

## PROTOCOL

### of the 9th Session of the Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee (May 2, 2007)

The **Hungarian-Croatian Minority Joint Committee** (MJC) held its 9th session in Zagreb on May 2, 2007. The leader of the Hungarian delegation, Deputy State Secretary **Ferenc Gemesi**, and the leader of the Croatian delegation, **Mirjana Vidovic-Bohanec**, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, 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 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 rights of the Croatian and Hungarian minorities, respectively. 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" ensures a framework for this. The legal situation of the two minorities – in accordance with the international minority protection documents – can be considered in order.
- 2) Since 1992 the Hungarian minority on the basis of law is **represented in the Sabor by an elected representative. Preparations have begun for the legislative drafting work for the settlement of parliamentary representation** of national minorities in Hungary – and thus for the Croatian national minority. For Hungarians in Croatia and Croatians in Hungary **representation is ensured self-government level, and in Croatia in the local and regional representative bodies as well.**
- 3) 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, 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 **preservation of national identity and the freedom of expression** is constitutionally and legally **guaranteed** for the Hungarian and Croatian minorities living on the territories of the state Parties. At the same time there would be a need for **the employment of members of the Hungarian national minority – in proportion with their number – in the local public administration bodies.**
- 2) According to the 2006 Law CXXVII on the Republic of Hungary's 2007 **budget, 88.6 million Forints** in support is allocated to the **National Croatian Self-Government (NCS)**, while **45 million Forints** is allocated to institutions maintained by the NCS. **The**

**Self-Government's general assembly decides on the division of the support.** It supports **the Association of Croats in Hungary through financial tenders.** The ministries and public foundations – through funding competitions – support the realization of numerous programs. **The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party ensure for the Croatian minority the possibility of consultation with Parliamentary committees prior to the distribution of funding-competition money.** In the past two years, the support provided to the Hungarian national minority through the National Minority Council of the Republic of Croatia grew by 42%, so that the Hungarian national minority associations received 2,710,000 Kuna in 2005, 3,225,300 Kuna in 2006, and 3,850,000 in 2007.

- 3) The renovation of the buildings and residences of the Croatian Danube Region is underway with the support of the Croatian state. The traditionally rich **cross-border cooperation programs** continued. The two minority communities are also among the beneficiaries of these cooperation programs. **The MJC urges that the Parties turn special attention toward the elaboration and realization of regional development projects.** They shall assist **the development of the border regions** of the two countries – inhabited by the Hungarian and Croatian national minorities – through the intake of European Union funds (for example, within the framework of the Hungary-Croatia Transborder Cooperation Program). The MJC calls upon the governments to ensure the participation of Hungarian and Croatian national minority representatives in the bodies being established in the interest of creating and developing cooperation among European regions. **It would be desirable for the general education and library services to also broaden transborder cooperation in accordance with the development conceptions for small settlements.**

**Priority recommendations** (not listed in order of importance)

- 1) The MJC welcomes that, as the J. Strossmayer University **Hungarian Studies Department in Osijek soon receives its temporary operating permit**, instruction can begin in the 2007-2008 academic year. The MJC calls upon the Parties to facilitate that the Hungarian Studies Department in Osijek and the University of Pecs's **Croatian Studies Department receive final accreditation.**
- 2) The MJC recommends that the two Parties rationalize the scholarship documentation system and speed up the process. It calls upon the **Croatian Party to make possible through scholarships** the participation of members of the Croatian national minority in Hungary **in the broader circle of higher education in the social and natural sciences as well as in theology.**
- 3) The Hungarian Center for Education and General Education in Osijek has operated since 1999. Beside its elementary school and secondary school classes, a kindergarten also operates. **At the request of the Center, the Hungarian Government sufficiently ensures the creation of the necessary conditions for its operation:** it contributed to the equipment of the gymnasium in 2006 and is contributing to the upgrade of the computer center in 2007. The MJC welcomes that the Croatian Party began preparations for the construction of the dormitory wing, and at the same time calls upon the competent bodies to do everything so that **the approval process is completed in 2007.** The MJC recommends that the Center request planning in the 2008 budget for the financial coverage necessary for the work. The Croatian Government shall ensure the establishment of the **"school inspector" dormitory instructor** and **"advisor responsible for the accomplishment of the Center's tasks" positions.**

- 4) It **represents a step forward** 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 in Korog could open its doors** following the renovation financed by the Government of Croatia. The MJC recommends that the Croatian Party continue the equipment of the elementary school in Korog and call upon the competent bodies to do everything in order that the **authorization process** for the building of the gymnasium of the elementary school in Zmajevac **be completed in 2007**. The MJC recommends that the school request planning in the 2008 budget for the financial coverage necessary for the work.
- 5) In 2006, on the basis of a decree issued by the education minister, taking into account the provisions of the budget law, the Self-Government of the City of Pecs received 60 million Forints in support for the renovation of the "**Miroslav Krleza**" Croatian Kindergarten, Elementary, High School and Dormitory in Pecs. **In 2007 the city submitted a new application for this purpose, and a decision regarding it will be made by May 30, 2007**. The MJC recommends that **both Parties examine the possibility of using (EU) funding-competition sources to finish the reconstruction, and also, in fulfillment of their earlier commitments**, assist in the earliest completion of the facility.
- 6) In 2007, also according to the **provisions of the budget law**, a decree by the Ministry of Education and Culture created the possibility for the maintainer of the Croatian Kindergarten, Elementary School and Dormitory in **Hercegszanto**, the National Croatian Self-Government, to also apply for a maximum of 60 million Forints for the construction of the dormitory, but nevertheless **the documentation of the renovation plans was not completed by the submission deadline** and thus this did not come about. The MJC recommends that the two Parties submit a joint application for Europe Union funding for **the construction of an 80-person dormitory** for the school in Hercegszanto. It calls upon the Hungarian Party to make it possible for the National Croatian Self-Government to be able to apply for funding for the construction of the dormitory in the coming **budget** year also.
- 7) The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party include the investment plan of the elementary school in Szentpeterfa in the appropriate **Operative Program** of the **New Hungary Development Plan**, and have it appear in that in the programming and execution documents related to the operative programs.
- 8) The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party **ensure** the completion and operation of the **Hungarian Croatian Christian Collection center** established by the National Croatian Self-Government.
- 9) **Operational and program support for the Croatian Theater** in Pecs is continuous within the framework of the joint funding competition of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Croatian government provides financial support for guest performances in the Danube area by Hungarian theaters. Mutual guest performances take place. **The MJC calls upon the Parties** to examine: in what way the renovation of the Theater can be fit into EU-financed cultural programs, or into the financing system of the "European Capital of Culture" event series; **it recommends** that the Parties add the question to the agenda of the next Hungarian-Croatian joint government session.

- 10) From February 1, 2007, **Hungarian Radio ensures an independent medium-wave frequency** for the broadcast of nationality programs, and thus the reception possibilities of the **Croatian nationality broadcast** also improved. The MJC recommends, that **the Croatian Party ensure the establishment of a Hungarian-language radio editorial office** at Osijek Radio. The Croatian Party welcomes the efforts made toward the operation of the "Dravataj" Hungarian TV studio and calls the attention of the Croatian Media Council to the financing possibilities for electronic media through funding competitions announced by the "Fund for Media Diversity and Pluralism." The MJC recommends that the competent Croatian bodies support the funding applications of the Hungarian minority.
- 11) Considering that the problem of the location of the **Endre Ady Culture Association** in Zagreb has still not been solved, the MJC recommends that the Croatian Party make efforts for the culture association – if possible in May 2007 – move to a worthy place.

**Long-term recommendations** (not listed in order of importance)

1. 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.
2. The Croatian Party, through job-creating investments, local supports and funding competitions, **shall attempt to block** the emigration of the Hungarian national minority from its places of residence and the "forced sale" of its properties, and with this the **shift in ethnic proportions**.
3. The MJC recommends that the Croatian Party assist in the creation of the planned museum network, in close cooperation with the founders and in accordance with the rules governing museum activities, and in coordination with the existing museum network.
4. The MJC recommends that both parties **ensure funding sources** for the operation of the **Training and Recreation Center of the Hungarian Croats** in Vlasici on the island of Pag and for increasing the capacity of the **Zanka Children and Youth Center** for Hungarian youngsters in Croatia (there would be demand for recreation for 50-50 persons instead of 20-20 children), **from European Union sources if possible**.
5. **The publication of Hungarian-language media for the Hungarian minority is ensured** from the budget of the Republic of Croatia. In the past two years support for the Hungarian national minority associations increased by 42%. The National Minority Council handles the distribution of funds set aside for this. Funding for *Hrvatski Glasnik* takes place through "The Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary." Since the real value of the support for this purpose declines year by year, **the National Croatian Self-Government (NCS) and the Croatia Public Company established by the NCS must supplement it** from their own financial resources. The MJC recommends that the **Hungarian Party ensure the smooth publication of *Hrvatski Glasnik***, the weekly newspaper of the Croats in Hungary.
6. **Editorial work continues** for the Hungarian-Croatian/Croatian-Hungarian **dictionary**. On the basis of a cooperation agreement signed in February 2007 between the Croatian

Linguistic Institute and the Croatica Culture, Information and Publishing Public Company, publication of the dictionary **can take place in 2009 at the earliest**. The MJC calls upon the Parties to make efforts in the interest of the earliest possible publication of the dictionary.

7. The Republic of Hungary supports the Hungarian Croatian Researchers Institute established by the National Croatian Self-Government. The MJC calls upon the Croatian Party to find a method for financing the research programs of the Croatian Hungarian Scientific and Artistic Association, and ensuring their completion.
8. The Croatian Party shall continue to pay special attention to building up the infrastructure of settlements inhabited by the Hungarian minority and providing them with public utilities. It shall construct the **ridge road connecting Kotlina and Bodola**, and begin reconstruction of the **central plumbing system in Korog**, for which a permit has already been issued.
9. The MJC welcomes the efforts made by the Croatian Party toward the **renovation of the Reformed churches in Knezevi Vinogradi and Laslovo**.
10. The MJC recommends that the competent bodies of both Parties jointly apply for Europe Union support for the purpose of creating financial coverage for **demining** the territory along the Hungarian-Croatian border.
11. The Parties agreed that they shall hold their next session in Hungary in 2008, striving for the session to take place before the budget planning process for 2009.

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

Zagreb, May 2, 2007

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Mirjana Vidovic-Bohanec