

**PROTOCOL OF THE 5TH SESSION OF THE SLOVAKIAN-HUNGARIAN
MINORITY JOINT COMMITTEE**
Budapest, November 15, 2005

The 5th session of the Joint Committee was held in Budapest on November 15, 2005, under the leadership of State Secretary Vilmos Szabo and Ambassador Miroslav Mojzita. The list of participants in the session is attached to the protocol.

I.

The Parties mutually informed each other about the status of the realization of the recommendations accepted in the previous sessions of the Slovakian-Hungarian Minority Joint Committee (hereafter Joint Committee).

The Parties concluded that:

- the Government of the Republic of Slovakia with its decision No.72/2004 of January 28, 2004, acknowledged the protocol of the 4th session of the Joint Committee and assigned the ministers responsible for the execution of the recommendations.
- the Government of the Republic of Hungary in government decision No. 2175/2005. (09.26.) assigned the ministers responsible for the execution of the recommendations of the 4th session of the Joint Committee.

The Parties further acknowledged that the Joint Committee, by its activities in accordance with the responsibilities arising from the treaty on good-neighborly relations and friendly cooperation between the Republic of Hungary and Republic of Slovakia, signed in 1995, helps the development of good-neighborly relations and in the field of national minority protection is an important institution for cooperation and the exchange of information. The Parties also agreed that their mutual cooperation is positively influenced by the European Union membership of Hungary and Slovakia, under which the European frameworks for national minority rights were strengthened and the possibilities for relations with the mother-nations were increased.

The example for effective cooperation is the agreement between the Republic of Slovakia and the Republic of Hungary regarding national minorities' mutual education and cultural support signed on December 12, 2003, in Brussels by the foreign ministers of the Republic of Slovakia and the Republic of Hungary.

The representatives of the Hungarians living in the Republic of Slovakia and Slovaks living in the Republic of Hungary are actively taking part in the work of the Joint Committee. Their participation in the work of the Joint Committee makes it possible for the special needs and claims of the nationalities to be given expression and for important recommendations to the governments of the two countries to be formulated.

The Joint Committee welcomes the start of work by the Slovakian-Hungarian intergovernmental joint committee that has been called to assist transborder collaboration.

The Joint Committee positively appreciates that, according to the law accepted by the National Council of the Republic of Slovakia, the Selye Janos University in Revkomarom started its operation.

The Hungarian Party gave a briefing about the change of the law regulating the situation of national minorities living in Hungary, and also the public administration law, since the 4th session of the Minority Joint Committee. It further advised that the Government of the Republic of Hungary accepted the National Responsibility Program. Based upon this, Parliament accepted the Homeland Program Package, which refers to the Hungarians living beyond the borders of Hungary as well. The Hungarian Party pointed to the fact that the provisions of the program in reference to the Republic of Slovakia will accommodate the agreement signed in Brussels on December 12, 2003.

II.

The Parties acknowledged that the recommendations accepted in earlier sessions of the Joint Committee are being realized, although the majority of these recommendations are not formulated as one-time tasks, but rather presume continuous and regular fulfillment. The Parties agreed that among the recommendations from earlier sessions, both Parties continue to consider the following as tasks to be fulfilled.

For Both Parties:

Session IV, recommendation no. 2 (modified version):

The Parties, with the collaboration of experts from both countries, will help the continuous publication of the most important Hungarian legislative provisions in Slovakian, and the most important Slovakian legislative provisions in Hungarian, with special attention to the regulations affecting individuals from national minorities.

Session IV, recommendation no. 4:

The Parties shall create an ad hoc committee to carry out a comparative study regarding support for the Hungarian minority living in the Republic of Slovakia and the Slovakian minority living in the Republic of Hungary in the field of education and general education.

Session IV, recommendation no. 5:

They shall survey the financial support possibilities for the establishment and operation of the network of Hungarian Slovakian and Slovakian Hungarian regional cultural centers.

Session IV, recommendation no. 6:

Through joint efforts they shall facilitate the possibility for Hungarians living in the Republic of Slovakia and Slovaks living in the Republic of Hungary to practice mother-tongue religious ceremonies, including the training and preparation of clerics.

Session IV, recommendation no. 7:

They shall prepare a joint plan for the complete renovation and joint use of the Castle in Bors, with joint material efforts. They shall take steps toward incorporating the EU development programs into the joint project. On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Rakoczi War

of Independence — between 2003 and 2011 — the renovation of the Rackozi birth-house should proceed.

Session IV, recommendation no. 8:

They shall examine the financing possibilities in connection with the plan to expand the Slovakian Culture House in Bekescsaba.

Session IV, recommendation no. 10:

They shall create the conditions for the completion and publication of alternative textbooks for teaching history.

Session IV, recommendation no. 11:

The Parties shall make efforts toward the development of the holdings of the Slovakian Hungarian and Hungarian Slovakian libraries, with special attention to the augmentation of holdings and development of information technology.

Session IV, recommendation no. 13

They shall examine new forms of cooperation between hosting institutions in the competitive selection of Hungarian teachers studying in Slovakia and Slovakian teachers studying in Hungary.

Session IV, recommendation no. 16 (modified version):

The Parties shall support activities of the Slovakian Hungarian Cultural Museum in the Republic of Slovakia directed towards the exploration of Slovakian Hungarian memorial sites, and take steps toward the reconstruction of the Mikszath Memorial House in Sklabina and the Madach Memorial House in Alsosztregova, work to be completed through joint efforts.

For the Slovakian Party:

Session III, recommendation no. 1.2:

The Government of the Republic of Slovakia shall also continue negotiations with the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia regarding the settlement of relations between the state and the churches.

Session III, recommendation no. 2.2:

It shall ensure the conditions for operation of the General Education - Methodological Center, formerly financed by the state, as well as the establishment of a Nationality Department within the National General Education Center in Bratislava.

Session III, recommendation no. 2.4:

It shall support the continuous further education of Hungarian Slovakian general education specialists in the Republic of Slovakia, as well as the sending of Slovakian general education specialists to the Slovakian regional centers in Hungary.

Session IV, recommendation no. 14:

It shall continue the preparation of the law regarding the financial support of national minority cultures and regarding minorities.

Session IV, recommendation no. 17:

It shall reconsider the renewed participation of graduating Slovakian high school students in Hungary in the one-year expense-free preparatory courses for language and professional university entrance exams.

For the Hungarian Party:

Session I, recommendation no. 4:

The Hungarian Party shall solve with legal regulations the parliamentary representation of the Slovakian national minority in Hungary.

Session III, recommendation no. 2.5:

According to an earlier recommendation, it shall ensure the placement of the Jan Kollar memorial plaque in a worthy place in Budapest.

Session IV, recommendation no. 19:

It shall guarantee sufficient financial, material and professional conditions for more effective Slovakian schools in Hungary.

Session IV, recommendation no. 21 (modified version):

It shall urge on the expansion and reconstruction plan of the Slovakian Elementary School, High School and Dormitory in Bekescsaba, and urge that the city's self-government or the National Slovakian Self-Government submit an application for funding for this purpose.

Session IV, recommendation no. 22:

It shall examine possibilities for publishing Slovakian minority professional, art and religious journals and ensuring necessary financial support for this.

Session IV, recommendation no. 25:

It shall support the National Slovakian Self-Government's efforts toward the establishment of the Slovakian evangelical missionary center (the so-called Luther House).

Session IV, recommendation no. 26 (modified version):

It shall examine, on the basis of a recommendation by the Budapest Slovakian Self-Government, the possibility of preparing a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a Slovakian Cultural Center in the so-called Bobula Palace in Budapest or another suitable building.

III.

The Joint Committee, in accordance with article 6 of the Agreement between the Hungarian and Slovakian Governments for mutual support in the field of national minorities, culture and general education signed on December 12, 2003, appreciated the fulfillment of this Agreement and established that the support given is in accordance with the agreement. The Joint Committee recommends that the Slovakian Party also use the frameworks created by the agreement in the in the interest of the Slovakian minority living in the Republic of Hungary.

IV.

The Parties approved the following new recommendations:

For Both Parties

1. The Joint Committee recommends that the Parties mutually inform each other about recommendations regarding the preparation and acceptance of European Union norms in minority politics, and cooperate as far as possible.
2. The Parties shall examine the support given to the civil organizations working to ensure the development of linguistic and cultural identity of the Hungarian Slovakian and Slovakian Hungarian minorities, as well as the possibility of increasing this support.
3. The Joint Committee recommends the conclusion of an interministerial agreement between the education ministries concerning the operation and development of Selye Janos University.
4. The Joint Committee recommends that the Parties examine the possibility of establishing the Training-Education and Continuing Education Center of the National Slovakian Self-Government, on the territory of the Republic of Slovakia, and support its operation.
5. The Parties shall examine of financial conditions in the interest of preserving the Slovakian schools with small numbers of students in Hungary, and in the interest of Hungarian schools with small numbers of students in Slovakia.
6. The Joint Committee shall support signature of the Hungarian-Slovakian agreement under preparation regarding the care of war graves.

For the Slovakian Party:

7. The Slovakian Party shall ensure the satellite broadcasting of the public Slovakian Television – or a special daily broadcast produced from its programs especially for the purpose – and free access for Slovaks beyond its borders, among them Slovaks living in Hungary.
8. The Slovakian Party shall support the cooperation of the National Slovakian Self-Government's cultural, scientific and public education institutions with the appropriate Slovakian state institutions (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovak National Museum, State Archives, Slovak Film Institute, National General Education Center, Theater Institute of the Culture Ministry, Methodological Institute of the Education Ministry, etc.).
9. The Slovakian Party shall continue to ensure the necessary material conditions for the operation and development of Selye Janos University in Revkomarom.

10. The Slovakian Party shall ensure the necessary support for the operation of professional organizations that assist the professional, methodological and pedagogical work of Hungarian-language public education in Slovakia: The Hungarian Pedagogues Association of Slovakia and the Comenius Pedagogical Institute.
11. The Slovakian Party shall examine the possibility of providing sufficient material conditions to ensure the complete and effective operation of the Hungarian cultural institutions under the supervision of county governments. In the case of the Jokai Theater in Revkomarom and the Thalia Theater in Kosice, it shall provide support for their activities beyond the borders of the counties where they are headquartered.

For the Hungarian Party

12. The Hungarian Party shall expand Slovakian language teaching and the framework of content taught in Slovakian, including general-knowledge subjects.
13. The Hungarian Party shall guarantee the necessary financial conditions for the nationality kindergartens, nationality education and dormitories, in such a way that the degree of state support does not decrease.
14. The Hungarian Party shall urge at the National Radio and Television Commission (ORTT) the broadcasting of the Slovakian-language minority transmission at a more favorable time and its repetition on Hungarian public television.
15. The Hungarian Party shall ensure the necessary conditions for the Slovakian-language minority broadcast on Hungarian public radio and its reception on the entire territory of the country, with particular attention to areas inhabited by the Slovakian minority.
16. The Hungarian Party shall ensure, within the framework of the Bologna Process, enhanced material support for the operation of the higher education institutions' Slovakian-nationality basic and master-level training. In the interest of the further fulfillment of the training of Slovakian intellectuals in Hungary, it shall examine the possibility of whether the acquisition of national-minority culture related secondary and further professional qualification can be guaranteed within the framework of state-financed education

Prepared in Budapest on November 15, 2005, in the Slovakian and Hungarian languages, in 2 copies each. Both versions are equally valid.

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