

**PROTOCOL OF THE 6TH SESSION OF THE HUNGARIAN-SLOVAKIAN ETHNIC
MINORITY JOINT COMMITTEE**

Bratislava, September 22, 2006

The Hungarian-Slovakian Ethnic Minority Joint Committee held its 6th session in Bratislava on September 22, 2006, under the leadership of Deputy State Secretary Ferenc Gemesi and Ambassador Miroslav Mojzita. The list of participants in the session is attached to the protocol.

I.

The Parties concluded that:

- on September 21, 2006, the Government of the Republic of Hungary acknowledged the protocol of the 5th session of the Joint Committee and assigned the execution of tasks resulting from it to the responsible ministers.
- the Government of the Republic of Slovakia with its decision No. 414/2006 of May 10, 2006 acknowledged the protocol of the 5th session of the Joint Committee and appointed the ministers responsible for the execution of its recommendations.

The Parties repeatedly acknowledged that the Joint Committee came into existence between the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Slovakia and by its activities in accordance with the responsibilities arising from the treaty on good-neighborly relations and friendly cooperation, 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 affirmed that their mutual cooperation is positively influenced by both countries' European Union membership, under which the European framework of national minority protection and the exercise of minority rights is strengthened.

The Parties acknowledged that advances have been made on concrete questions in the field of national minorities, and at the same time an obvious need for strengthening the mutual trust between the two countries is becoming evident, as well as the need for members of national minorities to be useful citizens of their own countries by having all the conditions given for the preservation of their national identity, and for the exercise of rights in accordance with the generally recognized principles and international practice, as well as rights guaranteed in bilateral agreements.

The Parties proclaim that they condemn every act aimed against national minorities or their members. Through its activities the Joint Committee endeavors to contribute to the strengthening of understanding between minorities and the majority, and to the solution by governments of practical issues raised by minorities.

The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Slovakia for mutual support in the field of national minorities, culture and general education signed on December 12, 2003, is an example of good cooperation and the satisfactory bilateral resolution of incidental open questions. The Joint Committee reviewed the implementation of the agreement (see chapter III of the protocol).

Both Parties highly appreciate the active participation in the work of the committee by representatives of the Slovaks living in Hungary and the Hungarian minority living in Slovakia,

which makes possible the full consideration of their requests and demands.

Considering that in 2006 parliamentary elections took place in both countries, the Parties mutually informed each other about those aspects of the government programs crucial to the mandate and work of the Joint Committee.

The Parties assessed with satisfaction that issues regarding the welfare of minorities played a role in the government programs, in accordance with European values and norms for the protection of national minorities. The Parties came to an agreement upon the continuous and mutual exchange of information about the fulfillment of these documents.

The Hungarian Party gave a briefing about the renewed principles of the Hungarian Government's nationality policy and institutional system.

II.

The Parties mutually informed each other about the realization of the recommendations accepted in the previous session of the Joint Committee.

They acknowledged that the recommendations have been realized, although most of them are not formulated as one-time tasks, in that the conditions for their realization are continuity and regularity. In the case of some recommendations it is necessary to increase the efforts toward realization.

Considering that they agreed upon holding a session on one occasion per year, and considering the content and extent of the earlier adopted recommendations, the Parties did not formulate new recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Slovakia.

They consider as most important that the Parties continue the fulfillment of previous sessions' recommendations, as is to be found in the attachment to this protocol.

Regarding the fulfillment of recommendations, within the framework of the discussion the Parties emphasized that in the near future particular attention should be paid to the following recommendations:

For both Parties:

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

The Parties, with the collaboration of experts from both countries, will help with 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. 8:

The Parties shall examine the financing possibilities in connection with the expansion of the Slovakian Culture House in Bekescsaba.

Session IV, recommendation no. 10:

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

Session V, recommendation no. 3 (modified version):

The Joint Committee recommends the conclusion of an agreement at the appropriate level concerning the operation and development of Selye Janos University.

Session V, recommendation no. 5:

The Parties shall examine the 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 10 (modified version):

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. The Hungarian Party shall examine the possibility for regular support for the Hungarian Slovaks' Research Institute within the budgetary framework of the National Slovakian Self-Government.

For the Slovakian Party:

Session III, recommendation no. 1.2 (modified version):

Within the settlement of relations between the state and the churches, the Slovakian Party shall examine the fulfillment of law no. 161/2005 regarding the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia.

Session IV, recommendation no. 14 (modified version):

Within the preparation of the law regarding the financing of culture, the Slovakian Party shall regulate the financing of the development and dissemination of national minority cultures.

Session IV, recommendation no. 17:

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

Session IV, recommendation no. 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, especially Slovaks living in Hungary.

Session V, recommendation no. 9:

The Slovakian Party shall continue to ensure the necessary material conditions for the operation and development of Selye Janos University in Revkomarom.

Session V, recommendation no 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:

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 (modified version):

The Hungarian Party, according to an earlier recommendation, shall ensure the placement of the Jan Kollar memorial plaque in a worthy place in Budapest.

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

The Hungarian Party 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 (modified version):

The Hungarian Party shall examine the possibility of publishing Slovakian minority journals and ensuring financial coverage for them, with particular attention to the weekly *Ludove Noviny*.

Session V, recommendation no. 12:

The Hungarian Party shall expand Slovakian language teaching and the framework of content taught in Slovakian, including general-knowledge subjects.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

III.

The Joint Committee, in accordance with article 6 of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Slovakia 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 on the part of the Republic of Hungary and on the part of the Republic of Slovakia is happening in accordance with the agreement.

IV.

Prepared in Bratislava on September 22, 2006, in the Hungarian and Slovakian languages, in 2 copies each. Both versions are equally valid.

Ferenc Gemesi

President of the Hungarian Section
of the Joint Committee

Miroslav Mojzita

President of the Slovakian Section
of the Joint Committee

Recommendations from earlier sessions of the Joint Committee, the fulfillment of which the Parties continue to consider as their tasks

For both Parties:

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 Slovaks living in the Republic of Hungary and Hungarians living in the Republic of Slovakia 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. 11:

The Parties shall make efforts toward the development of the holdings of the Hungarian Slovakian and Slovakian Hungarian 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 Slovakian teachers studying in Hungary and Hungarian teachers studying in Slovakia.

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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 6:

The Joint Committee shall support signature of the Hungarian-Slovakian agreement under preparation regarding the care of war graves.

For the Slovakian Party:

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 V, recommendation no. 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.).

For the Hungarian Party:

Session IV, recommendation no. 19:

It shall guarantee the necessary financial, material and professional conditions for the more effective operation of the Slovakian schools in Hungary.

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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.

Session V, recommendation no. 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.