

PROTOCOL

of the 3rd session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee convened to monitor the fulfillment of provisions of the Agreement signed on November 6, 1992, guaranteeing the special rights of the Hungarian national community living on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian national community living on the territory of the Republic of Hungary

The Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee held its 3rd session on November 4-5, 1997, in Lendava. The Hungarian delegation was led by Csaba Tabajdi, Political State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, and the Slovenian delegation was led by Mihaela Logar, State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry.

I.

The Parties, during the exchange of opinions regarding current issues of minority protection, again determined that the provisions of the Agreement signed between the two countries in 1992 regarding guaranteeing the special rights of the Slovenian national minority living in Hungary and the Hungarian national community living in the Republic of Slovenia settle the rights of both nationalities at a high level. The spirit and content of the Agreement in several respects, in many substantive issues, go beyond the 1992 UN declaration on the rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, the provisions of the Council of Europe framework agreement on the protection of national minorities, the European charter on regional or minority languages, and the recommendations of international minority documents.

II.

The Joint Committee reviewed the fulfillment of the recommendations from the 2nd Joint Committee session in 1996 and established that:

In the area of general issues

1. The laws of both countries sufficiently guarantee the possibility of free use of language, the preservation of national identity and special nationality rights for each other's minority communities.
2. In Slovenia the issuing of bilingual personal documents for the national minorities has been settled for years. The Hungarian party made preparations for the introduction of bilingual personal documents next year.

Despite the legal background providing exemplary guarantees for the free use of language by members of the minorities, in practical administration many difficulties can still be experienced in the area of free language use.

3. The representatives of both minorities called attention to the slow, and in some cases late, realization of the Joint Committees' recommendations in respect to changing the conditions of education and information as well as in the area of religious practice in the mother-tongue.

4. The material and placement conditions of the institutions of both the Hungarian national community in Slovenia and the Slovenian minority in Hungary - with state and regional support - improved considerably.

5. Meaningful progress happened in the area of maintaining communication between members of the Hungarian community in Slovenia and the Hungarian population in the border area with the opening of the border crossings between Kebele and Nemesnep, and Partosfalva and Magyarszombatfa.

6. Preparations are underway for the classification of the border station between Pince and Törölyszentmiklós as an international border crossing.

7. The governments of the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Slovenia this year shall sign the agreement regarding the crossing of borders using personal identification cards.

8. The Republic of Slovenia approved a decree according to which members of the autochthonous minorities (among them the Hungarian national community) - through competitive applications - can receive favorable conditions for loans. Through a separate decree it also ensures different forms of support for members of the Slovenian communities in neighboring countries.

9. In the area of ensuring the mother-tongue religious life of the Slovenian minority in Hungary there continues to be no substantial progress. Sufficient religious textbook translations for the youth religious instruction of the Hungarian minority in Slovenia are lacking.

10. The Hungarian Party has begun preparations for opening an honorary consulate in Lendava.

11. The Slovenian Party shall open a consulate general in Szentgotthard in 1998.

In the area of education

1. In Hungary and in Slovenia, the programs connected with the further professional training of teachers from nationality and bilingual schools, and with the exchange of textbooks and students, continue. Educational cooperation between the Hungarian border counties and members of the Slovenian minority is productive.

2. The number of Hungarian college students from Slovenia studying in Hungary is continually decreasing - because of the high requirements of the colleges.
3. The nostrification of diplomas earned in the two countries is still unresolved.

In the area of general education

1. The activities of general-education groups are effectively coordinated by the Hungarian Nationality General Education Institute in Slovenia, and in Hungary by the National Slovenian Minority Self-Government and the Association of Slovenians in Hungary. Both countries continue the construction of the community center in Lendava with moral and material support. The construction of the Slovenian General Education and Information Center in Szentgotthard has begun.
2. The Hungarian national community in the Mura Region is preparing the expansion of the Hungarian program within the framework of Slovenian TV. In addition, the National Slovenian Minority Self-Government and the Association of Slovenians in Hungary began preparations for the start of a Slovenian radio station in Szentgotthard.
3. Intensive cooperation continues on the part of Zala and Vas Counties and the border villages of the Mura Region, in the interest of which they signed a separate cooperation agreement with members of the nationality communities as well.

III.

The Joint Committee makes the following recommendations to the two governments:

In the general area

1. Both states shall endeavor still more consistently toward the fulfillment of the provisions of the Agreement and the recommendations in the protocols of the committee sessions.
2. The Joint Committee, according to the wish of the Hungarian national community living in Slovenia and the Slovenian minority in Hungary, shall approve joint-committee task formulations that are more concrete and, where possible, bound to deadlines.
3. Both Parties shall continue the economic development of the areas inhabited by the two minorities and in this field take advantage of the PHARE-CBC program possibilities and instruments. For this purpose, both Parties shall strengthen the regionalization of these territories.

4. Both governments shall do everything in the interest that the border crossing between Cepinci and Ketvolgy open in 1998, and with this finish the series of border-crossing openings that ensures a better connection between the national minorities and the mother countries and between the two countries. The Hungarian Party shall speed up the declaration of the Pince-Tornyiszentmiklos border crossing as an international crossing.

5. Both Parties shall examine the possibility that the border crossings designated for local border traffic - in the interest of regional tourism, regional cooperation and the carrying out of joint PHARE projects - exceptionally and on a case-by-case basis be made open to the citizens of other countries.

6. The Hungarian Party once again shall create the conditions for restarting bus traffic between Hosszofalu and Redics.

7. Both Parties shall examine whether the financial background for the operation of the minority organizations and professional institutions is sufficiently ensured from the budget or through funding competitions.

8. The Joint Committee requests the competent religious bodies to make religious practice possible in the minority mother-tongue.

In the area of education

1. In the area of education, both Parties shall improve the level of Hungarian and, respectively, Slovenian mother-tongue instruction. The Hungarian Party shall for this purpose send - with an assignment similar to that of the Slovenian instructor in Szentgotthard - a school inspector to the Mura Region.

2. The Hungarian Party shall continuously ensure the material conditions for the operation of the Slovenian schools in the Mura Region.

3. The Slovenian Party shall continue the further professional education program for Hungarian teachers.

4. The education ministries of the two countries shall continue discussions for the earliest possible resolution of the problem of diploma nostrification.

In the area of general education

1. The National Slovenian Minority Self-Government and the Association of Slovenians in Hungary, with the help of both RTVs and the state bodies, shall continue the preparations for the establishment and operation of the Slovenian-language radio station in Szentgotthard. The Hungarian Party - in the spirit of the previous Joint Committee protocol - shall continue to support the radio's establishment and operation.

2. The Slovenian Party shall expand the Hungarian-language program in the Slovenian TV studio in Lendava.

3. The Hungarian Party, in the spirit of its original assumption of responsibility, shall continue to support the construction of the community center in Lendava.

The Parties agreed to hold their next session in 1998 in Hungary.

Prepared in 2 copies, in Hungarian and in Slovenian. Both versions are authoritative.

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of the Joint Committee

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Lendava, November 5, 1997