, Šalara/Salara and Škocjan/San Canziano;
- Izola/Isola Municipality with settlements Izola/Isola, Dobrava pri Izoli, Jagodje, Livada and Polje pri Izoli;
- Piran/Pirano Municipality with settlements Piran/Pirano, Portorož/Portorose, Lucija/Lucia, Strunjan/Strignano, Seča/Sezza, Sečovelje/Sicciole, Parecag/Parezzago and Dragonja.

In accordance with the legal order of the Republic of Slovenia, the Italian national community in Slovenia is organised within the Coastal Italian Self-governing Community. This is an umbrella organisation which has the status of an entity of public law, and communicates with state authorities in the name of the Italian national community residing in the municipalities of Koper, Izola, and Piran – municipalities in which Italians live autochthonously. In the above three municipalities, the Italian national community is organised in municipal Italian self-governing communities which are linked with the umbrella organisation through their delegates, i.e. elected members, and represent a form of political representation at the local level (i.e. the municipal level). The council of the Coastal Italian Self-Governing Community has nine members; each of the three municipal self-governing communities has three members in the council.

In each of three coastal municipalities where Italians autochthonously live, the applicable statutes stipulate that one of the deputy mayors has to be a member of the Italian national community. Members of the Italian national community also have councillors in municipal councils, which are elected by members of the Italian community themselves. In addition to universal voting right, members of this national community also have a special voting right: they elect their own representative - deputy to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (Article 80, Paragraph 3, of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia).

In addition, the Italian national community in Slovenia established the Italian Union – the Community of Italians, which has the status of an association. This Union has established links with the Italian Union in Croatia, and serves as a (material and cultural) bridge to link with the parent nation and state.

Members of the Hungarian national community reside in five municipalities in the Prekmurje region (Lendava, Dobrovnik, Moravske Toplice, Šalovci and Hodoš):

- Hodoš/Hodos Municipality with settlements Krplivnik/Kapornak and Hodoš/Hodos;
- Moravske Toplice Municipality with settlements Čikečka vas/Csekefa, Motvarjevci/Szentlászló, Pordašinci/Kisfalu, Prosenjakovci/Pártosfalva, Središče/Szerdahely;
- Šalovci Municipality with the settlement Domanjševci/Domonkosfa;
- Lendava Municipality with settlements Banuta/Bánuta, Čentiba/Csente, Dolga vas/Hosszúfalu, Dolgovške gorice/Hosszúfaluhegy, Dolina/Völgyifalu, Dolnji Lakoš/Alsólakos, Gaberje/Gyertyános, Genterovci/Göntérháza, Gornji Lakoš/Felsőlakos, Kamovci/Kámaháza, Kapca/Kapca, Kot/Kót, Lendava/Lendva, Lendavske gorice/Lendvahegy, Mostje/Hidvég, Petišovci/Petesháza, Pince/Pince, Pince marof/Pincemajor, Radmožanci/Radamos, and Trimlini/Hármasmalom;
- Dobrovnik Municipality with settlements Dobrovnik/Dobronak and Žitkovci/Zsitkóc.

In accordance with the legal order of the Republic of Slovenia, the Hungarian national community is organised within the Pomurje Hungarian Self-Governing National Community with its seat in Lendava. This is the umbrella organisation of the Hungarian national community in the Republic of Slovenia, which has 21 members, and communicates with state authorities. This organisation is composed of the following municipality councils: Lendava as the greatest council of the national community - 11 members, Dobrovnik - 4 members, Moravske Toplice - 3 members, Hodoš - 2 members, and Šalovci - 1 member.

Within municipalities, the Hungarian national community has municipal Hungarian self-governing national communities in the following municipalities: Lendava, Dobrovnik, Moravske Toplice, Šalovci and Hodoš. The council represents the highest form of organisation for each municipal Hungarian self-governing national community in a municipality. These municipal organisations are linked with the umbrella organisation through their delegates, i.e. elected members.

The Slovenian state granted members of the national communities living outside ethnically mixed areas the right to be entered into the electoral register of residents – members of national community for the election of a deputy to the National Assembly, and, under certain conditions, the right to learn the language of national minorities outside the ethnically mixed area.

The decision of the Constitutional Court No. 844 (Ur.l. RS, No. 20/98) also dealt with the rights of members of national communities living outside the ethnically mixed area. The Court estimated "that it is not inadmissible under the Constitution that a person living outside the ethnically mixed area is considered a member of the autochthonous Italian or Hungarian national community". The Court took into account the provision of Article 64, Paragraph 4, of the Constitution stipulating that those rights which the members of these national communities exercise also outside these areas, shall all be regulated by law (Ur. l. RS No. 20/98, p. 1314).

The Romany community does not have the status of a national minority in the Republic of Slovenia. It is an ethnic community or minority which has specific ethnic characteristics (language, culture and other ethnic features). The legal basis for regulating the protection of

the Romany community by law is provided in Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, which stipulates that "the status and special rights of the Romany community living in Slovenia shall be regulated by law".

Historical sources refer to Roma in the territory of the present Slovenia as early as in the 15th century, while from the 17th century data on Roma have become more frequent, appearing also in registers. According to research, Roma have settled the Slovenian territory from three directions: the ancestors of Roma living in the Prekmurje region have come via the Hungarian territory; the Roma in Dolenjska came from Croatia, whereas the Gorenjska region has been settled by smaller groups of Sinti, coming from today's Austria. Despite the fact that at first these populations had a nomadic way of life and often changed their settlements, there are nowadays permanent Roma settlements in the regions of Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Posavje and partly Gorenjska. In these areas Roma are considered to be traditional settlers that have occupied their respective settlements more or less permanently up to the present.

In its decision of 22 March 2001 concerning the initiative to review constitutionality and legality of the statute of the Novo Mesto city municipality, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia established that the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS, No. 70/2000) is in disagreement with the Constitution. The law does not determine criteria and conditions for efficient implementation of Article 39, Paragraph 5, of the above law, introducing a special Roma councillor in local self-government, although the provision of the very Article 39, Paragraph 5, stipulates: "In the areas where the Romany community autochthonously reside, Roma shall have at least one representative within the municipal council." Before the Law was amended in 2002 and municipalities in which Roma should have their representative were determined, the Murska Sobota municipality had already elected a Romany councillor in two previous mandates: in 1994 and 1998.

Competent state bodies cooperated with local authorities, and the Government Office for Nationalities held expert consultations with the Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Bureau for Local Self-Government with a view to amend the Law on Local Self-Government, thus respecting the recommendations of the Constitutional Court, which would enable the Romany community political participation at the municipal level. Article 101(a) of the Act Amending the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS 51/2002) stipulates as follows: "The Municipalities of Beltinci, Cankova, Črenšovci, Črnomelj, Dobrovnik, Grosuplje, Kočevje, Kuzma, Lendava, Metlika, Murska Sobota, Novo mesto, Puconci, Rogašovci, Semič, Šentjernej, Tišina, Trebnje and Turnišče shall be obliged to ensure the right to one Romany representative in their respective municipal councils before the ordinary elections in 2002." To facilitate the implementation of the Act, the legislator decided to enumerate twenty municipalities, for which it established on the relevant legal basis that they fulfil the set conditions and criteria (including the so-called autochthonous status, specifically referred to in Article 39, Paragraph 5), and examples of which are listed in the 2001 decision of the Constitutional Court.

There has been an ongoing debate in Slovenia on the definition of areas historically and/or traditionally settled by Roma (autochthonous communities); the result of this debate is survey which is currently being underway and includes field work.

b) Statistical data

Italian national community:

Table 1: Population by ethnic affiliation (censuses from 1953 to 2002) - Italians

Ethnic affiliation	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
ITALIANS	854	3072	2987	2138	2959	2258

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 2: Population by mother tongue (the 1991 and 2002 censuses) – the Italian language

Mother tongue	1991	2002
ITALIAN	3882	3762

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 3: Population by ethnical affiliation in municipalities (the 2002 census) – Italians

	MUNICIPALITY	2002
1.	KOPER	712
2.	PIRAN	698
3.	IZOLA	430
	Total (ethnically mixed area)	1840
4.	LJUBLJANA	107
5.	NOVA GORICA	56
6.	SEŽANA	19
7.	MARIBOR	15
8.	TOLMIN	10
	OTHER	211
	Total (outside the ethnically mixed area)	418
	TOTAL	2258

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

In the last census in 2002, 2,258 persons declared themselves members of the Italian national community, which represents 0.11 per cent of the entire population in Slovenia. 3,762 persons stated the Italian language as their mother tongue. Among 2,258 persons declared themselves as Italians 1,840 members of the Italian national community live on the ethnically mixed area in three coastal municipalities (Koper, Izola, Piran), which represents 81.5 per cent of all Italians in the Republic of Slovenia. 418 members of this community live outside the ethnically mixed area, which represents 18.5 per cent of all persons who declared themselves as members of the Italian national community.

Hungarian national community:

Table 4: Population by ethnic affiliation (the censuses from 1953 to 2002) – Hungarians

Ethnic affiliation	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
HUNGARIANS	11019	10498	8943	8777	8000	6243

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 5: Population by mother tongue (the 1991 and 2002 censuses) – the Hungarian language

Mother tongue	1991	2002
HUNGARIAN	8720	7713

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 6: Population by ethnic affiliation in municipalities (the 2002 census) – Hungarians

	MUNICIPALITY	2002
1.	LENDAVA	3917
2.	DOBROVNIK	616
3.	MORAVSKE TOPLICE	351
4.	ŠALOVCI	169
5.	HODOŠ	159
	Total (ethnically mixed area)	5212
	OTHER	1031
	Total (outside the ethnically mixed area)	1031
	TOTAL	6243

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

In the last census in 2002, 6,243 persons declared themselves as members of the Hungarian national community, which means that the Hungarians living in the Republic of Slovenia represent 0.31 per cent of the total population in the Republic of Slovenia. 7,713 persons stated the Hungarian language as their mother tongue. Out of 6,243 persons declaring themselves as Hungarians, 5,212 members reside on the ethnically mixed area in five municipalities in the Prekmurje region (Lendava, Dobrovnik, Hodoš, Šalovci, and Moravske Toplice), which represents 83.5 per cent of all persons who declared themselves as Hungarians in the Republic of Slovenia. 1,031 members of this community live outside the ethnically mixed area, which represents 16.5 per cent of all persons who declared themselves as members of the Hungarian national community.

Romany community:

Table 7: Population by ethnic affiliation (the censuses from 1953 to 2002) – Roma

Ethnic affiliation	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
ROMA	1663	158	951	1393	2259	3246

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 8: Population by mother tongue (the 1991 and 2002 censuses) – the Romany language

Mother tongue	1991	2002
ROMANY	2752	3834

Source: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 9: Population by ethnic affiliation in municipalities (the 2002 census) – Roma

	MUNICIPALITY (Article 101a of the Law on Local Self-Government) ¹	2002 ²	Data provided by the municipalities ³	Difference - non-declared ⁴	Difference - non-declared
1.	NOVO MESTO	562	739	177	24%
2.	MURSKA SOBOTA	439	1100	661	60%
3.	PUCONCI	137	430	293	68.1%
4.	KOČEVJE	127	484-550 ⁵	357	73.7%
5.	ŠENTJERNEJ	98	95(135) ⁶	+3	
6.	METLIKA	90	260	170	65.4%
7.	LENDAVA	86	171	85	49.7%
8.	TIŠINA	86	365	279	76.4%
9.	ČRNOMELJ	85	575	490	85.2%
10.	ČRENŠOVCI	63	141	78	55.3%
11.	CANKOVA	56	211	155	73.4%
12.	ROGAŠOVCI	51	215(419) ⁷	164	76.3%
13.	SEMIČ	47	87 ⁸	40	51.3%
14.	KRŠKO	37	270	233	86.3%
15.	TURNIŠČE	29	46	17	36.9%
16.	BELTINCI	23	102	79	77.4%
17.	TREBNJE	16	245(300) ⁹	229	93.4%
18.	KUZMA	10	110	100	90.1%
19.	DOBROVNIK		44	44	100%
20.	GROSUPLJE		169	169	100%
	MUNICIPALITY	2002	Data	Difference	Difference

¹See Article 101(a) contained in Article 14 of the Act Amending the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS 51/2002).

²Data of the 2002 official census.

³These are unofficial data of the municipalities of autochthonous settlement of Roma. In April 2003, the Government Office for Nationalities requested from individual municipalities to provide these data.

⁴The difference between the 2002 official census and unofficial data or estimations of individual municipalities.

⁵Estimation; the number ranges between 484 and 550, the smaller number is considered in calculation.

⁶The number before the parenthesis is an official data while the number in parenthesis is an estimation of the municipality; the official data is taken into consideration.

⁷The number before the parenthesis is an official data while the number in parenthesis is an estimation of the municipality; the official data is taken into consideration.

⁸The data only includes the settlement of Sovinek; Roma also reside in several other settlements.

⁹The number before the parenthesis is an official data while the number in parenthesis is an estimation of the municipality; the official data is taken into consideration.

			provided by the municipalities	- non- declared	- non- declared
	Total (according to the Law on Local Self-Government)	2042	5859	3820	65,1%
21.	ŠKOCJAN		150	150	100%
22.	LJUBLJANA	218			
23.	MARIBOR	613			
24.	RIBNICA	49			
25.	BREŽICE	42			
26.	VELENJE	34			
27.	IVANČNA GORICA	27			
28.	Miklavž na Dravskem polju	25			
29.	JESENICE	21			
30.	HOČE-SLIVNICA	19			
31.	LENART	16			
32.	STARŠE	14			
33.	KRANJ	12			
34.	SLOVENSKA BISTRICA	10			
35.	LENART	16			
35.	OTHER	104			
	TOTAL	3246	6009	3970	66.1%

Source: The 2002 census; data and estimations of the municipalities as of April 2003

In the 2002 census, 3,246 inhabitants declared themselves as Roma and 3,834 stated the Romany language as their mother tongue. In the 1991 census, 2,259 inhabitants declared themselves as Roma and 2,752 stated the Romany language as their mother tongue.

According to data from the social work centres and municipalities, which are explicitly stated in the Act amending the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS, No. 51/2002), around 6,264 Roma autochthonously live in the Republic of Slovenia (in 1991 census, 2293 persons declared themselves as Roma, and in 2002, 3246 persons).

Despite official data from the census, it is estimated that between 7,000 and 10,000 Roma live in the Republic of Slovenia, the majority of them in Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela krajina.

Commentary

The question about nationality is considered to be one of the hardest census questions by census experts. Two main factors influence this question: On the one hand, many people whose parents are of different nationalities have difficulties deciding on their own national affiliation. On the other hand, one may feel discomfort as they could be subject to possible planned manipulation in the census if a person would not answer the question on their own and members of the household could answer it in their name (as it was possible in the 1991 census in case of absence of persons). Other manipulations are also possible, such as those by interviewers, those entering or codifying the data. These manipulations can be assessed by statistical methods. Direct answering of the question on nationality was given special consideration by the Statistical Office, also with regard to the proposals of the National

Assembly. As already stated, the answers were gathered only directly from persons over 14 years (hence, the last census used the method by which the question on nationality/ethnicity and religion may be answered only by persons over 14 themselves, if they wished to answer it). Consequently, all persons that were absent from the household at the time of the interview or did not want to answer the question in the presence of other household members or the interviewer received a special questionnaire and an envelope with prepaid postage. Around 250,000 questionnaires were distributed, and around 75 per cent were returned and processed. A great number of such persons did not return questionnaires to the Statistical Office, which automatically meant that they were processed in all tables under "unknown" category.

When comparing data on ethnic affiliations between 1991 and 2002 one has to be aware that in 1991, 42,355 persons were included under the categories "did not want to reply" and "unknown", and in 2002 174,913. One of the possible explanations is that this category comprises many persons originating from mixed marriages. Consequently, one may see a drastic increase in the number of those refusing to reply or in the number of the "unknown" category¹⁰.

The problem of decrease in the number of members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities encountered in the last census was addressed within the following bodies: the Working Table on Minority Issues active within the Mixed Commission between the Republic of Slovenia and the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia for the discussion on common development issues, and within the Commission on the Monitoring of the Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights of the Slovenian Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia; the latter currently addresses topical issues of minorities in both countries, evaluates the implementation of obligations arising from the Agreement, and drafts and adopts recommendations to the two governments concerning the implementation of the Agreement.

At the last meetings of the above two bodies, the conclusion was adopted that the competent Slovenian bodies, and the Hungarian and Italian minority bodies and bilingual municipalities, analyse the reasons for the decrease in the number of Hungarians and Italians in Slovenia, which is shown by the 2002 census¹¹. This issue was also addressed by the Commission of the National Assembly for National Communities, the Government Commission for National Communities, the Government Office for Nationalities, and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

The main findings of different bodies which presented their views on the drastic decline in number of members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities resulting from the 2002 census, comprise the following main factors: non-declared persons and non-reply; mortality higher than natality; change in ethnic affiliation; mixed marriages; different methodology used in the census – persons over 14 declare their ethnic affiliation on their own (in 1991 the answer could be provided by an adult household member instead of an absent member); migrant workers were not interviewed; other potential social reasons such as general trend of giving up ethnic identity which also holds true for majority population and Europe in general.

¹⁰ SOURCE: Rapid Reports, No. 93/2003, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

¹¹ SOURCE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Neighbouring States and South-Eastern Europe, letter No. ZSD-I/03-540/03 of 13 October 2003.

A different state of the number of members of the two national communities was established by using a combined method: the number of members of the two national communities which were, at local elections in November 2002 (census was in April 2002), entered in a special electoral register compiled by the respective national community for the ethnically mixed area (Koper, Izola, Piran; Lendava, Dobrovnik, Moravske Toplice, Šalovci, Hodoš), and the number of members of the two national communities by age groups up to 18 years, i.e. when they acquire the right to vote (see the 2002 census) and the number of members of the two national communities living outside the ethnically mixed area.

In this way, an actual number of members of the Italian national community in the ethnically mixed area has even increased and totals 2970 persons. By adding those members living outside the ethnically mixed area (418 persons) it can be seen that 3388 members of the Italian national community live in Slovenia (in 1991 census, there were 2959 persons in the entire territory of Slovenia).

It is similar with the Hungarian national community: There are 7297 members of the Hungarian national community living in the ethnically mixed area. By adding those members living outside the ethnically mixed area (1031 persons) there are 8328 members of the Hungarian national community living in the entire territory of Slovenia, which is more than in 1991 (8000 persons).

With regard to this situation, it may be established that the number of members of the respective national communities is higher, when their interests are directly involved (elections of councillors, deputy mayors, etc.) in contrast to matters of no specific interest. This concerns certain social reasons which should be examined within an individual national community by a special research.

General social environment for the two national communities and other ethnic communities and groups is favourable in Slovenia, which may be demonstrated by the increase in the number of persons declaring themselves Germans (40.3 per cent increase) and Austrians (30.4 per cent increase) or members of the Romany community (30.4 per cent increase); the latter are often stigmatised in many local areas.

Tolerance and signs of the European model of co-existence, at least with regard to the autochthonous national communities, are also demonstrated by other facts: in the ethnically mixed area in Prekmurje, the majority population is, voluntarily and without major opposition, educated in bilingual education institutions, and in the coastal area, two members of the Italian national community were elected at the last elections to the National Assembly, mostly by votes of the majority population.

The two national communities in Slovenia have so far expressed no dissatisfaction or other well-founded reservations for which an individual national community would feel discriminated or would take part in the census with concern for other well-founded reasons.

Article 4

Because of historic and various other circumstances, there are great differences between Roma in Slovenia, based on the specific way of life, traditions and level of socialisation and integration into the environment. It is estimated that the conditions are generally much better in the northeast part of Slovenia than in the south. Despite some differences, it is still possible to draw some common conclusions that apply to the majority of the Romany population. This group of people have little or no education and are mostly unemployed.

Government's Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma (1995) and Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (1999)

In order to further stimulate the activities of the state and other bodies aimed at improving the situation of the Romany community, the Government has on several occasions discussed Roma issues in the Republic of Slovenia. At its 171st session in November 1995 the Government also adopted the still applicable special Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma. The Republic of Slovenia is aware that the Programme must be consistently implemented particularly in the following areas:

- a) Education (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, professional instructions for education of Romany children – language problems);
- b) Employment (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs: Equal Employment Opportunities for Roma - Our Common Challenge, Public Works programmes in the Period 2000-2002, Subsidised employment: Thousand New Opportunities Programme. The Ministry is also in charge of an interagency working group composed of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Union of Roma of Slovenia. The working group is intensively engaged in drawing up an action programme for Roma employment, which will be in line with the 2003–2006 European Employment Policy and with the programme of the active employment policy in Slovenia).
- c) Housing conditions (Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy, Ministry of the Economy – legalisation of Romany settlements, infrastructure and other facilities in Romany settlements – subsidies to municipalities).

On 1 July 1999, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted decisions No. 550-03/97-8 (P), stipulating:

- Concerted action of municipalities and state bodies is required with regard to Roma issues,
- All ministries and government offices must devote special attention to Roma issues within their competence and include them in national programmes in their fields of work,
- The Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy and the Ministry of Finance are tasked to examine possibilities of providing a budget item with appropriate funds for assisting municipalities in improving the housing conditions.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia tasked the ministries disposing of budgetary funds for the promotion of the development of local communities to consider, when allocating funds to municipalities, the need for improving the housing conditions of Roma and of those non-Roma inhabitants whose housing conditions have deteriorated due to disordered Roma settlements. Representatives of the state in boards of the relevant funds (e.g. Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Regional Development and Preservation of the Settlement of Slovenian Rural Areas, Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia) have been tasked to propose appropriate action.

- Housing conditions

The majority of Roma still reside in settlements isolated from other population or at the margin of settled areas; the circumstances there are below the minimum living standards. According to the data available, only about 12% of Roma live in apartments, 39% live in built houses (half of which do not possess the licences required by administrative authorities), and others in provisional residences - cabins, caravans, containers and similar. Only a minor part of Roma live together with the majority population, mainly in the Prekmurje region where Roma have achieved a satisfactory level of socialisation and have integrated into the society.

Romany families have difficulties in socialising and integrating into the environment as living conditions are unsettled. In many cases not even the right to residence has been guaranteed; consequently, some settlements are illegal, built on foreign land and have a disturbing effect on the environment. Due to their unadapted way of life, Roma often enter into conflicts with the local population, especially in the Dolenjska region. The municipalities, however, do not receive sufficient financial support from the state to resolve the spatial difficulties.

The Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy has in recent years helped municipalities in preparing spatial plans; it has provided expert assistance and co-financed site development documentation for Romany settlements in certain municipalities. In 1998, the Ministry also produced a study which, *inter alia*, demanded additional budgetary funds from the state in order to legalise Roma settlements and build their infrastructure and other facilities, since municipalities cannot meet this challenge with their own budget resources.

The Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia - the institution financing the implementation of the National housing programme - included a special offer for resolving the Roma housing issues into the text of the call for applications for the acquisition of rental non-profit and social apartments. The December 1999 call for applications of soft housing loans for the acquisition of rental non-profit and social apartments explicitly defined that, on observing the criteria for determining the loan amount, priority (or higher loans) shall be given to those non-profit-making housing associations which jointly with their respective municipalities work at improving the living conditions (conditions for the use of their own or other apartments, residential houses and residential areas of other local residents) in the areas where such conditions have deteriorated due to unregulated Roma settlements. The same offer has been repeated in this year's call for applications of the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, i.e. a public fund for long-term loans for the acquisition of social and non-profit apartments (38th call for applications of the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia – Ur. l. RS, No. 62 of 27 June 2003) which remains open until 30 June 2004.

On the basis of Government decisions of 1 July 1999, the Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy provided subsidies in 2000 to nine municipalities for the drafting of spatial documentation for the improvement of housing conditions of Roma and those residents whose living conditions have deteriorated due to unregulated Roma settlements. Subsidies totalled SIT 10,300,000.00 and were allocated to the municipalities of Beltinci, Rogašovci, Krško, Metlika, Turnišče, Dobrovnik, Grosuplje, Črenšovci and Kuzma.

In early 2002 representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, and the Government Office for Nationalities addressed more thoroughly the issue of legalisation of Roma settlements and of implementing the positions of the Government Commission for the Protection of the Romany community. A proper legal basis for the solution to spatial problems and legalisation of Roma settlements was provided in the draft law on spatial planning and the draft law on construction. Article 34 of the Spatial Planning Act provides for a shorter procedure for the adoption of a spatial plan, while municipalities may proclaim public interest in cases of ownership problems with the land. Article 55 of the Construction Act enables exceptional use of land in cases of less exacting buildings which Roma settlements normally are.

In 2002, ten municipalities also received subsidies, through a call for applications of the Ministry of the Economy, to carry out municipal Roma projects for building infrastructure in Roma settlements (water, electricity, sewage system, streets in settlements etc.). Due to greater needs, special additional funds for building infrastructure in Roma settlements must be provided based on constitutional criteria to municipalities with historic or traditional Roma settlements (these municipalities are obliged to elect special Roma councillors to local self-government bodies). Pursuant to Article 26 of the Financing of Municipalities Act, permanent annual supplementary funds must also be earmarked according to criteria fixed in advance (similarly as for the Italian and Hungarian national communities). Both steps would mean implementing the decision of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, issued upon adopting the Act Amending the Law on Local Self-Government in 2002.

The 2002 Annual Working Programme for the Area of Regional Development, prepared by the Ministry of the Economy, highlights in particular Cooperation in Resolving Problems of the Romany Community¹² and provides for financial assistance to municipalities which have been actively engaged in settling the Romany issues. The Ministry has also been involved in providing the concentrated Romany settlements with the basic public utility infrastructure. Slovenia adopted the Programme to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in February 2002, and the Implementing Strategy with the Report on Carrying out the Programme to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in April 2002. In this context, Slovenia signed the Joint Inclusion Memorandum with the European Community to combat social exclusion in September 2002. When drafting the memorandum, Slovenia also considered and analysed in detail the social status of Roma who represent one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

¹² 2002 Annual Working Programme for the Area of Regional Development. Ministry of the Economy, January 2002.

It has not been noticed that Roma who come from the territory of the Republic of Slovenia and are traditionally settled in Slovenia have major difficulties in obtaining citizenship or regulating their status as a foreigner. The situation is, however, different with Roma who have citizenship of one of the successor states to the former Yugoslavia and are not members of the Romany community traditionally residing in Slovenia. These Roma do not have Slovenian citizenship and are treated in compliance with the Constitution and sector-specific legislation in the same way as other foreigners in Slovenia. The Ministry of the Interior has, on several occasions, received representatives of Romany associations that presently reside in Slovenia but have arrived, especially after 1991, from the territory of the former Yugoslavia; they were given the explanation of how to acquire permanent residence permit or citizenship. Legal basis for these issues is clearly defined in the Act Amending the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 96/2002) and in the Aliens Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 87/2002).

- Education

In 1996, special conditions required for the education of Romany children were introduced in the new education legislation (in addition, the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, Pre-School Institutions Act and Elementary School Act were amended in 2000 and 2001).

With the new legislation in the education area, additional measures and endeavours of schools, Slovenia succeeded in having 1,349 Romany children enrolled in elementary schools in 2002/2003 school year, out of whom 1,223 attended regular elementary schools, while 126 were enrolled in elementary schools with modified programmes. The share of all children attending elementary schools with modified programmes in that year was 1.46 per cent, while the share of Romany children attending elementary schools with modified programmes was considerably higher, accounting for 9.3 per cent of all Romany children.

There are 272 pre-school institutions in Slovenia (independent or within elementary schools); in the 2002/2003 school year there were 157 Romany children enrolled in ten classes in pre-school institutions. In that same year, there were 295 adult Roma attending elementary school programmes in 8 public institutions, and there were more than 100 Romany pupils enrolled in post-elementary education. The above measures have improved the participation of Romany children in school classes, thus providing for a higher level of education of Romany children.

An unsolved problem remains the education of children of those Roma that have not regulated their legal status and their number is not known. It is likely that at least some of these children do not attend elementary schools since their parents are afraid that this would reveal their unregulated status and they and their families would be expelled from the country. However, there are cases where elementary schools make it possible for enrolment and education of these children in regular school programmes.

The state devotes special attention to education of Romany children and grants special concessions to schools attended by Romany children: it allocates additional funds for individual or group work with Romany children, sets more advantageous norms for classes with Roma, finances meals, textbooks, excursions, etc., grants scholarships to all Romany students of teaching studies; the state also financed the designing and publishing of the first textbook for teaching the Romany language.

Until the 2002/2003 school year, the elementary school standards defined special norms for the establishment of Romany elementary school classes or classes including Romany children. The establishment of Romany classes is no longer foreseen as of the 2003/2004 school year. Classes attended by 3 or more Romany children usually consist of 21 pupils.

In the 2003/2004 school year the ministry granted 512 teaching hours to schools for work in small groups. Schools state that this type of activities is necessary for successful work with Romany pupils.

409 Romany pupils attended day-care care classes in the 2001/2002 school year. Most of Romany children attend integrated classes; in the 2001/2002 school year, there were 4 classes that were attended only by Romany children. Funds for field trips are allocated to all schools according to the same criteria for all pupils (for Romany and non-Romany children). The ministry financed some camps organised for Roma in the past years. Presently, organisers participate in the calls for applications of the Office for Youth. In accordance with the Programme for Assisting Roma and the abovementioned school legislation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport grants to schools supplementary teaching classes for holding joint Romany classes outside the main classes. Within the scope of legal norms and standards for elementary schools and pre-school institutions, Romany children are included in the day-care classes.

Since 1 January 2003, the Ministry allocates to schools SIT 1,200 monthly per each Romany student for the purchase of teaching tools and for some expenses incurred by daily activities and excursions. The Ministry allocates additional funds for reimbursing school meals for Romany pupils (613 additional reimbursements were granted in the 2001/2002 school year).

Textbooks for Romany children are provided by schools with the help of textbook funds. Specially adapted workbooks for the Slovenian language and mathematics have also been designed for those Romany children who are in need of such teaching assistance.

The Ministry ensures through the Office for the Development of Education the development of education of Romany children. When the 9-year elementary school was introduced in Slovenia, new curricula were also adopted that set the minimum standards for progressing to a higher class. In 2000, the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education adopted the Instructions for the Implementation of the 9-Year Elementary School Programme for Romany children. The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia has monitored the reform and developed, with the assistance of a special study group, new methods of work adapted to the 9-year education of Romany children.

Within the framework of the Competitiveness of Slovenia 2001–2006 programme, a three-year research and development project was selected and financed pursuant to a call for applications. The objective of the project is to develop models of education and training of Roma, with the ultimate goal of increasing their regular employment. A programme entitled the Ensuring of Equal Opportunities for the Education of Romany Children and Their Families was selected and financed within the Competitiveness of Slovenia 2001–2006 programme, pursuant to a call for applications. The Ministry allocated SIT 6 million for this programme.

The Ministry also provides scholarships for all Romany students engaged in teaching studies. However, no results have as yet been noted in this field, even though this possibility has frequently been brought up at public meetings, in the media and in the talks with schools. Only one Roma has applied for this scholarship to date, who, however, did not complete his studies.

In December 2002, the Ministry also set up a special working group tasked with drawing up a strategy for ensuring the participation of Roma in education. The working group consists of experts in the areas of pre-school to adult education and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Union of Roma of Slovenia and the National Education Institute. The Ministry plans to draft a strategic document in 2004 that will provide a basis for further measures in the field of education of Roma.

The Ministry has also co-financed the research and development project entitled the Ensuring of Equal Opportunities for the Education of Romany Children and Their Families carried out by the Educational Research Institute (duration 2003–2005). The project focuses on the integration of Romany children in schools, increase in school efficiency, adequate training of experts and work with parents.

- Employment

Employment is one of the basic preconditions for improving the social and economic status of Roma and ensuring their integration into society. The current situation in the labour market, with a relatively high level of unemployment (both structural and regional) is particularly unfavourable to Roma due to the supply and demand imbalances in the labour market. This is partly the result of prejudices by the employers, as data show that unemployed persons - non- Roma - have fewer difficulties in finding a job after completing the employment programme.

The starting points of the Programme for the Employment of Roma, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia at its session on 9 May 2000, indicate that there are differences between working activities of Roma and of the majority population. Roma are only rarely permanently employed; they are mostly engaged with unorganised types of work. Roma have considerably lower level of education, which is a great disadvantage when seeking a job.

In 2000 the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs drafted a Programme for the Employment of Roma which ensued from the Employment Action Plan in Slovenia for 2000-2001. The Programme was carried out through a period of two years and has exceeded the planned number of inclusions more than twice, regardless of the number of Roma included. Apart from the regular programmes of employment, the Ministry further drafts new national and local employment programmes for Roma. Roma and their organisations (the Union of Roma of Slovenia) are directly engaged in these programmes, as are the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia and the Institute for Ethnic Studies.

According to the assessment of the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, 900 Roma are registered in the unemployed record at the Novo Mesto Regional Office, while 750 Roma are registered in the unemployed record at the Murska Sobota Regional Office.

Larger numbers of unemployed Roma have also been registered at the Regional Offices of Maribor and Sevnica.

In the past years, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has defined special measures, projects and programmes primarily aimed at employing Roma.

- a. Equal Employment Opportunities for Roma – Our Common Challenge; a programme carried out in the regions of Dolenjska and Prekmurje and involving approximately 200 Roma. Its implementation was funded from the national budget of the Republic of Slovenia (SIT 70m), the budgets of local communities and PHARE funds.
- b. Public Works Programmes in 2000-2002
In 2000, the Novo mesto regional office carried out nine public works programmes for Roma, spending a total of SIT 34.8m.
55 Roma were involved in 10 different public works programmes in 2001; SIT 37.3m was spent to that end.
In 2002, 60 persons were involved in 11 different public works programmes for Roma. Approximately SIT 7,774,352.50 was spent to that end.
- c. Subsidised Employment: Thousand New Opportunities Programme.
The programme was carried out by a society from Krško (Društvo zaveznikov mehkega pristanka Krško) and was aimed at assisting the youth and members of the Romany community (project: "Gypsy Pot" for 150 participants).
Employment programmes thus included 330 Roma in 2000 and 550 Roma in 2001.

In order to provide Roma with equal access to employment, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs co-financed the project titled "Roma in the processes of European integration / the situation in Slovenia, Austria and Croatia: the Development of Models for Education and Training of Roma". The project is being prepared by the Institute for Ethnic Studies and is expected to be concluded in 2004. Its objectives and purposes are to implement the Equal Employment Opportunities for Roma and to prepare proposals for the most appropriate models for the development of education and vocational training of Roma in Slovenia. The project will be carried out within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe as part of a broader international project - Roma in the European Integration Processes. The three-year project has been designed to give each year concrete proposals for experimental implementation of the selected cases for education, vocational training and employment of Roma.

The Ministry is also in charge of an interagency working group composed of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Union of Roma of Slovenia. The working group is intensively engaged in drawing up an action plan for Roma employment, which will be in line with the 2003–2006 European Employment Policy and with the programme of the active employment policy in Slovenia. The primary goal of the programme is to reduce the level of unemployment of Roma. The programme will also consider the proposals of Roma referring to the employment of Roma advisers at the regional offices of the Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia in those areas with larger numbers of Roma and where the establishment of public funds for promoting Roma entrepreneurship is underway.

Despite relatively discouraging perspectives shown by the data on the unemployment of Roma, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has recorded some positive changes in recent years; the number of Roma employment programmes has grown, the public works programme has become more adapted and the participation of Roma in resolving the employment issue has increased. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs endeavours to eliminate and prevent all forms of discrimination of Roma in finding and/or preserving a job. The measures aimed at improving the level of education and training of Roma will also be intensified. Considering the special attention which the EU pays to the Roma population, including by providing specific funds, the Ministry will promote the development of programmes to obtain resources from the Structural Funds. Through cooperating in the EQUAL initiative, the Ministry will seek to find ways for a speedier integration of Roma in the labour market.

Within the framework of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, a project titled "Roma Women Can Do It" was carried out in June 2003 with the purpose of increasing Roma women's involvement in public and political life. The project was carried out in Novo mesto, Črnomelj, Murska Sobota and Rogašovci and was solemnly concluded in early July 2003 in Murska Sobota. The content of the seminars focused on providing Roma women with the possibility of mutual acquaintance, exchanging experience, seeking possible solutions and joining forces with the purpose of achieving the common objectives. The project was a major step forward in the open dialogue between Roma and the majority population on how to eliminate prejudices, resolve problems and build mutual trust, respect and equal coexistence through common efforts.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs endeavours to make new advances in the area of providing employment to unemployed Roma in Slovenia. An initiative titled "Romany issues in the area of unemployment must be resolved" was put forward in a session of the Union of Roma of Slovenia and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, on 7 August 2003. It was decided that the Ministry would cooperate with the Union of Roma of Slovenia in carrying out employment programmes aimed at opening new jobs; it was further decided that in connection to that objective, the Ministry would seek to acquire support for the Union of Roma of Slovenia at other ministries. In accordance with the adopted Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma of 30 November 1995 (No. 550-3/95-2/3-8) and the Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia of 1 July 1999 (No. 550-03/97-8 (P)), it is in the national interest and vital for the future functioning of the Union of Roma of Slovenia to provide regular jobs at the Union's headquarters in Murska Sobota and Novo mesto. The earlier Roma employment programmes that were directly or indirectly financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs should be reviewed, with the view of assessing advantages as well as shortcomings in the endeavours made to date.

In relation to anti-discriminatory measures, the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act was adopted in May 2004 in accordance with both directives of the EU.

- Social Security

Sociological research on the life of Roma¹³ shows that their low status is connected with the status of an exceptionally underprivileged ethnic minority. Roma are classified among the lowest social strata affected by poverty. Their social status is markedly lower than the social status of the majority population. It involves not only the pecuniary circumstances but also the level of education, profession and employment opportunities. Roma therefore lack social and negotiating power. They are excluded from the mainstream, permanently marginalised and dependent on social assistance.

Even among themselves Roma are not united; rather they are scattered among settlements and largely unorganised.

It often occurs that those who began accepting more advanced norms and rules are faced with obstacles in their own environment. They are dealt with as a problem that needs to be restrained and not resolved. They rarely participate in resolving problems.

The socio-economic status of Roma (see footnote 14) differs in relation to various areas and municipalities. In the Prekmurje region, the socio-economic status of Roma is better than in the Dolenjska, Posavje and Bela Krajina regions, as well as other regions with Roma population. Differences in the socio-economic status, ways of life, education, working habits, religious affiliation and customs are great even among the so-called non-traditionally settled Roma who mostly live in large cities (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Jesenice, Velenje).

The Prekmurje Roma enjoy a socio-economic status that allows for a regular enrolment of Romany children in pre-school institutions, elementary schools and secondary vocational schools. Living conditions and the public utility infrastructure in Prekmurje Roma settlements are better, thus rendering possible the enrolment of children in educational institutions. The situation, however, is different in other parts of Slovenia where Roma reside. Some Roma settlements still lack even the most basic amenities (water, electricity, sewage system).

Roma are entitled to social security services under the same conditions as the rest of the population. Due to the specific way of life, low education level and high unemployment rate, the main source of income for Roma is the assertion of rights to social and family security.

The basic regulation in the area of social security is the Social Security Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 54/92, 2/2004), which *inter alia* provides for the social security services, social welfare benefits, as well as the conditions and ways of exercising these rights.

The basic regulation in the area of family security is the Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 97/2001, 110/2003), which likewise provides for the conditions of exercising the rights under the title of parental leave and the participating allowance, as well as all other rights under the title of parenthood, the right to parental allowance, child allowance for one's own children, child allowance for children who are in need of special

¹³ SOURCE: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Strategy of the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, draft six, working material, 27 October 2003.

care, the right to partial payment of income loss, the right to assistance upon child birth and the right to large family benefit.

Cash benefits as provided by the Social Security Act and the Family Benefit Act (child allowance, parental allowance, assistance upon child birth) ensure subsistence of Roma. Cash benefits are given to all Roma families who have children or where none of the adult family members is employed and who are bound to enter into a contract on resolving social problems. The contract is monitored on a monthly basis through certificates of class attendance of children of school age or pre-school institutions attendance by pre-school children or through certificates of organisations of adult education and similar. In case it is established that a family does not comply with the provisions of the contract, the latter shall be amended through establishment of the grounds of guilt. After 2001, the admonition of removal from the unemployed record has further influenced the benefit recipients to actively seek employment or undergo relevant training. An unemployed family of 5 members with no property receives SIT 188,122.40 of social welfare benefits and child allowance per month.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has communicated several additional instructions on the treatment of individual population groups to departments of social security in order to ensure a consistent implementation of the Act. In such a way, the departments of social security can establish eligibility for social welfare benefits. In case of doubt as to the proper use of the social welfare benefits, an appropriated payment (food, schoolbooks, electricity) in the form of a delivery order is recommended; the latter is done not by payment of the money order which the beneficiary brings to the department of social security, but by direct payment to the beneficiary based on an agreement with him/her or by service of a particular amount of social welfare benefits to a Roma for the payment of an individual money order. The social welfare benefits are paid in such form only when the case involves families with a large number of members and those who are incapable of disposing of assistance by themselves (e.g., alcoholism).

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has endeavoured for measures of social prevention, training for self-care and a higher quality of life. The central department of social security has established that such comprehensive and demanding work would require specific criteria in the employment of qualified personnel. A recent consultation of representatives of departments of social security in Novo mesto has confirmed this observation.

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (Family Department) has been co-financing social security programmes for many years. In the area of family affairs, individual programmes of non-governmental organisations at the local level are co-financed within the framework of annual calls for applications. For several years, the Voluntariat institution has been organising Romany camps and carrying out a programme titled "Rom"; in addition, the Črnomelj institute of education and culture has been carrying out a programme titled "Socialisation of pre-school Romany children through fairytales", co-financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Within the framework of annual calls for applications in the area of social security, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has co-financed 35 Roma development and prevention programmes in the amount of SIT 8.6m; if funds covering family matters are added, the amount surpasses SIT 10m.

In the opinion of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the programme of measures of assistance to Roma, covering social and family security, is still of still topical and obligatory for the work in this important field. The Ministry has therefore drafted a Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion which was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the European Commission in autumn 2003. The material *inter alia* defines the key challenges in the area of social inclusion and provides a general summary of the situation of Roma in Slovenia. The Ministry will follow the joint strategic objectives of the European Union by endeavouring to realise the envisaged measures, especially through implementing additional programmes of social services with the view of speeding up the integration of the most vulnerable groups.

Article 5

(a) Italian and Hungarian national communities

Chapter III of the Basic Constitutional Charter on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Slovenia¹⁴ to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulated as follows: “The Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia and their members shall be guaranteed all the rights provided in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and international agreements.” The status and special rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia are thus defined in Article 64 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, stipulating as follows:

- The autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and their members shall be guaranteed the right to use their national symbols freely;
- In order to preserve their national identity, they shall have the right to establish organisations, to develop economic, cultural, scientific and research activities, as well as activities in the fields of media and publishing;
- In accordance with laws, these two national communities and their members have the right to education and schooling in their own languages, as well as the right to establish and develop such education and schooling (the geographic areas in which bilingual schools are compulsory shall be established by law);
- These national communities and their members shall be guaranteed the right to foster relations with their nations of origin and their respective countries (Slovenia shall provide material and moral support for the exercise of these rights);
- In the geographic areas where they live, the members of these communities shall establish their own self-governing communities (on the proposal of these self-governing national communities, the state may authorise them to perform certain functions under national jurisdiction, and shall provide funds for the performing of such functions);
- The two national communities shall be directly represented in representative bodies of local self-government and in the National Assembly (Article 80, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates that one deputy of each national community shall always be elected to the National Assembly; contrary to other deputies, who are elected according to the principle of proportional representation, the representatives of the national communities are elected according to the majority principle);

¹⁴Cf. Ur. l. RS, No. 1-4/91-I, 25 July 1991.

- The position of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the manner in which their rights are exercised in the geographic areas where they live, the obligations of the self-governing local communities for the exercise of these rights, and those rights which the members of these national communities exercise also outside these areas, shall all be regulated by law;
- The rights of both national communities are guaranteed irrespective of the numerical strength of these communities;
- In Article 64, paragraph 5 the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates as follows: "Laws, regulations and other general acts that concern the exercise of the constitutionally provided rights and the position of the national communities exclusively, may not be adopted without the consent of representatives of these national communities." Based on the constitutional provision, Article 15, paragraph 2 of the Law on Self-governing National Communities (Ur. l. RS, No. 65/94) further stipulates as follows: "As to matters related to status of the members of national communities, state bodies are obliged to acquire prior opinion of the self-governing national communities".

In its Article 11 the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia contains important provisions concerning the fulfilment of the rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities: "The official language in Slovenia is Slovene. In those municipalities where Italian or Hungarian national communities reside, Italian or Hungarian shall also be official languages." Furthermore, Articles 61 and 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia guarantee all citizens of the Republic of Slovenia the right to freely express affiliation with their nations or national communities, to foster and give expression to their cultures and to use their languages and scripts.

The organisation and the fundamental rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia are defined in the Law on Self-governing National Communities (Ur. l. RS, No. 65/94), its Article 1 stipulating as follows: "For the implementation of special rights, guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, for the promotion of their needs and interests, and for organised participation in public matters, members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities establish, in regions of their autochthonous settlement, self-governing national communities"; this gives further operational basis for implementing the constitutional rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities.

Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are also guaranteed certain rights that apply outside the ethnically mixed areas (e.g. entry into a special electoral register for the election of a deputy to the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the right to learn one's native language outside the ethnically mixed area under certain conditions).

Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are also represented in the Council of Radiotelevizija Slovenija, with one representative for each of the two communities. In addition, the Council of Radiotelevizija Slovenija also appoints programme councils for minority programmes in which two thirds of the members belong to the two national communities.

The status of the two national communities is further regulated by some 40 sector-specific laws, the ordinances and statutes of the municipalities in the ethnically mixed areas, other

legal acts, treaties or interstate agreements, as well as international conventions that have been ratified by the Republic of Slovenia. The most important are the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (the two apply to both national communities). The 1977 Treaty of Osimo is relevant to the Italian national community. It is a bilateral agreement between the former SFRY and the Italian Republic. Upon proclaiming independence in 1991, the Republic of Slovenia made a commitment to further respect these agreements. The Treaty of Osimo also includes the essential provisions of the Special Statute annexed to the London Memorandum of 1954.

The Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights of the Slovenian Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia (1993) is an important interstate agreement for both the Hungarian national community living in Slovenia and the Slovenian minority living in Hungary.

2001 saw the adoption of the revised Act Guaranteeing Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education (Ur. l. RS, No. 35/2001) which regulates comprehensively all the specialities of education for the needs of both national communities, based on all legal acts governing the area of education, beginning with the umbrella Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 55/2003 – official consolidated version). The Librarianship Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 87/2001), containing a number of executive regulations, also deserves mentioning; its Article 25 governs the general libraries in the ethnically mixed areas. A special working group was established at the Ministry of Culture to draft proposals on the implementation of the mentioned Article. Two members of this working group were also representatives of the umbrella organisations of both national communities. The Ministry of Culture has organised expert assistance and counselling for members of the national communities with the purpose to ensure their equal participation in cultural life. Special attention is paid to the artists stemming from national communities. This approach allows for the specific conditions in which national communities and their members live to be taken into account.

2002 saw the adoption of the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 96/2002) which defines the public interest in culture, the public bodies that are competent and responsible for it, as well as the mechanisms for its implementation. The provisions of this Act also govern the Italian and Hungarian national communities, apart from other minority communities in the Republic of Slovenia. Article 59 of the Act stipulates that the programmes of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are provided on the basis of a direct invitation for applications. In addition, Article 31 of the Act contains the provision stipulating that the financing of public institutes, which the Italian and Hungarian national communities may establish in order to meet their needs in the field of culture, shall be provided for the Italian and Hungarian national communities by the state within the framework of the funds allocated to the Italian and Hungarian national communities.

2003 saw the adoption of the Central Register of Population Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 37/2003), which substituted the previous Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act. The new Act has integrally redefined the area of keeping population registers (a unified data base in a computerised register). Article 23, paragraph 5 of the Central Register of Population Act stipulates as follows: “In the areas, as defined by law, populated by autochthonous Italian or Hungarian national communities, copies and certificates from the Register of Civil Status shall be issued in Slovene and in the language of the national community.”

Article 5 of the amended Matura Examination Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 15/2003) of 2003 stipulates that in the areas populated by the Italian national community, in schools with Italian as the language of instruction, the subject of the joint part of the general *matura* examination is the Italian language instead of the Slovenian, while in the areas populated by the Hungarian national community, a candidate may choose between the Slovenian and the Hungarian languages. Article 7 of the Matura Examination Act is equally applicable in cases where a candidate takes a vocational *matura* examination.

In 2003, the Organisation and Financing of Education Act was amended (Ur. l. RS, No. 55/2003).

Secretary General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia issued instruction No. 023-12/2001 of 3 March 2003 on the integration of national communities into the decision-making procedures related to the status of their members – Article 15, paragraph 2 of the [Law on Self-Governing National Communities](#) (Ur. l. RS, No. 65/1994) – with regard to the observation made by Mr Roberto Batelli, representative of the Italian national community in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, and the leadership of the Italian national community on the inconsistent application of Article 15, paragraph 2 of the [Law on Self-governing National Communities](#). In the instruction, Secretary General called upon all national authorities (the Government, the ministries and other bodies) to comply consistently with all procedural and statutory provisions. Among other matters he stated the following:

- In relation to the Government and its working bodies considering matters related to the status of members of the national communities, whereby final decisions are adopted by the National Assembly (defining legal norms and adopting other acts), I would like to point out Article 49 of the Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (Ur. l. RS, No. 43/2001) which stipulates: “The Government shall cooperate with other state bodies, with professional associations, chambers, unions, local communities and other entities as a rule via the relevant ministries. In so doing it shall, in particular, discuss their opinions and initiatives and take a position on them, inform them of its own positions and measures, where necessary, invite their representatives to sessions of its working bodies, set up Government councils and organise other forms of cooperation.” Consequently – and regardless of the provision that prior to adopting laws, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia is obliged to acquire opinions of self-governing national communities – I recommend that ministries cooperate with national communities already when preparing the documents, in accordance with the above quoted provision of the Rules of Procedure.
- When state authorities decide, in the framework of the executive (the Government, the ministries and other state bodies), on the basis of executive regulations and other legal acts, they are obliged, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 2 of the [Law on Self-governing National Communities](#), to acquire a preliminary opinion of the governing bodies of national communities, as follows: (a) in matters involving the Italian national community, the opinion is to be provided by its highest body: the Coastal Italian Self-governing National Community (Koper, Župančičeva 39); (b) in matters involving the Hungarian national community, the opinion is to be provided by: the Hungarian Self-governing National Community of Pomurje, (Lendava, Glavna ulica 124); (c) in matters involving the Romany community in the Republic

of Slovenia, the statutory provisions and executive regulations under (a) and (b) apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Romany community. The opinion of the Romany community is provided by its highest body, i.e. the Union of the Roma of Slovenia, with its seat at Arhitekta Novaka 13, Murska Sobota;

- When in doubt whether a statutory or other regulation is prejudicial to the status of the members of the national communities, an appropriate interpretation is provided by the Government Office for Nationalities.

In January 2003, the Decree on the Establishment of the University of Primorska (Universita della Primorska) was issued. The University of Primorska is based in Koper and located in the autochthonous ethnically mixed area, which is populated by members of the Italian national community and where bilingualism is ensured by law.

On the basis of the Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights of the Slovenian Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia, signed by the two states in 1992, the 7th Session of the Mixed Slovenian-Hungarian Commission was held in Moravske Toplice on 27 and 28 May 2003.

Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries

The Republic of Hungary adopted the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries, which also concerns the Hungarian national community living in Slovenia and has been in force since 1 January 2002. The Act, however, does not apply to Hungarians living in Austria. The Act provides certain advantages for the members of the Hungarian minority in the neighbouring countries. Due to objections from international institutions (Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE) as well as some neighbouring countries like Romania and Slovakia, Hungary on 23 June 2003 adapted the Act to European standards and to some specificities that apply to the Hungarian minorities in Romania and Slovakia.

The position of the Republic of Slovenia on this Act is that it is a legitimate act of a neighbouring country; nevertheless, its implementation should not infringe upon the legal order of the Republic of Slovenia or constrain the framework or mechanisms provided by the agreements between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary. Slovenia will discuss the issues regarding the implementation of the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring Countries and its particular contents together with Hungary at the bilateral level, within the framework of the mixed Slovenian-Hungarian Commission which monitors the implementation of the Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights of the Slovenian Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia.

The advantages that Hungary offers to members of the Hungarian national community, including their spouses who are not Hungarians, are based on five types of cards issued by the Hungarian state.

Under the auspices of the umbrella organisation Hungarian Self-Governing National Community of Pomurje an "Information office" in Lendava carries out administrative tasks and completes application forms for the above mentioned identification or "Hungarian" cards for members of the Hungarian national community in the Republic of Slovenia (but does not issue the cards). The cards provide numerous advantages to members of the Hungarian national community in Slovenia and to their spouses or cohabiting partners

(regardless of their national affiliation), as well as to secondary school students and teachers (e.g. in the areas of education, transport, museums, libraries, archives etc.). According to the data provided by the Lendava information office, 1785 cards were issued by 22 January 2004. Sixty-five cards were issued to secondary school students, 45 to teachers, 54 to spouses, while the remaining went to members of the minority. To date, 4 applications have been rejected.

The interstate Agreement on Guaranteeing Special Rights of the Slovenian Minority Living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian National Community in the Republic of Slovenia (1993) was signed on 6 November 1992 in Ljubljana and ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia on 3 April 1993. The Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary signed the Agreement in the desire to provide the highest possible level of legal protection as well as preservation and development of national identities of the Slovenian minority in the Republic of Hungary and of the Hungarian national community in the Republic of Slovenia. On the basis of this Agreement, a mixed Slovenian-Hungarian commission was established with the aim of monitoring the fulfilment of obligations arising from the Agreement, proposing and recommending the manner and contents of resolving open issues. The Commission's last session took place in Moravske Toplice, on 27 and 28 May 2003.

(b) The Roma

The regulation of the legal status of the Roma began in 1989, when a provision was adopted within the framework of constitutional amendments stipulating that the legal status of the Romany community should be regulated by law. The legal basis for the regulation of the status of the Romany community in the Republic of Slovenia is provided by Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, which stipulates as follows: “The status and special rights of the Romany community living in Slovenia shall be regulated by law.” On one hand, this set the legal foundation for protective measures, on the other, it pointed out the fact that due to its specific character the Romany community cannot be equated with the Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia¹⁵. Article 65 confers a mandate upon the legislator to provide for special statutory rights of the Romany community living in Slovenia as a distinct ethnic community – in addition to the general rights that appertain to every citizen. This means ensuring special (additional) protection, which in legal theory is known as a “positive discrimination” or positive protection, and implies that in regulating the special status and rights of the Romany community the legislator is not restricted by the principle of equality; in regulating human rights and fundamental freedoms, the latter forbids any discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race or other circumstances, as stipulated in Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Constitution¹⁶. The Constitution guarantees special rights of the Romany community under the chapter of human rights and fundamental freedoms; this does not imply, however, that the special rights provided by individual laws are also considered as constitutional rights. They are special statutory rights and the constitutional provision of Article 65 provides the basis for granting such rights.

¹⁵ Information on the status of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, Poročevalec DZ/No. 18, 1995.

¹⁶ Cf. L. Šturm, Comments on the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Faculty of Postgraduate National and European Studies, Ljubljana 2002. F. Zakrajšek, Article 65 (Status and Special Rights of the Romany Community in Slovenia), pp. 630-633.

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Romany community does not enjoy the status of a national minority, but is recognised as a special ethnic community or a minority with special ethnic characteristics (its own language, culture and other ethnic specificities).

On drafting the Constitution, various questions arose as regards providing special protection to the Romany community, especially in comparison to the constitutional protection enjoyed by the Italian and Hungarian communities. On the basis of the principle that the Romany community requires special treatment due to its specific ethnic characteristics, a special “Roma Act” was proposed with the aim of regulating integrally the status and special rights of that community. Subsequently, a view prevailed that the status and special rights should be governed by sector-specific legislation, as it is the case for the two national communities. From the constitutional perspective the issue that remains outstanding is whether the legislator has achieved, through partial regulation of the Romany community's special rights, the objective to statutorily define not only the special rights of the Romany community but also its status, namely the scope of the areas in which such rights are granted as well as other conditions that must be met on granting special rights¹⁷.

At its 115th session, on 2 December 1993, on discussing the draft Law on Self-governing National Communities, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision that the Government should also draft a law on the protection of the Romany community in the Republic of Slovenia. On 12 October 1995, the National Assembly's Committee on Home Affairs and Legislation adopted the following decision: “No global law is necessary at the moment to govern the issues vital for the regulation of the status of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia. These issues should be governed on the basis of equality by sector-specific legislation in accordance with the proposals of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and other measures.” In 1995 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a position that it would be reasonable to regulate the protection of the Romany community by sector-specific legislation.

Article 65 of the Constitution is still being implemented through sector-specific legislation and the protection of the rights of the Romany community has thus far been regulated by nine (9) sector-specific acts:

1. Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS, No. 72/93 ... 51/2002)
2. Act Amending the Local Elections Act (Ur. l. RS 51/2002)
3. Voting Rights Register Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 52/2002)
4. Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 14/2003)
5. Pre-school Institutions Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96 ... 44/00)
6. Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96 ... 59/2001)
7. Mass Media Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 35/2001)
8. Librarianship Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 87/2001)
9. Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 96/2002)

Political participation of the Roma at the local level in the Republic of Slovenia

Following the initiative of Mr Rajko Šajnovič from Novo Mesto for a review of constitutionality and legality, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia, in its

¹⁷Cf. L. Šturm, Comments on the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Faculty of Postgraduate National and European Studies, Ljubljana 2002. F. Zakrajšek, Article 65 (Status and Special Rights of the Romany Community in Slovenia), pp. 630-633.

decision (U-I-416/98-38) of 22 March 2001, established, *inter alia*, that the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS, Nos. 72/93, 70/2000) was in disagreement with the Constitution, namely in the part of the provision of Article 39, paragraph 5 stipulating that in municipalities where autochthonous Romany communities live, the Roma shall have at least one representative in the municipal council. The said provision does not enumerate any conditions under which the municipalities populated by the Romany community would be obliged to ensure in their statutes the election of a special Roma councillor upon elections to local self-governing bodies. The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia was tasked by the Constitutional Court to eliminate the provisions that are in disagreement with the Constitution.

Thus Article 101(a) was added to the Law on Local Self-Government in Article 14 of the Act Amending the Law on Local Self-Government (Ur. l. RS, No. 51/2002), which should eliminate the non-constitutionality, stipulating: "The municipalities of Beltinci, Cankova, Črenšovci, Črnomelj, Dobrovnik, Grosuplje, Kočevje, Krško, Kuzma, Lendava, Metlika, Murska Sobota, Novo Mesto, Puconci, Rogašovci, Semič, Šentjernej, Tišina, Trebnje and Turnišče shall be obliged to ensure the rights of the Romany community living in their respective municipalities to one representative in the municipal council before the ordinary local elections in 2002." To date, the Municipality of Grosuplje remains the only one not respecting the decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia. Currently, the Romany community has special councillors in 19 municipal councils. Through the amendment of the Law on Local Self-Government, which is again undergoing amendments, the issue of Roma councillors is expected to be settled also in the municipality of Grosuplje.

In drafting the proposals for settling the status of the Romany community in Slovenia at the local level, good guiding examples were provided by Article 4 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Resolution of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (No. 294, 1993) for a Europe of tolerance, especially in facilitating the integration of the Roma into local communities.

In 2002 and 2003, the Government Office for Nationalities financially supported the training and education programme for members of the Romany community who stood as candidates for the election of Roma councillors to the municipal councils. In future, this programme is expected to enter into an advanced stage in terms of further training of the already elected Romany councillors as well as of the chairmen and secretaries of the established Romany societies (there are now 21 such societies registered). Such training would be focused on the significance and opportunities that the Romany representatives have got with the election, such as direct decision-making in the wider political, social, economic and cultural spheres.

Article 6

In accordance with Article 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Freedom of Expression), freedom of expression of thought, freedom of speech and public appearance, of the press and other forms of public communication and expression are guaranteed to all Slovenian citizens. Everyone has the right to freely collect, receive and disseminate information and opinions. Except in such cases as are provided by law, everyone has the right to obtain information of public nature in which he has a well founded legal interest under law.

Human rights are part of the curricula for elementary and secondary schools. Especially basic education curricula extensively focus on acquainting children with human and children's rights. Various school subjects include content on human rights and human relations; special attention is paid to these issues within Social Studies (4th and 5th grades of the 9-year elementary school), Civic Education and Ethics (7th and 8th grades of the 9-year elementary school) and some other subjects, e.g. Civic Culture, Media Education, Rhetoric etc.

Supplementary mother tongue classes for the children of migrants are based on Article 8 of the Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS, Nos. 12/96, 33/97 and 59/01), on the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the EU, and on extensive experience from supplementary Slovenian language classes in Western European countries. The system of supplementary education for the children of migrants was described in the first Report (Article 6).

The following numbers of pupils attend mother tongue classes in the school year 2003-04:

- **Macedonian: 52 pupils (in Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica and Jesenice);**
- **Serbian: 16 pupils in Maribor;**
- **Croatian: 35 pupils (in Novo Mesto, Ljubljana, Maribor and Radovljica).**

Information on foreign language classes as optional subjects is contained in Article 13.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has been trying hard to promote the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue in the field of media. In its letter of 15 July 2002 the Minister of culture recommended to Radiotelevizija Slovenija that more media attention be dedicated to minority communities and their successful integration into their living environments; in this way the population would better understand cultural characteristics and specificities of these communities. This is important with a view to ensuring an atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Slovenia.

Ever since 1992 the Ministry of Culture has been trying to create favourable conditions for cultural activities of other minority communities and immigrants, mainly ensured by the societies of former Yugoslav peoples that now live in Slovenia.

However, there is a gap between the number of requests for assistance and the financial possibilities: in 2004 the amount claimed was 4 times higher than the available amount of the Ministry of Culture. At a meeting with the Minister of culture in February 2004 several measures were taken that should improve the situation in this field.

Articles 7 and 8

In Slovenia the principles of the Framework Convention, namely ensuring respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of expression and freedom of thought (Article 7) and for the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions (Article 8), are applied through national legislation and appropriate government policy.

(a) National legislation

Slovenian Government Office for Religious Communities has established that the national legislation – i.e. the positive law, the Legal Status of Religious Communities in the Republic of Slovenia Act (Ur. l. SRS, Nos. 15/76 and 42/86, and Ur. l. RS, No. 22/91), the Government's draft law on religious communities, submitted to the National Assembly on 22 June 1998, and the draft law on religious freedom and religious communities, prepared by the Institute for Human Rights Law – does not contain any specific provisions on freedom of conscience and religion for national minorities. With regard to the freedom of conscience persons belonging to national minorities are treated in the same way as all other persons entitled to this freedom.

Based on the data on national affiliation in the register of religious communities established in the Republic of Slovenia and the 2002 Census, the Office for Religious Communities has ascertained that members of national minorities can openly exercise the freedoms of conscience and religion in their collective dimension. The fact is that successful applications for the establishment of religious communities were submitted by members of the following national groups: Bosnians, Moslems (as a rule their ethnic basis is the Islamic community in the Republic of Slovenia), Serbians (as a rule their ethnic basis is the Serbian orthodox church of Mitropolija Zagrebačko-Ljubljanska), and Macedonians (as a rule their ethnic basis is the Macedonian orthodox community "Sveti Kliment Ohridski" in the Republic of Slovenia).

(b) Government policy

As regards the freedom of conscience, Slovenian Government policy towards national minorities is part of the general Government policy in the field of freedom of conscience and the principle of separation of state and religious communities. The state assigns financial aid, i.e. the employer's contribution for social insurance of priests, monks and nuns, for whom this is the only occupation, also to the priests of the Islamic community in the Republic of Slovenia and the Serbian orthodox church of Mitropolija Zagrebačko-Ljubljanska. The Macedonian orthodox community "Sveti Kliment Ohridski" has no priest. As a rule, each year the mentioned religious communities are allocated a symbolic financial aid by the state.

Article 9(a) Italian national community

The Italian national community has numerous societies and other cultural and educational institutions using the Italian language.

In the 2002/2003¹⁸ school year, a total of 280 children attended three pre-school institutions using Italian as the language of instruction (Delfino Blu in Koper, Dante Alighieri in Izola, and La Coccinella in Portorož) in the ethnically mixed areas of the coastal municipalities. A total of 416 pupils attended three elementary schools and affiliated schools with Italian as the language of instruction in the 2002/2003 school year (elementary schools Dante

¹⁸ A letter to the educational institutions in the matter of numerical data for the 2002/2003 school year, Ljubljana, July 2003.

Alighieri, Izola; Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio, Koper with affiliated schools in Semedela, Bertoki and Hrvatini; and Vincenzo de Castro, Piran with affiliated schools in Lucija, Sečovelje and Strunjan).

A total of 287 students attended three secondary schools with Italian as the language of instruction in the 2002/2003 school year (Antonio Sema High School, Piran; Gian Rinaldo Carli Secondary School, Koper; Pietro Coppo Secondary Vocational School – Economics, Izola).

The Italian language and literature can be studied at the University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana with the seat in Koper). A decree has recently been issued on the establishment of the University of Primorska. Members of the Italian national community can also study at the universities in Italy (particularly when they want to study other, non-linguistic subjects in the Italian language) and in Croatia (Rijeka, Pula).

Members of the Italian national community in the Republic of Slovenia have set up numerous societies (political, general, cultural, sports, research, etc), they have three libraries and there are also special departments devoted to the Italian culture, publications and magazines within the network of public libraries.

The EDIT publishing house in Rijeka with the A.I.A. agency in Koper (the former is co-financed and the latter fully financed by Slovenia), is engaged in newspaper publishing and publishes the weekly *La Voce del Popolo*. Cultural and information publications are also published in the ethnically mixed area: *La Città*, *Il Mandracchio*, *Lasa pur dir*, *Il Trillo* and other occasional editions.

Regular daily radio and television programmes are produced within the public Radiotelevizija Slovenia, at the Regional Radio and Television Centre Koper-Capodistria (national RTV Slovenia). There is 18 hours of radio programme daily which amounts to 126 hours weekly, while television programmes are broadcast for 9 hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and for 7.5 hours on Mondays and Thursdays. To ensure the operation of this institution falling within the system of RTV Slovenia, a certain number of the employed are working full time and a certain number part time, both on a permanent basis (a special fee is collected by the national TV for this purpose). 59 employed in the radio programme and 93 in the television programme of the Regional Radio and Television Centre Koper-Capodistria are working on a full time basis. In addition to those employed full time there are 20 employed working on a permanent part time basis in the radio programme and 30 in the television programme. The programmes of national communities have been additionally co-financed by the state (Office for Nationalities) in view of the provision of Article 14 of the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Ur. l. RS No. 18/94, ..., 79/2001).

Three common institutions which are very important for the Italian community in Slovenia are active in the territory of the Republic of Croatia:

- EDIT publishing house in Rijeka
- Italian Theatre, Rijeka
- Historic Research Centre in Rovinj, and
- Italian Union.

These institutions are co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia, even though there is no interstate legal instrument to this end. The present financing is based on the decision of 1993 of the Government Committee for State Regulation and Public Administration.

The restoration of the Manzioli Palace in Izola is also of great significance for the Italian national community. The relevant agreement was concluded in the time of the former common state, between Yugoslavia and Italy. The investment has been made by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. The Office for Nationalities co-financed the equipment for the library in the Palace in 2002, providing funds in the total amount of SIT 5,578,500.00.

The Italian national community is presently in the process of setting up an institute for the culture of the Italian national community. The start-up capital totalling SIT 4,500,000.00 has been provided by the Office for Nationalities.

(b) Hungarian national community

The Hungarian national community has numerous societies and other cultural and educational institutions using the Hungarian language.

Unlike the Italian national community, which has schools using Italian as the language of instruction, schools in the ethnically mixed areas in which the Hungarian national community resides must be bilingual by law (education is conducted in both languages, Slovenian and Hungarian, for all inhabitants of the area).

According to data for the 2002/2003 school year, a total of 273 children attended the bilingual pre-school institutions in the ethnically mixed area of Pomurje.

1,022 pupils (see footnote 2) attended bilingual elementary schools with affiliated schools (Bilingual Elementary School Lendava I, Bilingual Elementary School Lendava II with a special programme, Bilingual Elementary School Vljaj Lajoš, Genterovci, Bilingual Elementary School Dobrovnik and Bilingual Elementary School Prosenjakovci).

The Lendava bilingual secondary school has 17 classes (7 *gimnazija* classes, 6 classes qualifying for the profession of a technician in the field of economics, 1 class qualifying for the profession of a mechanical engineering technician and 3 classes qualifying for the profession of a shop assistant). There were 284 students attending the school in the 2002/2003 school year.

Members of the Hungarian national community can study the Hungarian language at the University of Maribor (Department for the Hungarian Language) and at the University of Ljubljana (lectorship in the Hungarian language) and, on the basis of the bilateral agreement of 1993 between Slovenia and Hungary, at universities in Hungary (about 50 members of the Hungarian national community study in Hungary every year).

The Hungarian national community has over 30 amateur societies and groups (folklore, music groups, choirs, recital and theatre groups the activities of which, as well as organisational tasks, are carried out by the Institute for the Culture of the Hungarian

National Community (this also comprises publishing activity and a writers' group of Hungarian nationality).

The Institute for the Information Activity of the Hungarian National Community based in Lendava publishes the weekly *Népújság* in the Hungarian language.

The library activity is carried out within the Regional and Study Library in Murska Sobota and a bookshop is open in Lendava selling books in the Hungarian language. Certain municipalities autochthonously settled by the Hungarian national community (the Goričko Hungarians: Moravske Toplice, Šalovci, Hodoš) are also visited by a mobile library on a regular basis.

The Lendava Library is another independent public institute based in the ethnically mixed area. It has been established by the Lendava and Dobrovnik Municipalities together with the Hungarian Self-governing Community of the Lendava Municipality and the Self-governing Community of the Dobrovnik Municipality (Ordinance on the Establishment of the Public Institute Lendava Library – Könyvtár Lendva, Ur. l. RS, No. 8/04). The library performs its activities for other municipalities on the basis of signed contracts. The Library is based in the ethnically mixed area and its library activity also extends to members of the Hungarian national community. It falls in the 3rd group of libraries and covers the municipalities of Lendava, Dobrovnik, Črenšovci, Kobilje, Odranci, Turnišče and Velika Polana. The Lendava Library has 12 affiliated local libraries in this area, 7 in monolingual and 5 in bilingual areas. The Library also provides the expertise and organisation of the library activity intended for the Hungarian national community. The Library purchases, processes, stores, conserves and provides books and other material in the Hungarian language as well. The Library also collects the material on homeland studies. As at 31 December 2003, the library fund comprised 114,148 units (books, video tapes and CDs), of which 32,036 in the Hungarian language; an average of 1,139 books and 45 issues of periodicals are obtained annually.¹⁹

Radio and television programmes for the Hungarian national community are produced within the public Radiotelevizija Slovenija, at the Regional Radio and Television Centre Maribor – Hungarian Programmes Studio Lendava. There are 13 hours and 15 minutes of radio programme daily, including Saturdays and Sundays, while the television programme comprises the TV series MOSTOVI-HIDAK (Bridges) that are broadcast by the national television and by the regional TV channel Maribor. 30-minute episodes of the MOSTOVI-HIDAK series are broadcast by the national television four times per week (with an additional rerun of each episode) through most of the year, and three times per week (plus reruns) in the summertime. The 30-minute episodes are also shown four times per week by the Regional Channel Maribor through most of the year, and three times per week in the summertime.

To ensure the operation of this institution falling within the system of RTV Slovenia, there is a certain number of staff members working full time and a certain number working part time, both on a permanent basis (a special fee is collected by the national TV for this purpose). A total of 25 staff members are employed in the Hungarian Programmes Lendava Studio in the radio and television programmes on a full time basis. In addition to those employed full time, there are 12 employed working on a permanent part time basis and 90

¹⁹ SOURCE: Letter from the Lendava Library of 16 February 2004.

working occasionally in the radio and television programmes. The programmes of national communities have been additionally co-financed by the state (Office for Nationalities) in view of the provision of Article 14 of the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (Ur. l. RS No. 18/94, 79/2001).

The construction of the Lendava Cultural Centre has entered its final stage. To date, the Ministry of Culture has met all its financial obligations, and the Lendava Municipality has met the major part of its obligations. A special agreement on co-financing the construction of the Lendava Cultural Centre was signed in 1995 by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Lendava Municipality, Hungarian national community in the municipality and the Office of the Republic of Hungary for Hungarian Minorities Abroad (which allocated 100 million forint to this end). Until 2000, SIT 1,006,080,020.60 were spent for the construction of the Lendava Cultural Centre.²⁰ On 20 May 2003, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a programme of measures and investments for 2003 and 2004, thus earmarking the funds for the completion of the investment into the Lendava Cultural Centre (a total of SIT 200,000,000.00 will be allocated by the Ministry of Culture). Funds from the national budget were provided as follows: SIT 150,000,000.00 in the 2003 budget year and SIT 50,000,000.00 in the 2004 budget year.²¹ The remaining expenses until the completion of the investment in the foreseen amount of SIT 211,923,278.00 and according to the payment schedule set in the investment programme and its amendment are to be covered partly by the Lendava Municipality from its own funds (SIT 117,323,278.00) and partly by the funds in the amount of SIT 94,600,000.00 (100 million forint) provided by the Republic of Hungary as a co-financer. The Lendava Municipality provided SIT 115,823,278.00 in 2003 and will provide the remaining SIT 1,500,000.00 in 2004.²² A total of SIT 1,418,003,298.60 (including the amount earmarked for 2004) will thus be required for the construction of the Lendava Cultural Centre to be used by the Hungarian national community. The talks are now held on the composition of the management bodies of the Centre and on the method of using its capacities.

Apart from regular funding, the Office for Nationalities allocated to the Hungarian Self-governing National Community of Pomurje (the umbrella organisation) additional funds in the total amount of SIT 3,335,745.00 in 2002. These funds were allocated for the reconstruction of the building at Glavna ulica 124 in Lendava, in which the Hungarian Self-governing National Community of Pomurje is located, and its surroundings.

A radio and television studio of the Hungarian national community is also being constructed in Lendava, which is financed by the Radiotelevizija Slovenija and the Office for Nationalities. SIT 330,000,000.00 have already been invested and further SIT 100,000,000.00 will be invested in 2004, when the investment is to be completed.

The investment in one of the most modern elementary schools in Dobrovnik with the state-of-the-art equipment was completed in 2003; the total of SIT 620,000,000.00 was invested by the state through the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (SIT 232,014,000.00), and by the Ministry of the Information Society and the Dobrovnik Municipality.

²⁰ SOURCE: Lendava Municipality, Revision of the Investment Programme for the Lendava Cultural Centre, Programme for Completing the Investment, Lendava May 2003.

²¹ SOURCE: Ministry of Culture, letter No. 403-315/2002 of 19 May 2003.

²² SOURCE: Ministry of Finance, Financing of Local Communities Department, Consent to the investment to be co-financed from the budgetary funds of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 65968/03, 637/SFLS, GP76972/03 of 23 July 2003.

(c) The Roma

An ever greater attention is paid to providing information to the Roma and about the Roma. The Romany community is occasionally provided with information in the Romany language as well. Information concerning Romany themes in the printed media as well as radio and occasional TV programmes are aimed at awareness-raising and educating the Romany community and also providing the majority population with information about the situation, life and problems of the Roma and about their particular features. The media, with the exception of tabloids, have recently treated Romany issues fairly favourably.

Two radio stations, the Murski val Murska Sobota and the Studio D from Novo Mesto, have been broadcasting weekly programmes for the Roma for eight consecutive years. Both, the Slovenian and Romany languages are used in the programme which provides information about the work and life of the Roma, reports on their cultural, sports and other events, including Romany music and original contributions by Romany authors. The programme has been well received by the Roma themselves as well as by other audiences. Radio and TV programmes are financed by the Office for Nationalities from the budgetary funds of the Republic of Slovenia.

In 2002 the TV AS studio from Murska Sobota began to produce and broadcast TV programmes for the Roma on the work, life and problems of the Romany ethnic communities in Slovenia. The studio produces one episode every two months, which is then broadcast by cable TV in the areas populated by a larger number of the Roma (Prekmurje, Dolenjska and Maribor). A special Romany programme is under preparation for the Dolenjsko region. It would be sensible if these radio and television programmes were organised and financed through the public institution Radiotelevizija Slovenija, as is also the case with the Italian and Hungarian national communities.

In October 2003 the Union of the Roma of Slovenia established the ROMIC documentation centre in Murska Sobota, which is involved with library activities and the audio production (documentary archives, radio studio). The purchase of the premises was financed by the Office for Nationalities from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia, and the equipment was provided by the Sörös Foundation.

Information in the Romany language is also provided in writing, e.g. in the Romany newspaper ROMANO THEM – ROMSKI SVET (ROMANY WORLD), which is published four times a year by the Union of the Roma of Slovenia. The newspaper provides the Roma with information and also increases the knowledge and understanding of the Roma issue among the Slovenian population.

The publishing activities of the Roma have also been enriched in the recent years. The Union of the Roma of Slovenia issued the following publications in the period from 1993 to 2003:

- LUNIN PRSTAN (MOON'S RING) – a collection of poems and plays by Jožef Livinja and Jožek Horvat;
- POT – DROM (PATH) – a collection of poems by Rajko Šajnovič;
- KRVAVA VODA (BLOODY WATER) – collection of plays depicting the life of the Roma, by Jožek Horvat;

- ROMSKI ZBORNIK (I and II) – ROMANO KEDIPE (ROMA ANTHOLOGY (I and II)) – contributions by authors from international Roma camps;
- VIOLINA – HEGEDUVA (VIOLIN) – collection of plays by Jožek Horvat;
- ROMANI ČHIB – ROMSKI JEZIK (ROMANY LANGUAGE) – a brief review of various Romany language groups, by Jožek Horvat;
- ROMANE ALAVA – ZBIRKA ROMSKIH BESED – a list of Romany words for everyday use; contributions by various authors.

(d) Other ethnic groups

The German language is promoted and supported by German societies in which members of the German community in Slovenia can receive additional education and establish links with their parent nation. There are three German societies in the Republic of Slovenia: the International Society *Most Svoboda*, officially registered in Maribor on 25 June 1991, and two societies of the Kočevje Germans, namely the *Peter Kozler Slovenian Kočevje Society* based in Ljubljana and officially registered on 19 September 1994 and the *Kočevje Germans Society* based in Občice and officially registered in the administrative unit of Novo Mesto on 11 August 1992.

The activities of the German ethnic group in Slovenia were additionally promoted following the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, and Science signed in Ljubljana on 30 April 2001. Article 15 stipulates as follows: "The Contracting Parties will always include in the programmes of the Mixed Commission established under Article 20, Paragraph 1, and in the given case in the joint work programmes of the ministries of both sides under Article 20, Paragraph 3, projects for the benefit of wishes and needs of the members of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia, important in terms of culture, education and science (e.g. projects in the field of language learning and preservation of monuments, scholarships, etc.). The Ministry of Culture supports the projects of this ethnic group and identifies their needs at special meetings organised on this topic.

Ethnic features and differences, cultures and languages are developed within various societies of "members of the nations from the former common state of Yugoslavia". This process of cultural pluralism is a conjunctive process facilitating the participation and self-government of ethnic communities in the Republic of Slovenia. Such cultural pluralism in the Republic of Slovenia has been ensured through the Ministry of Culture which provides financial support for the activities of societies of "members of the nations from the former common state of Yugoslavia" (e.g. The Croatian Cultural Society in Maribor, Bosnian Cultural Union of Slovenia, Society Serbian Community, Society of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Slovenian Friendship Liljan, Union of Macedonian Cultural Societies of Slovenia – Macedonian Cultural Society Makedonija and Macedonian Cultural Society Sv. Ciril in Metod).

In the territory of Slovenia, members of nations from the former common state of Yugoslavia have the possibility of following TV channels in their mother tongues through a cable TV system provided by cable operators. The following TV channels may be received: Channel 1 and 2 of the Croatian TV, RTV Braća Karić (Yugoslavia), TV-Pink, TV Crna Gora (Montenegro), TV Makedonija (Macedonia), TV Kosovo.

Members of nations of the former SFRY and the German speaking ethnic group have the possibility of learning their respective mother tongues and getting acquainted with their respective cultures in compliance with all applicable international regulations and the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. In the Slovenian educational system German is the second foreign language in terms of the number of students learning it; in some elementary and secondary schools it is even taught as the first foreign language.

Article 10

The use of the minority language for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in all public matters and in all other areas is guaranteed by the Constitution and is legally regulated.

Article 11

As already mentioned, the use of the minority language for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in public matters and in all other areas is guaranteed by the Constitution and is legally regulated. The provision on the use of the language of the Italian national community that may be found in Article 112 of the Statute of the Koper municipality (Uradne objave No. 40/2000) may be cited as an example. This provision stipulates: "In the ethnically mixed area of the municipality, criminal and other proceedings are conducted in compliance with the law. The proceedings in which parties of both nationalities appear shall be conducted in the Slovenian or Italian language or bilingually. State bodies, administrative and other municipal bodies, courts and other public power holders issuing legal and other acts in certain procedures laid down by law are obliged to issue these acts to members of the Italian national community in both languages and to other citizens, provided they so request. In cases under the foregoing paragraph, both texts shall be considered as originals."

In December 2003, the Office for Nationalities consulted the City Municipality of Koper on the issue of conducting marriage ceremonies in the Slovenian or Italian language or in both languages. The City Municipality of Koper stated in its reply that in contracting marriages in ethnically mixed areas, the General Administrative Procedure Act (Ur. l. RS No. 80/99, 70/00 and 52/02) and the Ordinance on Implementing Bilingualism in Ethnically Mixed Areas (Uradne objave, No. 22/98) were applied as the main legal sources. In the opinion of the City Municipality of Koper and the Administrative Unit of Koper marriage may be contracted only in the Italian language provided consent is given by both fiancés. In the opposite case marriage is contracted in both languages. It is also important to underline that the right to bilingualism or the use of one's own mother tongue is reserved exclusively to members of the Italian national community residing in the ethnically mixed area set out in Article 1 of the Ordinance. According to the information provided by the City Municipality of Koper, there are very few marriages contracted exclusively in the Italian language or bilingually.

Article 12

On the basis of the Law on Special Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education (Ur. l. RS No. 35/01), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport drafted the Rules on norms, standards and elements for the systemisation of posts serving as a basis for organising and financing of the 9-year elementary school

programme from the state budget in bilingual elementary schools and schools with Italian as the language of instruction in ethnically mixed areas (Ur. l. RS No. 82/03, the Rules on norms and standards in the bilingual secondary school (Ur. l. RS No. 85/03, the Rules on norms and standards in the secondary schools with Italian as language of instruction (Ur. l. RS No. 85/03).

The models applied in the education of members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are described in the First Report (Article 12).

The data on schools in both ethnically mixed areas for the school year 2003/04 are as follows:

Kindergarten	Number of classes	Number of children	Average number of children per class
Kindergarten within the Dante Alighieri Elementary School, Izola	4	64	16.00
La Coccinella, Lucija	6	90	15.00
Delfino Blu, Koper	7	110	15.71
TOTAL	17	264	15.52

Kindergarten	Number of classes	Number of children	Average number of children per class
Kindergarten within the bilingual Elementary School Dobrovnik	2	27	13.50
Kindergarten within the bilingual Elementary School Prosenjakovci	2	17	8.50
Kindergarten Lendava	14	191	13.64
Kindergarten Moravske Toplice	2	14	7.00
TOTAL	20	249	12.45

Elementary School	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Average number of pupils per class
Dante Alighieri Elementary School, Izola	9	94	10.44
Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio Elementary School Koper (total)	18	178	9.88
Main School	10	124	
Semedela Branch School	3	18	
Bertoki Branch School	2	14	
Hrvatini Branch School	3	22	
Vincenzo de Castro Elementary School, Piran (total)	14	117	8.35
Main School	4	29	
Lucija Branch School	5	51	
Sečovlje Branch School	5	37	
TOTAL	41	389	9.48

Elementary School	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Average number of pupils per class
Bilingual Elementary School Lendava I (total)	40	697	17.42
Main School	34	617	
Gaberje Branch School	3	42	
Petišovci Branch School	1	8	
Čentiba Branch School	2	30	
Bilingual Elementary School Lendava II (total) (Elementary school with special programme)	6	34	5.66
Bilingual Elementary School Genterovci	9	95	10.55
Bilingual Elementary School Dobrovnik	8	78	9.75
Bilingual Elementary School Prosenjakovci (total)	10	93	9.30
Main School	8	80	
Domanjševci Branch School	1	5	
Hodoš Branch School	1	8	
TOTAL	73	997	13.65

Secondary School	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Average number of pupils per class
Gimnazija (High School) Antonio Sema, Piran	4	87	21.75
Gimnazija Gian Rinaldo Carli, Koper	4	60	15.00
Pietro Coppo Secondary School, Izola	17	144	8.47
Bilingual Secondary School Lendava	18	280	16.47
TOTAL	43	571	13.28

Pietro Coppo Secondary School carries out the *gimnazija* programme; in addition students may also follow other programmes qualifying for a technician in economics and business, business secretary, shop assistant, administrator, motor mechanic, vehicle and other transport means mechanic, cook, waiter, and metal worker/designer.

Lendava Secondary School carries out the *gimnazija* programme; in addition students may also follow other programmes qualifying for a shop assistant, technician in economics and mechanical engineering, motor mechanic, mechanical fitter, cook, and waiter.

There is a Department for the Italian Language and Culture at the Faculty of Education in Koper and a Chair for the Italian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

There is a Chair for the Hungarian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education in Maribor, which also carries out a training programme for teachers at bilingual schools; there is a lectorate of the Hungarian language at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

Until Slovenia's accession to the EU, the system of the recognition of professional qualifications had not been operative in the Republic of Slovenia. In Slovenia, there was the procedure of recognition of school certificates obtained abroad and the procedure of the so-called academic recognition. With Slovenia's accession to the EU, the system of recognition of professional qualifications will be introduced, which has been devised by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

The procedure of recognition of foreign school certificates has been governed by the Act Regulating the Recognition of School Certificates Obtained Abroad (Ur. l. SRS, No. 42/72) and the Rules on the documentation for the recognition of foreign school certificates (Ur. l. SRS, No. 34/84 and 36/84) in accordance with which the foreign school certificate is compared with the relevant school certificate issued in the Republic of Slovenia. It is also governed by bilateral agreements which Slovenia concluded with other countries, including the neighbouring countries.

The following regulations apply between Slovenia and Italy in the area of recognition of school certificates:

- **Act Notifying Succession to the Agreements Concluded between the Former Yugoslavia and the Italian Republic, (Ur. l. RS, Mednarodne pogodbe, No. 11/92 (Ur. l. RS, No. 40/92)) :**
- **Agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy on Mutual Recognition of Final Secondary School Certificates for the Enrolment in Universities and Higher Education Institutions (Ur. l. SFRJ - Mednarodne pogodbe, No. 58/71),**
- **Agreement between the SFRY and the Republic of Italy on Mutual Recognition of Degrees and Professional Titles Obtained at Universities and Higher Education Institutions (Ur. l. SFRJ - Mednarodne pogodbe, No. 9/83),**
- **Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Recognition of Slovenian and Italian Degrees and Professional Titles (Ur. l. RS - Mednarodne pogodbe, No. 4/1996 (RS 17/1996)).**

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Mutual Recognition of School Certificates and Degrees has been signed and ratified (Ur. l. RS - Mednarodne pogodbe, No. 11/2000 (Ur. l. RS, No. 44/2000)).

The recognition procedure is being carried out by the competent authority in compliance with the General Administrative Procedure Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 80/99, 70/00 and 52/02) and may take not more than two months from the date when a complete application has been filed.

In compliance with bilateral agreements visiting teachers come to Slovenia (teaching subjects such as history, geography, art etc.); there are exchanges of students, camps are organised and certain books, reference books and teaching aids from home countries are being used.

To ensure appropriate teaching staff in schools, the Law on Special Rights of the Italian and Hungarian National Communities in the Field of Education (Ur. l. RS, No. 35/01) also regulates the employment of foreign citizens. If no candidate fulfilling the conditions required for a qualified staff member applies for a vacancy, the pre-school institution or school may employ a visiting foreign teacher, for a maximum period of two years, in compliance with the conditions set out in Article 101 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 115/03 – official consolidated text). During that time a qualified staff member must learn the Slovenian language and his employment contract may be renewed for not more than two years.

The preparation and printing of textbooks and workbooks proceed according to the programme drawn up by the Task Force for the Education of Ethnicities at the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The starting points for drafting the programme are as follows: adjusted curriculum of the nine-year elementary school programme, catalogues of certified textbooks for the nine-year elementary school and the needs identified at the study groups meetings or in the field. The programme also comprises reprints of textbooks that have to be republished to satisfy the demand for text- and workbooks, and translations, new publications and reviews of imported textbooks intended for the national communities. The programme is initially dealt with by the Task Force for the Education of Ethnicities and subsequently by the Extended Task Force for the Education of Ethnicities within the National Education Institute. Representatives of both national communities are also members of the above task forces.

In providing teaching material, certain specific problems and limitations are encountered. The first is a limited number of qualified associates who can provide translations of Slovenian textbooks, reviews for imported textbooks, and author material for new text- and workbooks. The same persons participate in several activities in ensuring equal rights in education to members of both national communities.

The nine-year elementary school programme is being introduced gradually. Since one of the bilingual schools participated in the first round of introducing the system, it needs textbooks at the same time as other Slovenian schools included in the first round. As a result, additional difficulties occur in translating text- and workbooks – translations may only be provided and bilingual text- and workbooks certified after the teaching material in Slovenian has been certified and published.

Due to small print runs, the translations are extremely expensive. In view of limited funds available, textbooks are mainly included in the programme, while workbooks are limited to those subjects, in which this is absolutely necessary due to external knowledge assessment (e.g. mother tongue and mathematics).

The Ministry solves the above problems in cooperation with the National Education Institute and bilingual schools. Every year, meetings are held with principals of bilingual schools and schools with Italian as the language of instruction. These meetings are aimed at coordinating and agreeing upon the activities to provide necessary textbooks for national communities' education. It is expected that the needs for these textbooks will be fully met and no major difficulties are envisaged in this respect in the school year 2003/04.

On the basis of education legislation (Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 115/03 – official consolidated text), Pre-school Institutions Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 113/03 – official consolidated text), Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96, 33/97 and 59/01)), the Council of Experts for General Education adopted in 2000 the Instructions for implementing the programme of the nine-year elementary schools for the Roma pupils, and in 2002 the appendix to the pre-school institution curriculum for the work with Roma children.

Pre-school Roma children are included in 40 pre-school institutions in Slovenia, mainly in Dolenjsko, Posavje, Bela Krajina, Štajersko and Prekmurje. They are included in Slovenian pre-school institutions in three different ways. Most of them are integrated in ordinary groups, and the minority in special Romany groups consisting of Roma children only, and in Romany pre-school institutions. They are integrated into pre-school institutions in the immediate vicinity of their settlements or in the settlements themselves. In case of greater distance, pre-school institutions organise transport and provide qualified kindergarten staff to accompany children, or in some cases a child from an elementary school upper class. In some cases children are taken from the Romany settlements to pre-school institutions or schools by their parents.

The majority of Roma children are included in daily or half-daily programmes where they are provided, in addition to education and care, all other services (care, board, rest, teaching aids); they can also be included in shorter programmes of four to six hours daily.

The applicable ordinance on norms and personnel requirements in the field of pre-school education stipulates that a pre-school institution group may be formed for the education of the Roma children in which at least 5 children are already included. In these groups the ratio of 4 children per staff member shall be ensured for the first age group and 7 children per staff member in the second age group (minimum 3 hours of programme per day). The Pre-school Institutions Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 113/03 - official consolidated text) stipulates in Article 31 that the parents' contribution shall be determined by the local community on the basis of a scale according to which parents are classified into categories taking into account family property and income per family member compared to the average wage per employee in the Republic of Slovenia. Parents who receive pecuniary social assistance in accordance with the social security regulations are exempt from payment. This applies to the majority of the Roma, but Romany parents seldom enrol their children in pre-school institutions, especially due to emotional attachment as a result of fear of an unknown environment.

1,469 Roma children have been enrolled in elementary schools in the school-year 2003/04. The Ministry grants additional teaching hours to schools with Romany students for lessons in small groups outside of the students' main classes (622.2 teaching hours per week in the 2003/04 school year). Schools in which Roma children are enrolled have been granted additional subsidies for school snacks (702 additional subsidies have been granted in the 2003/04 school year). The Ministry transfers SIT 1,240 monthly per pupil to co-finance teaching material and certain expenses for the activities and excursions of Roma children. Textbooks for Romany children are provided by schools with the help of textbook funds.

In the school year 2003/04, the Ministry changed norms and standards for elementary schools. The norm for classes attended by three or more Roma children remained the same – 21 pupils (the usual norm for ordinary classes is 28 pupils). The norm for forming classes

in a bilingual elementary school has been reduced: if not less than three Roma children attend the class, the norm is 16 pupils (the norm for ordinary classes in the bilingual elementary school and school with Italian as the language of instruction is 21 pupils). The Ministry no longer provides for the possibility to form classes in which only Roma children are included.

In the 2003/04 school year elementary schools for children with special needs are attended by 120 Roma pupils, i.e. 8.17% of all Roma pupils. The percentage was reduced by 1.17% compared to the previous school-year. It is expected that this percentage will be gradually reduced due to innovative approaches in guiding children with special needs and the Ministry's efforts, as well as by familiarising the commissions responsible for guidance with Roma problems.

The working group for preparing a strategy for integrating Roma into the education system, on which we have reported in the comments of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the opinion of the Advisory committee, has been drafting a document titled "The Strategy of Education of the Roma in the Republic of Slovenia". The document will contain an analysis of the situation to date and the Ministry's measures, a review of key unresolved issues and proposals for their settlement (e.g. integration of Roma children in pre-school institutions, abolishing prejudices, permanent professional teacher training etc.). The document will also cover the education of the Roma from pre-school to adult education. It will be considered and adopted by the Council of Experts for General Education as the highest professional authority, making decisions on technical issues in individual education areas. It is expected that the document will be finalised and adopted this year; The Ministry will then draft action plans for individual spheres.

The model of cultural rights protection of special social groups which provides a technical basis for the work of minority department within the Ministry of Culture proceeds from the notion of cultural rights as a category of human rights. It sets up objectives aimed at encompassing cultural diversity as broadly as possible, as one of the valuable principles of life in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, and enables participation of all those who can offer anything original and authentic to the culture in this area. The underlying objectives and principles of minority cultural policy include tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, and peaceful coexistence between the minority and majority populations in the country. The financing of minority programmes and projects is carried out in compliance with those objectives and principles.

With its approach to the minority cultural rights, the Ministry of Culture realises a positive concept of minority protection as well as a democratic and up-to-date cultural policy.

Article 13

In Slovenia, there is a traditionally organised network of public education for the needs of both national communities. Representatives of both national communities cooperate in programme planning, administration of education policy and management of educational institutions. Self-governing national communities can establish organisations and public institutes in the field of education (e.g. Self-governing national communities are co-founders of all schools and pre-school institutions in the nationally mixed areas where members of different nationalities receive education.). In this framework, there are statutory possibilities for establishment of private schools for national communities.

Establishment of private schools in the Republic of Slovenia is regulated by the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 14/2003) that, among other things, regulates statutory conditions for the establishment and management of private schools and educational institutions and provides for consistency of conditions for implementation of education programmes in the Republic of Slovenia.¹²

¹² **Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 14/2003), Article 5:**

"Educational activities shall be carried out by pre-school teachers, pre-school teacher's assistants, teachers, post-secondary vocational-college lecturers, counsellors and other educators in public and private pre-school institutions and schools. Free-lance teachers can carry out educational activities in a pre-school institution or a school or independently, unless otherwise stipulated by law.

Education of children and youth with special needs shall be carried out only as a public service."

Article 7: *"Pre-school institutions and schools may be established as educational institutions or businesses or as organizational units of institutions, companies or some other legal persons, unless otherwise stipulated by this Act.*

Elementary schools and the gimnazija may be established as educational institutions or organizational units of educational or other institutions.

Public pre-school institutions and schools may be established as educational institutions or organized as organizational units of public educational or other institutions or other legal persons of public law.

Pre-school institutions and schools shall be legal persons, unless otherwise stipulated by law or their articles of incorporation.

Pre-school institutions and schools shall not carry out educational activities financed from public revenues for the purpose of earning a profit.

The rights, obligations and liabilities of pre-school institutions and schools are determined by law and their articles of incorporation."

Article 15: *"State-approved education programmes – with the exception of education programmes of private schools – shall be adopted by the minister responsible for education and/or the minister responsible for adult education (hereinafter: the minister) in cooperation with the relevant council of experts.*

Councils of experts propose the general part and establish the special part of education programmes.

Education programmes offered by dormitories for pupils and secondary school students – with the exception of private dormitories for pupils and secondary school students – and the education programme for children and youth with special needs, as well as the special education programme shall be adopted by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education."

Article 17: *"The contents of and the adoption procedure for education programmes of private schools shall be determined by their articles of incorporation.*

Education programmes of the preceding paragraph shall become state-approved when the relevant councils of experts state that the schools meet the required educational standard.

Education programmes carried out by private schools operating on the basis of special educational principles (Steiner, Decroly, Montessori, etc.) shall become state-approved when the respective council of experts states that they guarantee the minimum knowledge leading to a successful completion of education and when they are recognized by relevant international associations of such schools.

Notwithstanding the stipulations of Article 20 of this Act, any implementation of the education programme of the preceding paragraph shall be trial tested during the whole period of the first generation's schooling."

Article 21: *"Schools carrying out state-approved programmes shall use textbooks and teaching aids approved by the relevant council of experts.*

The procedure for preparing and approving textbooks and teaching aids shall be regulated by the minister.

In addition to the approved textbooks and teaching aids, teachers may also use other optional means and aids. Private schools shall use textbooks and teaching aids of the first paragraph of this Article for compulsory subjects stipulated by law only.

Stipulations of this article shall also apply for the post-secondary vocational colleges."

Article 33: *"Private schools carrying out state-approved education programmes and private pre-school institutions carrying out programmes for pre-school children shall meet the same requirements concerning the staff, premises and equipment as public pre-school institutions and schools, respectively.*

Private pre-school institutions and schools offering programmes based on special educational principles shall meet the same requirements concerning the premises as public pre-school institutions and schools, respectively."

Article 38: *"Free-lance educators shall file applications for registry with local school boards of their permanent residency. The application shall be accompanied with documents proving that the applicants meet all the requirements.*

Free-lance educators shall be registered if they meet the requirements for carrying out educational activities. Taking into account the criteria and standards provided for by the minister, the registration statement shall determine the maximum number of children, secondary-school and vocational-college students and adults who may concurrently participate in the education programme, carried out by a free-lance educator, with regard to the area, scope and manner of education and the requirements concerning the premises.

The following shall be listed in the register: applicant's first and family name; date and place of birth; permanent address; type and level of education; educational activity; seat for carrying out the activity; information from paragraph 3 of this Article; date of the entry into or removal from and the reasons for the removal from the register.

The form of the register and the procedure for entering the educators into the register and removing them from it shall be determined by the minister."

Article 40: *"Private pre-school institutions and schools may be established by Slovenian and foreign natural or legal persons, the sole exception being elementary schools, which may be founded by Slovenian natural or legal persons only."*

Article 42: *"In addition to the matters stipulated by law, articles of incorporation shall also define the organization of public pre-school institutions or schools.*

According to the criteria for the organization of the public school network, articles of incorporation of public elementary schools shall define the boundaries (school districts) within which school-age children have to reside to have the right to enrol in a particular elementary school."

Article 60: *"Expert bodies of public pre-school institutions shall be the assembly of pre-school teachers and the professional working group.*

Expert bodies of public schools shall be:

- the assembly of teachers,
- teaching staff of individual classes,
- class teachers working group and
- professional working group.

Expert bodies of post-secondary vocational colleges shall be:

- the faculty assembly,
- professional working groups and
- study committee.

If a public pre-school institution or school is an organizational unit, the expert bodies of the preceding paragraph shall be established within the unit.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, in a school that does not provide the gimnazija programme within the framework of an independent organisational unit, matters related to the gimnazija programme are decided on only by those members of the assembly of teachers and professional working group respectively, who carry out this programme.

Stipulations of the third paragraph of this article shall also apply to the private post-secondary vocational colleges, if they carry out state-approved programmes."

Article 69: *"The name of a private pre-school institution or school should contain the information required by law and in addition to that denote that it is a private pre-school institution or school."*

Article 70: *"The contents and form of the seals of private pre-school institutions and schools shall be determined by their articles of incorporation."*

Article 86: *"Private schools offering state-approved elementary school, basic music school and gimnazija education programmes shall be entitled to receive budgetary funding from the state and/or local communities, provided that:*

- they carry out education programmes from the first to the final grade;
- there are students enrolled in at least two first-year classes or – in the case of music schools – classes in at least three orchestra instruments are offered and at least 35 students are enrolled;
- teachers needed to carry out the state-approved programme in accordance with law and other regulations are employed or ensured in some other way.

Private schools shall be entitled to 85% of the funds per student allocated by the state or the local community to public schools for salaries, other personal income under the collective agreement and operating expenses for each student in a public school.

Private schools can take part at competitions for textbooks and teaching aids intended for public schools. School boards shall check whether the requirements of paragraph 1 of this Article are met."

Private elementary school can only be established by a Slovene natural or legal person, whereas other private schools can also be established by a foreign natural or legal person. Schools not established by Slovenian citizens, as well as international schools that carry out classes in a foreign language and in accordance with international programmes, and schools that carry out classes in a foreign language and in accordance with a programme of a foreign state, while the founders of such schools, intended especially for children of foreign citizens, are foreign or Slovenian citizens, are treated individually (so called foreign schools). The founder should ensure legal and financial conditions as well as the personnel and space for continuous activity of such private school.

For a founder, there are no special restrictions, except for some restrictions applying to foreign schools established in the Republic of Slovenia, firstly due to legal issues concerning foreign citizens and secondly because of the language of instruction. The national interest is that elementary education of Slovenian citizens be carried out in the Slovenian language or a language of national communities.

Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 115/03 – officially consolidated text) in Article 40 stipulates that private pre-school institutions and/or schools can be established by Slovenian and foreign natural or legal persons, the sole exception being elementary schools, which can be founded by Slovenian natural or legal persons only.

Article 6 of the Elementary School Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96, 33/97 and 59/01) stipulates that the language of instruction in elementary schools is Slovenian. The language of instruction in elementary schools using the language of a national community is Italian, and in bilingual elementary schools Slovenian and Hungarian. In elementary schools in areas populated by Slovenian nationals and members of Italian national community, and defined as ethnically mixed areas, pupils in schools using Slovenian as the language of instruction shall also learn Italian, whereas pupils in schools using Italian as the language of instruction shall also learn Slovenian. (Language of instruction in secondary schools is, identically, regulated in Article 8 of the Gimnazije Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96 and 59/01) and Article 8 of the Vocational Education and Training Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 12/96 and 44/00)).

In Article 28, the same Act stipulates the conditions that a private school must observe when creating its programme: "A private school shall determine the elementary school programme in compliance with its acts. A private school should carry out classes for the following compulsory subjects: Slovenian language and Italian or Hungarian language in ethnically mixed areas, mathematics, a foreign language, history, ethics and society, physical education and at least one natural-science subject, one social-science subject and one arts subject.

Article 87: *"Notwithstanding the stipulations of the preceding Article, private schools shall not be entitled to receive public funding, if their enrolment endangers the existence of the only public school in their school district or if they do not comply with the stipulation of Article 7, paragraph 5 of this Act.*

The funding of private schools from public revenues shall be terminated for the reasons stipulated in the first preceding paragraph upon entry into force of the decision issued by the minister."

Article 90: *"Financing and obligations of private schools shall be regulated in detail by a contract."*

Article 104: *"Requirements stipulated for educators in public pre-school institutions and schools should also be met by educators in private pre-school institutions and schools offering state-approved programmes.*

The stipulation of the preceding paragraph does not apply to pre-school institutions and schools offering programmes for pre-school children and education programmes based on special educational principles."

Private schools that carry out elementary school programmes on the basis of special educational principles (Steiner, Decroly, Montessori, etc.) can form an elementary school programme, regardless of the preceding paragraph of this article, in compliance with these principles in such manner that they ensure the minimum knowledge that enables conclusion of elementary education."

In Slovenia there are currently no private schools, the sole exception being the Waldorf school carrying out English classes. Public elementary schools carry out various foreign language classes.

Foreign language as a compulsory subject:

- English: 386 schools,
- German: 22 schools,
- English and German (pupils choose between the two languages): 39 schools.

Foreign language as an optional subject:

- English: 78 schools,
- German: 324 schools,
- French: 34 schools,
- Italian: 41 schools,
- Spanish: 7 schools,
- Croatian: 2 schools,
- Latin: 1 school.

A curriculum for Serbian is in preparation and it has been decided that preparations for curricula for Macedonian, Albanian and Bosnian as optional subjects will be undertaken.

In Slovenia, currently there are six private secondary schools carrying out the *gimnazija* programme and one secondary school with a concession, carrying out programmes of lower vocational education. At this school the students learn English.

Foreign languages in private-school programmes:

- English: 6 schools (first or second foreign language),
- German: 5 schools (first or second foreign language),
- Italian: 1 school (second foreign language),
- French: 2 schools (optional subject),
- Spanish: 1 school (optional subject),
- Latin: 4 schools (optional subject),
- Greek: 2 schools (optional subject).

Article 14

The implementation of this provision of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia is regulated by the constitution and by law (cf. Part II of the FCPNM, Article 9).

In addition to the goals set by the regulations in education, the goals of the Act Implementing Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities Regarding Education and Training (Ur. l. RS, No. 35/01) are also:

- the preservation and development of Italian and Hungarian languages and cultures of the Italian and Hungarian national communities,
- development of linguistic competences in the first and the second language (for members of national communities the first language is Italian or Hungarian, and the second language is Slovenian),
- development of knowledge of historic, cultural and natural heritages of the Italian or Hungarian national communities and their mother nations,
- development of the awareness of affiliation with the Italian or Hungarian national community and the preservation and development of their own cultural traditions,
- education towards respect and understanding for national and cultural differences, towards cooperation between members of the Slovenian nation and members of the Italian and Hungarian national community, respectively, and development of capacities for life and cohabitation in nationally and linguistically mixed area,
- getting acquainted with the situation of the Italian or Hungarian national communities in neighbouring countries and establishment of ties and cooperation with members and institutions of these communities.

To achieve these goals, the programmes in bilingual pre-school institutions and schools, as well as pre-school institutions and schools with Italian as the language of instruction, are adapted in a manner stipulated by law. The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, which provides development and advisory services, has to ensure qualified personnel from national communities for the needs of these pre-school institutions and schools.

One of the spheres receiving treatment in the document on education of the Roma (for details, see Article 12) is also the Romany language. Ministry of Education, Science and Sport endeavours to introduce the Romany language as optional subject in schools. To make this possible, the ministry supports a 30-month project "Standardization of the Romany language in Slovenia and including the Romany culture in education" that is being carried out by the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana.

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Romany ethnic community achieves its cultural objectives and the preservation of its language and tradition through the Romany societies (currently, there are 20 registered Romany societies) that are established in compliance with provisions of the Societies Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 89/99). Leaders of the Romany societies at the local level communicate with the municipalities, whereas the representatives of the Union of the Roma of Slovenia, assembling these societies, communicate with the state administration of the Republic of Slovenia.

Article 15

The Republic of Slovenia fulfils provisions of this article for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Ministry of Culture's department for cultural activities of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, Romany community and other minority groups in the Republic of Slovenia cooperates directly with both central organisations of the national communities in managing minority issues; with the new Public Interest in Culture Act (Article 59) these organisations are given even greater power and autonomy in forming their own cultural programmes. Cooperation with the Union of the Roma of Slovenia is also very good. Opinions on the Roma issues are systematically obtained from this Union.

As far as political participation of the Romany community in the Republic of Slovenia at the local level is concerned, before the local elections on 10 November 2002 only the Murska Sobota municipality had a Roma councillor for two terms already (on the basis of Article 39, paragraph 5 of the then valid Local Government Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 70/2000)). On the basis of the Constitutional Court's decision, Act Amending the Local Government Act (Ur. l. RS, No. 51/2002) determined 20 municipalities that have to elect a special Roma councillor on the first local elections following the decision. These municipalities are: Beltinci, Cankova, Črešnovci, Črnomelj, Dobrovnik, Grosuplje, Kočevje, Krško, Kuzma, Lendava, Metlika, Murska Sobota, Novo Mesto, Puconci, Rogašovci, Semič, Šentjernej, Tišina, Trebnje and Turnišče. At the 2002 elections, all the municipalities, the sole exception being Grosuplje, elected their Roma councillors.

Representation of the Romany ethnic community in the local self-government means that:

- a) the Roma councillor brings the Romany community issues to the municipal council, which takes appropriate measures,
- b) 22 Romany societies help the Roma councillors with their work (they can be the basis for public law organisations),
- c) a forum of the Roma councillors at the Union of the Roma of Slovenia coordinates work of the Roma councillors in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia,

In the Republic of Slovenia, the Romany community issues are resolved:

- at the state level:
 - a) Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Nationalities (as a coordinator and holder of some original powers – e.g. financing the umbrella organisation for the Romany community and comprehensive help, at least for now, in organisation of the Romany community and resolving its problems in all spheres),
 - b) all state bodies in their spheres and other para-state organisations (e.g. Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Regional Development and Preservation of the Settlement of Slovene Rural Areas),
 - c) Government Commission for the Protection of the Romany Ethnic Community,
- at the local level: municipalities,

- other: Ombudsman, non-governmental organisations that normally only warn of the unfavourable situation of the Romany ethnic community in the Republic of Slovenia.

Article 17

Ministry of Culture finances contacts between members of the national communities with their mother nations and, in the case of the Roma, supports the international linking between Romany communities. Furthermore, it establishes contacts with the non-governmental organisations dealing with minorities and informs them of the lawful possibilities within the framework of the Ministry of Culture.

Article 18

In education of nationalities on the basis of bilateral agreements, both neighbouring countries appoint an adviser for Italian and Hungarian, respectively. Thus, additional care for the mother tongue and cooperation with the mother nation is ensured. Advisers from Italy and Hungary, respectively, come to Slovenia and organisational units of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in Koper and Murska Sobota offer them room and expert assistance.

Among other, tasks of the advisers are:

- cooperation with the expert institutions of both countries,
- advisory and expert assistance to the education personnel with emphasis on teaching and usage of mother tongue of pupils and secondary school students in developing their national culture,
- organisation of seminars and other expert education activities for the education personnel,
- cooperation in planning, organisation and attracting lecturers for seminars in the framework of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for the areas of pre-school, elementary school and secondary school education.
- informing the education personnel of the seminars taking place in their mother countries and coordination of these seminars between the institutes with Italian as the language of instruction and bilingual institutes,
- cooperation and organisation of teacher training for expert personnel at institutes with Italian as the language of instruction and bilingual institutes in their mother countries,
- acquainting the education personnel with new textbooks, teaching instruments and literature in their mother countries and providing them with suitable documents,
- cooperation and organisation of connections between schools and exchange of pupils and students between both countries,
- cooperation in organisation and guidance of expert excursions and other activities intended for secondary school students and pupils of institutes with Italian as the language of instruction or bilingual institutes.

In the sphere of culture, the Ministry of Culture established a special system of collecting the proposals for inter-state agreements made by minority societies and unions. In addition to this, at the meetings of ministers of culture (the last one between the Slovenian and Hungarian minister), the Ministry of Culture promotes special care for the minorities in both countries.