

PROTOCOL
of the 2nd Session of the Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee

The second session of the Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee was held on September 23-24, 1996, in Budapest. Csaba Tabajdi, Political State Secretary in the Prime Minister's office, led the Hungarian delegation, and Jaksa Muljacic, Deputy Foreign Minister, led the Croatian delegation.

FIRST PART

The Parties exchanged opinions about current minority-protection issues of the Hungarian minority living in the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian minority living in the Republic of Hungary.

1. They agreed that the contents of the Minority Protection Agreement signed between Hungary and Croatia continues to satisfy the needs regarding the improvement of the situation and protection of the communities of the minorities living in both countries.
2. The Republic of Hungary also ratified the Agreement, thereby making it part of the internal legal order of both republics.
3. The Parties consider the Serbian-occupied Croatian Danube Region (Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium) to be part of the Republic of Croatia and urge the beginning peaceful reintegration process in these territories. Two representatives of the Hungarian minority are also taking part in the work of the Temporary Public Administration Governmental Office established for the purpose of restoring Croatian authority.

SECOND PART

I. General issues

1. The contracting Parties - according to Article 10 of the Agreement - advocated in international fora that refugees and displaced persons be able to return to their homes in Croatia and reestablish the pre-1991 ethnic status.
2. The contracting Parties endeavored to ensure for the Croatian and Hungarian minorities living on their territories the possibility for the preservation of national identity and freedom of speech. The institutional guarantees for this on the part of both Parties are satisfactory.

3. The Hungarian minority - on the basis of the mandate guaranteed by law for national minorities - is represented by an elected representative in the Croatian Parliament.

The Croatian minority does not have representation in the Hungarian Parliament but 57 Croatian minority self-governments operate in the Republic of Hungary, the top body of which is the Hungarian Croats' National Self-Government. In 1995 the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minority Rights (ombudsman) began its work. The preparation for the necessary legislation for the parliamentary representation of Hungarian minorities - including the Croatian minority - is underway.

4. In addition to the Croatian minority self-governments, the Republic of Hungary continuously supports the social organizations of the Croatian minority living in Hungary, including the Association of Croats in Hungary. The Croatian Party provides support to the Hungarian minority organizations in Croatia, the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia and the Association of Hungarians in Croatia.

5. In the area of religious practice - in the absence of a sufficient number of clerics or trained religion instructors knowing the minority language - the fulfillment of the mother-tongue religious needs of the national minorities living in the two countries still has not succeeded in being fully satisfied.

6. In view of issues covered in Article 11 of the Agreement (in the area of opening new border crossings and the repair of transportation connections), the partial occupation of Croatia, economic difficulties and the lack of the necessary new agreements between governments, there still was not success in advancement. The Croatian Party made preparations for the establishment of the Kotoriba-Molnari, Donja Dubrava-Murakeresztur and Legrad-Ortilos ferry crossing.

The Parties were concerned that the Udvar-Knezevo highway crossing and the Magyarboly-Beli railway crossing reopen as soon as smooth operation can be insured.

7. Because of war conditions as well as financing difficulties, the economic development of territories inhabited by minorities and economic measures to help retain inhabitants cannot be emphasized enough in either country.

II. In the area of education

1. In December 1995, the Hungarian and Croatian governments signed the Educational, Cultural and Scientific Cooperation Work Plan valid for 1996-1997.

2. The higher education institutions in Hungary, accordingly with the demand, continue to constantly accept Hungarian scholarship students from Croatia. The Hungarian Party continues to satisfy the needs concerning continuing professional education of most Hungarian students from Croatia. Both the Croats in Hungary and the Hungarians in Croatia are satisfied with the scholarship allocations, but they

demand new regulations for admissions examinations. The Croatians in Hungary ask for a greater degree of care on the part of the Croatian host universities.

3. The Hungarian Party fulfilled all the requests relating to the continuing education of Hungarian educators in Croatia.

4. The inauguration of the new building of the Croatian Primary School and Gymnasium took place on August 30, 1996, in Budapest. The Croatians in Hungary - in the sense of the preliminary agreement - continue to have a demand for the Munkacsi Mihaly Street dormitory building in Budapest.

5. In the financing of schools in Hungary that provide homes for Croatian-language instruction - as a consequence of the lack of local-government sources - stoppages are appearing that give reason for worry. The modification of the Public Education Law that comes into effect on January 1, 2007, puts financing on new foundations, and further in the sense of the 1996 budget law and the bill prepared to amend the Minority law, the possibility opens for allocations remaining from compensating local self-governments' need for premises to be reclassified for this purpose.

6. The Republic of Croatia adopted a resolution for the establishment of the bilingual educational center in Osijek. In the Republic of Croatia, in the Ivan Gundulic Primary School in Zagreb, the bilingual first grade has begun its work, and in the second grade elective Hungarian language instruction is being organized. Beyond this, in several primary and high schools in Zagreb Hungarian language instruction is taking place for members of the Hungarian minority and for students interested in Hungarian language and culture.

7. In 1995, the legal and professional status was settled of the institutions training and education refugees in Hungary, among them the school in Mohacs.

8. Successful cooperation among schools in Zala, Vas, Varazdin and Medzimirje Counties continues. Varazdin and Medzimirje Counties guarantee scholarships for the further studies of Croatian students from Hungary.

9. On the part of the Hungarian Party textbook support is continuous for groups promoting the mother tongue in Croatian schools. The Croatian Party provides occasional textbook support to Croatian schools in Hungary.

10. In view of the realization of the last paragraph of Article 2 ("The Parties shall, in the schools of the majority nation, encourage learning of the language, culture and history of the respective minority and its mother nation."), an advancement took place in Hungary with the acceptance of the National Basic Curriculum, which in the future will also regulate the teaching of Croatian cultural studies.

11. Considering that the work of the Hungarian Studies Department of Zagreb University in preparing educators capable of educating Hungarians in Croatia is not satisfactory, the Contracting Parties hold it necessary that a Hungarian language and literature department open at the teacher training school of Osijek University.

12. Both Parties support the ministries' agreement to continue reconciliation at the expert level regarding mutual recognition of grades, diplomas and scientific qualifications.

III. In the area of culture and information

1. The Hungarian Party continues to support the Hungarian Croatian Scientific Researchers Association, which operates in Pecs as an independent scientific center.

2. Due to the lack of long-term conceptions in relation to the Hungarian Radio and Television's minority and regional broadcasts, Croatians in Hungary do not feel that the broadcasting possibilities guaranteed for them earlier are ensured. The nationality TV-transmission time and duration are not satisfactory for them, and they wish to apply the airtime received for re-broadcasts to new broadcasts. They resent that the Radio's Pecs program can only be received in certain parts of Baranya and Bacs-Kiskun Counties.

3. Hungarians in Croatia demand the establishment of an independent Hungarian information system, as part of which Osijek Television's trial Hungarian broadcast would start. They do not consider the Osijek, Baranya, Vinkovci and Vukovar Radios' programs broadcast in Hungarian to be enough. They also ask for the examination of starting conditions for a maritime broadcast in Hungarian - also necessary from the tourism standpoint.

4. The possibilities for receiving the mother countries' television programs are limited. Both Parties consider it desirable to enlarge the area of reception.

5. In 1996, the Education, General Education and Economic Cooperation Agreement among Zala, Vas, Varazdin and Medzimirje Counties also came into existence.

6. The Kinizsai Dorottya Museum in Mohacs wishes to contribute with premises to the establishment of the Croatian nationality basic library. The restocking of the library holdings has not yet begun. The "Ozirisz" minority bookstore opened in Budapest.

7. The Parties continue to support the publication of literary works appearing in minority languages, the operation of cultural associations and the minority press.

8. No progress took place in the interest of expanding the German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary into a Hungarian-German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary. The material for the German-Burgenland illustrated dictionary was prepared.

9. The material for the small Hungarian-Croatian dictionary is in printer-ready condition.

10. The Hungarian Party continues to support the operation of the Croatian Theater in Pecs as an independent cultural institution.

THIRD PART

For the purpose of developing the continuing cooperation between states in the area of ensuring minority rights, as well as in the interest of eliminating problems that impede the harmonious development of the national minorities, the Joint Committee offers the below recommendations to the two governments:

I. General issues

1. The Parties continue to consistently fulfill measures toward ensuring the right to national identity of the Hungarians living in Croatia and the Croatian minority living in Hungary, according to the laws in force in both countries and the real needs of the minorities.
2. The Republic of Hungary is concerned that the Republic of Croatia's legal order be restored as soon as possible in the occupied Croatian Danube Region (Eastern Slavonia, Baranya and Western Sirmium), so that refugees can return to their places of residence and the pre-1991 ethnic status is restored.
3. The Republic of Croatia, also including the representatives of the Hungarian minority, shall do everything in the interest that following the restoration of the Croatian legal order in the territories currently under interim public administration the Hungarian minority shall return. In the case of any territorial changes in the future restructuring of local self-government units, it shall pay attention to the interests of the Hungarian minority.
4. Both Parties shall take steps in the interest that new bilateral agreements are produced as soon as possible - concerning national minorities and the fate of the border population - in replacement of missing agreements and ex-Yugoslav agreements still in effect. The Parties make the recommendation that among these the agreement guaranteeing mutual provision of health insurance take priority.
5. The Parties shall work out a Hungarian-Croatian regional cooperation plan for complex economic development containing concrete recommendations with the involvement of the neighboring border counties.
6. The Joint Committee once more calls upon the competent religious bodies to take every necessary step toward ensuring the mother-tongue religious life of the minorities. The presidents of the Joint Committee's Hungarian and Croatian sections in a joint appeal shall turn to turn to the Hungarian and Croatian church leaders and offer them a personal meeting.
7. The Republic of Hungary - in accordance with the existing legislation - shall endeavor to ensure the parliamentary representation of the Croatian minority.

8. The Hungarian Party - in accordance with the existing legislation - also shall continue to provide support to the Association of Croatians in Hungary alongside the Hungarian Croatians' National Self-Government.

9. The Hungarian Party shall ensure that the issuing of bilingual personal identification cards guaranteed by laws - similarly to the practice with extracts from the official register - shall take place in practice through a simple notification of need.

10. The Parties, according to the emerging needs, considering and in coordination with the financial capabilities of the two countries, 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 the Kotoriba-Molnari, Donja Dubrava-Murakeresztur, Sopje-Sellye, Legrad-Ortilos and Vejti-Vajszlo, Baranjsko Petrovo Selo-Beremend border crossings, raised by the Croatian Party, when the conditions for this are established.

11. The Parties shall examine the possibility of border crossings using personal identification cards.

12. The Hungarian Party shall offer help for the establishment of the old people's home in Horvatzsidany - which will also provide housing for residents of Croatian nationality.

II. In the area of education

1. The Republic of Croatia shall set to work to build up the Hungarian minority's entire network of educational institutions, so that, following the reintegration of the territories under interim public administration, it will be capable of operating in practice. It shall take all necessary measures so that from September 1997 the educational-cultural center and dormitory in Osijek, with at least kindergarten and elementary school classes, can begin its work. For this purpose it shall urge that the building and organizational work, as well as the direction of financial tasks take place at government level.

The Republic of Croatia shall examine the possibility that in the future the form of the existing institutions of Hungarian school education in Zagreb gradually take the shape of school-center. The Hungarian Party shall give all the professional-educational-organizational help at its disposal to this, as well to the organization of the educational Center in Osijek.

2. The Croatian Party shall find a possibility to broaden the work of the Hungarian studies department at Zagreb University. The Ministry of Science and Technology shall take every measure for a Hungarian department at Osijek University to come into existence. The Hungarian Party shall undertake the responsibility for working out the necessary material and ensuring the training of the experts necessary for its start.

3. The Hungarian Party shall do everything for the long-term stable financing of the independent Croatian schools, which are difficult to maintain under the local self-governments. It shall examine how the entire Croatian nationality education network can return to a central, national framework, with targeted and group financing, and with national professional direction.

4. 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.

5. The Hungarian Party shall promote, with the regular operation and financing of the professional teaching services, the raising of the level of Croatian nationality education.

6. The Hungarian Party in the future shall also make it possible that the Educational Committee of the Hungarian Croats' National Self-Government can take part in debates about educational questions relating to national minorities.

7. The Hungarian Party shall examine the possibility that the high school dormitory (Budapest, Munkacs Street) used by the Croats in Hungary shall continue to be available for use for the Croatian community's purposes. It shall find a way to support the expansion of the Croatian kindergarten in Pecs.

8. Both Parties shall make it possible that during customs procedures in practice shipments of newspapers, journals and books arriving for the Croatian and Hungarian schools shall be exempted from customs fees.

9. Both Parties shall examine the possibility of how to mobilize the higher-education scholarship structure toward training sufficient professionals for the needs of the minorities. The Parties urge an increase in the amount of the scholarships.

10. The Hungarian Party shall ensure that Croatian nationality students in Hungary can continue to take the admissions examination to qualify for Zagreb University in the language in which they studied the subject in high school.

11. The Croatian Party shall continue to do all it can to ensure for the members of the Croatian minority in Hungary sufficient numbers of such textbooks, study aids, and audio and video material for Croatian language teaching that cannot be obtained in Hungary. It shall continue to undertake the supply of monographs, albums and study aids for nationality-studies curricula. The Hungarian Party will assist with similar professional materials the beginning educational centers and - according to the possibilities - Hungarian educational institutions operating in both the occupied and free territories.

The institutions (ministries) responsible for education in the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Croatia shall issue approvals for the use of school textbooks arriving from the mother country immediately, but at the latest within 30 days of the notification of need.

12. 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.

13. The Joint Committee recommends the conclusion of a new agreement in the area of simplifying recognition of diplomas earned in both countries.

III. In the area of culture and information

1. 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.

2. The Hungarian Party shall take steps in the direction of expanding the existing German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary into a Hungarian-German-Burgenland Croatian dictionary.

3. The Parties shall continue the development of the Croatian nationality library network, and efforts aimed at restocking and exchanging the basic library's holdings.

4. The Parties shall continue support for the press appearing in the minority languages.

5. The Hungarian Party shall examine the lasting guarantee of financial conditions for the operation of the Croatian Theater in Pecs. In case the Hungarian Party assumes responsibility, the Croatian Party is ready to set aside material resources to begin the renovation and refurbishing of the building.

The competent institutions of the Republic of Croatia are prepared to ensure training for the actors of the Croatian theater in Pecs at the college of dramatic arts in Zagreb. The Croatian theater in Osijek shall continue to devote attention to Hungarian authors and the inclusion in its programs of productions by theater companies from Hungary. The Contracting Parties shall support the plan for establishing a Hungarian stage in Osijek. The Croatian theater in Pecs shall continue to support the production of works by Croatian authors. The Croatian Party expressed its readiness to continue to support guest performances in Pecs by Croatian theater companies.

6. The Contracting Parties recommend the initiation of a joint Croatian-Hungarian minority program for the purpose of strengthening publishing activities and the promotion of literary meetings that meet the needs of both countries' minorities.

7. The Croatian Party shall extend the times of the Osijek, Vinkovci, Vukovar and Baranya Radios' Hungarian broadcasts. It shall examine conditions for beginning the maritime radio and Osijek TV's Hungarian broadcasts.

The Hungarian Party shall take steps toward improving the reception possibilities of Pecs Radio. It should also consider further the possibility that Gyor Radio broadcast

programs in the Burgenland dialect. It shall continue to ensure the operation of the regional minority TV and radio editorial offices.

8. 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.

The Republic of Croatia shall examine the possibility of adjusting the satellite television program to the needs of the Croatian minority in Hungary.

9. Both Parties shall urge the strengthening of cooperation between the mass media editorial offices.

10. The Contracting Parties, considering that information by radio and television bears great importance for both minorities, recommend that representatives of the competent institutions be present among the ranks of the Minority Joint Committee.

11. The Parties shall undertake the financing of the publication of three books each of both the concerned minorities.

12. Both Parties shall urge exchanges and study trips for dance and music teachers, and guest performances of theatrical productions in territories inhabited by the minorities.

13. The Parties shall support, in the framework of the Millicentennial celebrations, the organization of a joint symposium for historians in the interest of discovering and popularizing the meeting points of the Hungarian-Croatian historical past and literature.

The Parties agreed to hold their next regular session in 1997 in Croatia.

The Protocol was signed by:

President of the Hungarian Section
of the Joint Committee

President of the Croatian Section
of the Joint Committee

Csaba Tabajdi

Jaksa Muljacic