

P R O T O C O L

**of the 8th Session of the Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint
Committee
(Budapest, June 16, 2006)**

The Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee (hereafter MJC) held its 8th session in Budapest on June 16, 2006. The leader of the Croatian delegation, dr. Slavko Leban, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, and the leader of the Hungarian delegation, Ferenc Gemesi, Deputy State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, served as Co-Presidents of the MJC.

The Joint Committee, during the exchange of views regarding bilateral minority protection as well as about timely questions regarding the situation of the Hungarian and Croatian minorities living in both countries, agreed upon the following:

1. The Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Croatia are committed to ensuring at a high level the communal minority rights of the Croatians and Hungarians living on their territories, representing a highly important stabilizing element in relations between these two friendly strategic partner states.
2. "The Agreement regarding the protection of the Croatian minority living in the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian minority living in the Republic of Croatia signed on April 4, 1995, in Osijek" (hereafter Agreement), ensures an adequate framework from the point of view of protecting the two concerned minorities' communal rights and improving their situation. The legal situation of the two minorities – in accordance with European minority protection norms – can be considered fundamentally in order. This was affirmed by the "Joint Declaration" of Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany and Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader issued in Budapest, on February 8, 2005.
3. The Hungarian minority is represented in the Sabor by an elected representative – on the basis of the mandate for national minorities ensured by legislation. Hungarian representatives chosen as the result of local elections work in the Croatian county and district governments. The constitutional act on the legal status of national minorities and the provisions of the separate law on local and territorial (regional) self-governments sufficiently guarantee for the members of the Hungarian national minority representation in the bodies that guide local governments.
4. The Hungarian Party acknowledged with satisfaction that the Croatian government, in keeping with its earlier promise, each year has raised by 19% the budgetary support for the institutions that ensure the provision of information, support for amateur art groups, and the preservation of identity. In the last period as well, the Republic of Croatia – in accordance with the internal regulation concerning the

financing of minority associations – provided support to Croatian minority organizations from the state budget primarily to carry out programs. The National Minority Council is an independent body that makes decisions about the use of money from the state budget designated for the needs of national minorities.

5. The MJC considers extremely significant the first combined session of the Hungarian and Croatian Governments held on January 26, 2006, in Budapest, and acknowledged with satisfaction that the minority representatives took part in it as well, and they accepted several proposals concerning the Hungarian Croatian and Croatian Hungarian minorities.
6. The MJC highly appreciates that the Republic of Hungary in every possible way supports and helps the efforts made by the Republic of Croatia in the interest of EU accession.
7. The Parties reviewed the status of the fulfillment of recommendations formulated at the previous MJC sessions, and the MJC summarized its related observations in the Protocol. The representatives of both minorities called to the MJC's attention that in some cases the MJC's recommendations have not been realized, or are only slowly being realized.

The Joint Committee reviewed the fulfillment of recommendations accepted in earlier sessions of the MJC and established the following:

In the area of general issues

1. The possibility for preserving national identity and the freedom of expression is constitutionally and legally ensured for the Hungarian and Croatian minorities living on the territories of the state Parties.
2. The Parties acknowledged with satisfaction that for minorities in Croatia, thus in the case of the Hungarians as well, the application of the legislation of 2000 regarding "the use of minority mother tongues and writing," the legislation of 2000 that ensures "the use of mother tongues and writing for minority education and training," and the constitutional act of 2002 regarding minority rights is in process.
3. The Croatian minority in Hungary still does not have its own representative in the Hungarian Parliament. At its session on October 17, 2005, Parliament approved legislation regarding the election of the minority self-government representatives, as well as regarding the modification of certain laws concerning the national and ethnic minorities. The new law primarily put the minority self-government elections upon a new basis that – adjusting to the Constitution – aims to ensure that only the members of minorities take part in the minority elections.
4. The Republic of Hungary formed a multi-channel support system for minorities (operating expenses, program financing, extra payments for minorities). The national and local Croatian self-governments partake of central budget support,

while the budget supports the Association of Croatians in Hungary on the basis of competitions for funding. A dramatic decline is experienced in financing, the support of the Association of Croatians in Hungary decreased to a significant degree, and the possibility of the civil organizations to apply for funding also diminished. The ministries and public endowments – through competitions for funding – support the realization of numerous programs. The local self-governments usually guarantee operating conditions for the local minority self-governments as well, but this combined support is in many places not sufficient for the completion of the work of the minority self-governments. Following the significant increase in support in 2003, a major decrease has been experienced. In accordance with the budget legislation, starting from 2006 the National Croatian Self-Government will directly receive budgetary support for the purpose of operating its institutions, and the general assembly of the Self-Government decides about the allocation of the support.

5. The MJC acknowledges with satisfaction the bilateral declaration of intent of the two governments regarding the facilitation of recreation for Croatian youth from Hungary at the Hungarian Croatian Training and Recreation Center on the island of Pag, and for Hungarian youth from Croatia at the Youth and Children Center in Zanka. The MJC considers as significant the decision of the two governments regarding the realization of the planned programs drawing upon of EU sources.
6. The MJC welcomes the resolution of the question of the right to vote for the Croatian member of the National and Ethnic Minority Public Endowment.
7. In recent years the renovation of border crossings took place on the common Hungarian-Croatian border, along with the expansion of their operating hours. Within the currently given possibilities, too many demands are put forth (the establishments of EU-type customs areas, tourist traffic and the facilitation of relations in the border region), but at the same time both minorities are aware that the increase and modernization of border traffic can only take place in accordance with European Union regulations.
8. With material support from the Croatian state, the renovation is underway of buildings and residences in the Croatian Danube Region, and thus of the homes of Croatian citizens of Hungarian nationality and of the infrastructural facilities that are necessary for the activities of the Hungarian minority organizations and institutions. At the same time it is necessary for Croatia to take on a greater burden especially in the renovation or rebuilding of religious institutions destroyed or damaged in the war (the Reformed churches in Knezevi Vinogradi, Laslovo, and Lug, the Catholic church in Kotlina).
9. In both countries the conditions for the issuing of bilingual personal documents are guaranteed. The Parties encouraged the official use of the Hungarian and Croatian minority languages in the territories of local self-governments and districts. In both states, the placement of bilingual place-name signs, with a few exceptions, can be considered general in practice, while the designation of state and self-government offices in the minorities' languages in settlements continues to leave much to be

desired. The newly adopted law on administrative procedures in Hungary recognizes the right of members of minority communities to use their mother tongues in official procedures, and the right of majority settlement self-governments to use the minority languages officially. In Croatia the constitutional act on the legal standing of minorities makes it possible for bilingual signs to be placed in every environment where members of the minority make up 1/3 of the populace, and if it is specified in the operating regulations of the local and regional self-governments.

10. The traditionally rich cross-border cooperation programs continued. Cooperation agreements are in effect between Zala, Vas, Varazdin and Medzimirje Counties, while the Baranya County Government and Osijek-Baranya County worked out a Euroregion cooperation program. The two minority communities are also part and beneficiaries of these cooperation programs.

In the area of education

1. The MJC considers it extremely important that the two governments approved the October 1, 2006, start of the Hungarian Studies Department at J. Strossmayer University in Osijek.
2. It represents a further step in the restoration process of the pre-war mother-tongue educational network of the Hungarians in Croatia that the reactivation of the only eight-year elementary school of the Hungarians in Eastern Slavonia became possible. Ensuring the necessary instruments for the renovation of the above school within the framework of the CEB V Program falls under the competence of the Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development.
3. The Hungarian Center for Education and General Education in Osijek has operated since 1999. Beside its elementary school and secondary school classes, there is also a kindergarten, and it provides general education activity as well.
4. In Zagreb bilingual instruction takes place at the Ivan Gundulić Elementary School in the lower grades in two groups that combine grades 1 through 4, and in virtue of this one more teacher was hired in 2002. The Hungarian Ministry of Education continues to provide textbook support to the Croatian elementary schools in Hungary and groups that preserve the mother tongue.
5. The MJC acknowledged with satisfaction that the Hungarian Accreditation Committee approved for a three-year trial period the request by the University of Pécs to start a university-level Croatian language and literature basic training school. In that sense university-level training can start in the Croatian Department in September 2005.
6. The MJC also acknowledged with pleasure that construction work on the Miroslav Krleža Croatian Kindergarten, Elementary School and Dormitory, which it urged for years, has reached a significant stage in 2005. In August 2005 the expansion

work on the school was finished and the new dormitory was built. The ceremonial inauguration took place at the same time as the opening of the 2005-2006 academic year.

7. In the last period in Hungary the possibilities of support for the nationality schools from the central budget have grown. The self-governments that support Croatian nationality schools with low numbers of students, beside the basic support will receive further additional support. The MJC acknowledges with satisfaction that in 2005 the Croatian Kindergarten, Elementary School and Dormitory in Hercegszanto received budgetary support for its smooth operation.
8. The Republic of Croatia's Ministry of Science, Education and Sport favorably evaluates those applications that request minority subject studies in the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian Party is ready to raise especially the number of scholarships related to the Croatian language and literature, and supporting the needs of the Croatian minority. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration annually provides scholarships to students of Croatian nationality studying in Croatia.
9. The MJC welcomes the signing and continuous fulfillment of the 2006-2008 cooperation work-plan for cooperation of the Hungarian Ministry of Education and the Republic of Croatia's Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

In the area of culture, science and information

1. The Republic of Hungary supports the Hungarian Croatian Researchers Institute established by the National Croatian Self-Government.
2. The Hungarian Center for Education and General Education in Osijek, due to the delay in hiring a general education staff member, is not able to completely fulfill the general education functions in its founding charter.
3. Regular subscriptions to *Skolske novine*, *Smib* and *Modra Lasta* were introduced for the Croatian schools in Hungary, for which funding is provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia. Smaller steps forward took place in the provision of basic literature to the Croatian minority libraries and toward the provision of books to the libraries of the Hungarians living in the Danube Region destroyed in the war. The provision of dailies, periodicals and books to the Croatian minority in Hungary is still occasional and unsystematic.
4. Editorial work for the Hungarian-Croatian/Croatian-Hungarian intermediate dictionary has begun, but it is not proceeding at a satisfactory pace. The undertaking's 2007 completion deadline demands increased efforts.
5. The MJC welcomes the joint declaration of the two governments on deepening and widening regional programs that focus on development of the information society. The MJC also welcomes the Hungarian party's plans for the continued development and operation of the eHungarian Points.

6. The support for the Croatian Theater in Pecs has increased through a competition for central Hungarian funding. The Croatica Information, Culture and Publication Center also took on the coordination of the Croatian-language publishing that is going on in several places. Hungarian financial support for the weekly *Hrvatski glasnik* through open competitions continued.
7. For the Hungarian minority in Croatia funding sources for information purposes have grown, thus making possible the publication of more papers. The National Minority Council does the allocation of the funds.
8. National broadcasting of Croatian-language nationality radio programs continued, but in a regional respect the possibility of reception is still limited. The MTV Pecs Region studio also prepares Croatian-language nationality programs for national broadcast. The independent TV and radio information institutions of the Hungarians in Croatia have not been reorganized following the war. There continues to be a rightful demand for the establishment of an independent Hungarian-language radio editorial office and broadcast in Osijek.
9. On the basis of the MJC's recommendations, development of the feasibility study regarding the plan for the central Croatian library in Hungary is underway. The National Croatian Self-Government undertook the preparation of the plan.
10. The MJC gladly acknowledges that the Croatica Culture and Information Public Company, jointly founded by the National Croatian Self-Government and the Association of Croats in Hungary, has decided to establish an independent internet-based radio broadcast in the interest of widening its publishing, cultural and information activities. The ceremonial inauguration of the radio, established with the support of the Hungarian government, took place on October 28, 2005.
11. The MJC acknowledge with satisfaction that the Hungarian Croatian's Christian Collection in November 2005 has received its operating permit from the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage necessary to operate as a museum institution, and in addition it was registered in the Register of Hungarian Museum Institutions by the National Office of Cultural Heritage.
12. The MJC welcomes and follows with attention the realization of the cultural work plan between the two countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

of the 8th Session of the Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee

The Joint Committee continues to consider valid those recommendations from earlier Protocols that have not been fulfilled or have only partly been fulfilled, and which the Governments of both countries have affirmed in resolutions. Beside these, it makes the

following recommendations to both Governments, urging their realization in 2006 or the beginning of their realization in 2006:

General recommendations

1. The MJC recommends that both Parties continue to do everything in the interest that the rights guaranteed by law for the two concerned minorities be fulfilled and become a functioning system. The MJC supports that the Hungarian Party, by modifying the minority and electoral rights laws, guarantees the conditions for cultural autonomy as well as for the legal and financial operation of the national and regional institutions.
2. In the coming parliamentary cycle the Hungarian Party shall endeavor that work on the legal basis for ensuring parliamentary representation for Hungary's minorities be completed in conjunction with the national legal-enactment and voting rights reform process, and thereby ensure that the Croatian minority can select its own parliamentary representative in the next parliamentary elections.
3. The Parties shall more coherently continue the economic development of the settlements inhabited by the two minorities. The MJC considers extraordinarily timely the comprehensive development of the settlements in the Croatian Danube Region inhabited by Hungarians. The Hungarian Party shall continue to offer assistance with the renovation of public buildings.
4. The Croatian Party shall continue to drive the rebuilding of settlements, the building up of infrastructure and with every instrument contribute to the improvement of living conditions for the Hungarian minority in the Croatian Danube Region. The Parties further recommend that the Hungarian government, by taking advantage of EU sources (INTERREG III A), urge support in the international arena for the reconstruction of the Croatian Danube Region. The Croatian Party shall do everything in the interest that significant progress take place in the area of supplying the Croatian Danube Region with public utilities.
5. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party confer continuous material support to the National Croatian Self-Government and its institutions. The Hungarian Party shall offer significant support to the Hungarian Croats' largest nongovernmental organization, the Association of Croats in Hungary. Support for local and professional organizations shall take place through program financing.
6. The MJC recommends that the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Government of the Republic of Hungary continue to guarantee sources of financing from the central budget for the operation of the Training and Recreation Center of the Hungarian Croats in Vlasici on the island of Pag, which they consider to be a unique example of cooperation between the two states from the standpoint of the preservation and protection of the minorities' sense of identity. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Government ensure similar recreation and training conditions in the Recreation Center operating in Zanka for Hungarian youth from

Croatia. The two governments shall do everything in the interest of drawing upon EU sources.

7. The MJC recommends reviewing the possibility for the transformation of regions rich in natural attractions into tourism zones, which would facilitate border crossings by the population living in the border areas.

In the area of education

1. The MJC recommends that the responsible ministry of the Republic of Croatia continue the renovation and equipment of the elementary school in Korog. At the same time it recommends that, according to the possibilities, they look into the construction of the gymnasium of the school in Zmajevac.
2. The MJC recommends that the Croatian Party assume the responsibility for ensuring the full-time operation of the pedagogical council (school inspectorate), which supervises all education for Hungarians in Croatia.
3. The MJC recommends that the equipment of the gymnasium and classrooms of the Hungarian Center for Education and General Education be continued.
4. Renovation work has started on the old wing of the school operating within the framework of the Miroslav Krleža Croatian Kindergarten, Elementary School, High School and Dormitory in Pecs. The MJC recommends that according to the responsibilities assumed at the joint government session the Hungarian Party and the Croatian Party guarantee 50% of the renovation costs each.
5. The Croatian Party shall assume its responsibility for the construction of a fifty-bed dormitory wing that, attached to the Hungarian Center for Education and General Education in Osijek, will ensure permanent accommodations for students from the countryside. It shall further ensure the creation of a sufficient number of dormitory-instructor positions.
6. The Croatian Party shall do everything in the interest that the operation of the Hungarian Studies Department at the Osijek University begins, in accordance with the agreement reached at the joint session of the governments held on October 1, 2006, as well as examine the possibility of establishing two lecturer positions.
7. The National Croatian Self-Government has started the preparation work for the new dormitory building in Hercegszanto. The MJC recommends that the Parties support the construction of the 80-person dormitory within the framework of the 2007 budget. The Hungarian Party shall provide enhanced support for the application submitted by the Self-Government that maintains the elementary school in Szentpeterfa.

8. The Parties shall examine the possibility of establishing a library in the Education Center in Pag.

In the area of culture, science and information

1. The Hungarian Center for Education and General Education (MOMK) in Osijek still is not a comprehensive cultural pursuit, due to by the lack of a cultural organizer position. The Croatian Party shall do everything in the interest of the fulfilling the obligation it undertook. It shall dedicate increased attention to the MOMK's operations and programming, also taking into account the criteria for financing. The Hungarian Party shall assist the work of this institution with professional and methodological materials.
2. The MJC considers it extremely important that in the interest of speeding up the dictionary project the competent bodies in both countries urgently specify the remaining professional tasks and the exact financing conditions in accordance with the MJC's pledges in this connection. The two parties shall nominate a coordinator for these tasks.
3. The MJC supports the idea of the National Croatian Self-Government in Hungary to establish a central Croatian minority library.
4. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party support the completion and operation of the Croatian Christian Collection planned by the National Croatian Self-Government.
5. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party continue to support the Croatian Theater in Pecs from the central budget. The renovation and expansion work has not started, and the MJC calls the attention of both Parties to the need for support. The Croatian Party shall provide financial support for the theater from Hungary to tour along the Danube for the purpose of satisfying the cultural needs of the Hungarian minority in Croatia. It shall further support performances in Hungary by Croatian theaters.
6. The Parties affirm their earlier recommendation that the two competent ministries contribute direct material support, on a project basis, to the annual publication by both concerned minorities of at least one literary, scientific and professional work each.
7. The MJC recommends that in 2007 the Croatian Party, in keeping with its repeated promise, ensure the establishment of a Hungarian-language public radio editorial office – operating in Osijek – in accordance with the needs of the Hungarian community in Croatia. The MJC welcomes that a Hungarian-language television editorial office was established in Osijek with support from the Hungarian government, and asks the Croatian Party to ensure the material conditions for the beginning Hungarian-language broadcast, which can be considered continuous.

8. The MJC recommends that Hungarian Radio improve the reception possibilities for the Croatian program, and continue to ensure the sufficient material, personnel and broadcasting conditions of the Croatian editorial office.
9. Considering that the question of the premises of the Endre Ady Hungarian Culture House in Zagreb is still not settled, the MJC recommends that the Croatian Party take concrete steps toward a calming solution to the problem.
10. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party ensure support, sufficient for the needs, to ensure the smooth publication of *Hrvatki glasnik*, the weekly of the Croats in Hungary.

The Parties agreed that they shall hold their next session in Croatia, in 2007, timed so that it takes place before the budget planning process for 2008.

This Protocol was produced in two copies, in the Hungarian and Croatian languages. Both versions are authoritative.

June 16, 2006

On behalf of the Hungarian
MJC delegation:

Gemesi Ferenc

On behalf of the Croatian
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Dr. Slavko Leban