

PROTOCOL
of the 1st Session of the intergovernmental Minority Joint Committee established by the
Agreement regarding the protection of Croatian minority living in Hungary and the
Hungarian minority living in Croatia concluded between the Republic of Hungary and
Republic of Croatia in Osijek on April 5, 1995

The intergovernmental Minority Joint Committee held its first foundation session in Zagreb on September 25-26 1995. The Hungarian delegation was led by Csaba Tabajdi, Political State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, and the Croatian delegation was led by Jaksa Muljadic, Ambassador, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

FIRST PART

The Joint Committee appreciates the fulfillment of the Agreement regarding the protection of minorities (hereafter: Agreement) established between the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Croatia (hereafter: Contracting Parties)

1. General issues

1. The Republic of Croatia ratified the Agreement (Narodne Novine – International Treaties, no. 8/95). With this the Republic of Croatia fulfilled from its side the conditions for bringing it into legal force. When the Agreement is brought into legal force it becomes part of the internal legal order of the Republic of Croatia. The Republic of Hungary endeavors to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible.
2. The Republic of Hungary – according to Article 10 of the Agreement – advocated in international fora that the refugees and displaced persons should be able to return to their homes in Croatia and reestablish the pre-1991 ethnic status. This is the purpose of all diplomatic activities of the Republic of Croatia as well.
3. The Parties shall endeavor to guarantee for the Croatian minorities and Hungarian minorities living on their territories the possibility to preserve their national identities and their free expression. The institutional guarantee of this is satisfactory on the part of both Parties.
4. The Parties endeavor to ensure on state and local levels the free use of languages for national minorities. The Hungarians in Croatia and the Croatians in Hungary are satisfied with the registration, as well as with the legal settlement for the use of national symbols, and partially satisfied with the bilingual designation of place names.

5. The Hungarian minority – according to the mandate ensured by the law on national minorities – is represented in the Croatian Parliament by an elected representative.

In Hungary 51 Croatian minority self-governments were established for a more effective representation and protection of minority interests. The Croatians in Hungary established through democratic elections the Hungarian Croats' National Self-Government. In Hungary the institution of the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights (ombudsman) was established.

6. The Republic of Hungary in accordance with the relevant legislation supports the operation of the Croatian minority self-governments, and to finance their activities established the Hungarian Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities. Beside this it continuously supports the social organization of the Croatian minority living in Hungary, the Association of Croatians in Hungary. The Croatian Party continuously supports the organizations of the Hungarian minority in Croatia: the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia and the Association of Hungarians in Croatia.

7. In the field of religious practice – in the absence of a sufficient number of clerics or trained religion instructors knowing the minority language – until now the fulfillment of the mother-language religious needs of the national minorities have not been fully satisfied (in accordance with Article 6 of the Agreement).

8. Until now the necessary steps were not fulfilled regarding the Article 11 of the Agreement (in the area of opening new border crossings and the repair of transportation connections) especially due to economical difficulties, but also due to lack of the necessary interstate agreements.

II. In the area of education

1. The higher education institutes in Hungary continuously receive the Hungarian scholarship holders from Croatia. The Hungarian Party can fulfill most of the needs of the Hungarian students from Croatia related to post-graduate and doctoral education. The Hungarians in Croatia are satisfied with the scholarship allocations in Croatia, but do not consider the legal regulations for the admissions examinations to be satisfactory. The scholarship holders of both Parties request an increase of the monthly scholarship amount.

2. The Hungarian Party fulfilled most of the requests regarding the training of Hungarian teachers in Croatia.

3. The construction work on the new building of the Croatian Elementary School and Gymnasium in Budapest began with an investment of 890 million forints (10 million DM).

4. An outstanding relationship developed between the schools in Zala, Varazdin and Murakoz Counties. Varazdin County guarantees scholarships for the further education of Croatian pupils from Hungary.

5. The Republic of Hungary ensures continuous textbook support for the Hungarian minority school groups in Croatia.

6. Regarding the fulfillment of the last paragraph of article 2 (“Both Parties shall urge in the majority schools the education of minority and its mother-nation’s language, culture and history”) essential steps have not been made in either of the countries.

7. The Republic of Croatia's Ministry of Education and Sport issued an Instruction regarding the registration of children of Croatian nationality into schools established for minorities, which regulates the attendance of people belonging to the majority population into these institutions. According to the opinion Hungarian minority in Croatia, this Instruction decreases the possibility of establishing the Hungarian language school system. From the standpoint of the Joint Committee delegation representing the Republic of Croatia, the Instruction does not limit the Hungarian language school system. In the mentioned schools even those students have the right to register whose parents declare their desire according to section 2 of the Agreement, without needing to declare separately their nationality affiliation.

III. In the area of culture

1. The Republic of Hungary supports the operation of the Croatian Institute in Hungary, which was established in Pecs as an independent scientific center.
2. The Croats in Hungary consider the extension of the minority television broadcasts and change of the change of broadcasting times to be necessary. The Hungarians in Croatia do not have a television broadcast at present. They considered the lengthening of the Hungarian language radio programs broadcast by Osijek Radio to be necessary.
3. The Parties shall examine the possibilities for extending the reception of the mother countries' television programs, and broadening the area of reception.
4. Varazdin County shall significantly support the Croatian institutions and cultural associations in Zala County in the spirit of the collaboration agreement signed between Zala and Varazdin Counties. Baranya County and Osijek-Baranya County signed a collaboration agreement. A declaration of intent for multilateral collaboration between Vas and Murakoz Counties was produced. Pecs and Osijek, Bacsalmás and Bizovac, Baja and Senj maintain sister-city and active cultural relationships.
5. The Croatian Theater in Pecs received an independent building from the city.
6. The Parties shall continue the publishing of literary works in the minorities' languages, and support for the operation of cultural associations and minority press.

SECOND PART

The Joint Committee considers expedient the fulfillment of the following recommendations for both governments:

I. General issues

1. The Parties shall consistently fulfill the measures towards ensuring the right to preserve the national identity of the Croatian minority living in Hungary and the Hungarian minority living in Croatia, according to the laws in effect in both countries and the real needs of the minorities.

2. The Republic of Hungary is concerned that in the currently occupied territories - Eastern Slavonia, Baranya and Western Sirmium - the Republic of Croatia's legal order be restored by peaceful means, so that refugees can return to their places of residence and the pre-1991 ethnic status is restored. In the case of any territorial changes in the future restructuring of local self-government units in the above-mentioned territories, it shall pay attention to the interests of the Hungarian minority, which are guaranteed by international law - especially by the documents of the Council of Europe - and by the present Agreement.
3. After the restoration of the Republic of Croatia's legal order in territories currently under occupation, the Republic of Croatia, involving the representatives of the Hungarian minority, shall ensure the return of the Hungarian minority and the protection of its interests.
4. The Contracting Parties shall initiate discussions as the result of which new agreements on border regions are concluded with the purpose of better protecting the interests of minorities living in both countries. Related to this they shall also examine the question of issuing bilingual identity documents.
5. The Joint Committee requests with respect that the leaders of the religious denominations of both countries render help in ensuring the mother-language religious life of the minorities.
6. The Parties shall work out a Hungarian-Croatian regional cooperation plan for complex economic development containing concrete recommendations with the involvement of the border counties.
7. The Republic of Hungary in accordance with the existing legislation shall take further steps to ensure the headquarters of the Hungarian Croats' National Self-Government, and shall urge the deepening of collaboration between the Croatian minority self-governments and the self-governments of settlements.
8. The Republic of Hungary shall ensure the parliamentary representation of the Croatian minority.
9. The Republic of Hungary shall examine the possibility of supporting the Association of Croats in Hungary alongside the Hungarian Croats' National Self-Government.
10. The Parties shall do everything so that the crossing of the border between the two countries is made simpler. They shall initiate the conclusion of the necessary international agreements in the interest that substantive negotiations begin about the opening of Kotoriba-Molnari, Donja Dubrava-Murakeresztur, Sopje-Sellye, Legrad-Ortilos, Vejti-Vajszlo and other border crossings, raised by the Croatian Party, when conditions for this are established.
11. The Parties shall take economic measures, according to the possibilities for the economic development of territories populated by minorities, and for ensuring the retention and existence of minorities.
12. The regular sessions of the minority Joint Committee shall continue according to the schedule established in the Agreement. The next session shall take place in Budapest in May or June of 1996.

II. In the area of education

1. The Republic of Croatia shall start the establishment of the Hungarian bilingual school in Osijek and proceed with the preparation work to gradually transform it into a school center like the similar Croatian school centers that can be found in the Republic of Hungary. In the Republic of Croatia the establishment of a bilingual first-grade group is in process in a school in Zagreb.
2. The Republic of Croatia interprets the Instruction issued by the Ministry of Education on July 17, 1995, as expressed by the Croatian delegation under point 7 of chapter to ("Education") in the first part of the present Protocol, in accordance with the spirit of the first paragraph of section 2 of the Agreement.
3. The Republic of Croatia shall examine the possibility of expanding the education of Hungarian language teachers of Hungarian nationality at the Department of Hungarian in the Faculty of Humanities at Zagreb University. It shall examine the possibility of starting Hungarian-language education of teachers at Osijek University.
4. The Republic of Hungary shall take steps to clarify the legal status of the refugee schools in Hungary.
5. The Republic of Hungary shall do everything to ensure stable financing of the Croatian, which are difficult to maintain under the local self-governments. It shall examine through which settlements the needs for school-enlargement and the placement of mother-language educational forms on a higher level are realizable.
6. The Hungarian Party shall examine the possibility that Croatian-language education be expanded with professional training, according to the needs of the minority self-governments and taking into consideration the possibilities.
7. The Republic of Hungary shall make possible that shipments of books for educational, cultural and scientific purposes during customs procedures are considered as commercial items, and in this way are exempted from customs duties, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Article 3 the Agreement on Minority Protection.
8. The Republic of Hungary shall make possible that the Educational Committee of the National Croatian Minority Self-Government can exercise its reconciliation and agreement rights during debates about educational questions relating to national minorities.
9. Both Parties shall examine the possibility of reorganizing the structure of the higher education scholarships, so that it is in accordance with the needs of the Croatian minority community in Hungary and the Hungarian minority community in Croatia. The Parties shall urge the raising of the scholarship amount.
10. The Republic of Croatia shall assist in the introduction of Croatian textbooks and study aids, and audio materials for language teaching and their transportation to Hungary. It shall undertake the supply of monographs, albums and study aids for nationality-studies curricula.
11. Both Parties shall support regional partnership relationships, and urge the cross-border exchange of students and regular study trips by language students to the mother country.

III. In the area of culture

1. Both Parties shall urge the signing of work plans between the responsible ministries regarding the settlement of emerging needs in the field of education and culture.
2. Both Parties shall do everything in the interest that within a specified time an accessible, comprehensive Croatian-Hungarian and Hungarian-Croatian dictionary of scientific character be produced.
3. The Republic of Hungary shall take steps toward the enlargement of the present German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary into a Hungarian-German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary. It should also consider further the possibility that Gyor Radio broadcast programs in the Burgenland dialect.
4. The Republic of Hungary shall initiate the development of a Croatian nationality library network and the establishment of a minority bookshop. It shall urge the restocking and exchange of the holdings of the basic libraries.
5. The Republic of Croatia shall extend the time of the Hungarian-language broadcasts of the Osijek and Vinkovci Radios. The Hungarian Party shall take steps in order to improve the reception possibilities of the Pecs and Baja Radios. Both Parties, according to the possibilities, shall lengthen the times of the television programs broadcast in the national minority languages. Both Parties shall strengthen the transmission of their own national television broadcasts enough so that they can be enjoyed in the border counties of the neighboring country.
6. Both Parties shall urge the strengthening of communication between the mass media editorial offices.
7. Both Parties shall urge exchanges and study trips for music and dance teachers, and guest performances by theaters, cultural and general education associations in the territories populated by the nationalities.
8. The Parties shall initiate the establishment of a joint history committee to discover and popularize the meeting points of the Hungarian-Croatian historical past and literature.
9. The Republic of Hungary shall urge the participation of Croatians in Hungary and Hungarians in Croatia in joint programs and symposiums in the Millecentennial celebrations.

The protocol is signed by:

President of the Hungarian Section
of the Joint Committee

Csaba Tabajdi

President of the Croatian Section
of the Joint Committee

Jaksa Muljadic

Zagreb, September 26, 1995