

PROTOCOL

of the 5th 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 5th session on February 3-4, 2000, in Ljubljana. The Hungarian delegation was led by Tibor Szabo, President of the Office for Hungarians Abroad, and the Slovenian delegation was led by Mihaela Logar, State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry.

I.

The Parties, as well as the representatives of the two minority communities, again determined that 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 positively affects the situation of the two nationalities.

To the satisfaction of the Parties, the practical realization of the agreement in many places goes beyond the 1992 UN declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, the Council of Europe framework agreement on the protection of national minorities, and the European charter on regional or minority languages. This practice provides the opportunity for the Hungarian-Slovenian cooperation between governments and border regions to become an example in Central Europe.

The Parties welcome and support - within the framework of their common understanding and the rule of law - that the national communities shall appear and represent in a legitimate way cultural self-government interests where they live sparsely and territorial self-government interests where they live in concentration - in accordance with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Recommendation 1201 and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' Recommendation 43.

II.

The Joint Committee reviewed the fulfillment of the recommendation from the 4th session and determined that:

In the area of general issues

1. Both governments formulated the recommendations from the fourth session in governmental decrees. The recommendations of the 4th session put new life into the activities of the concerned ministries, and, thanks to this, concrete results were produced. At the same time the realization of some recommendations of the Joint Committee require a longer time, and keeping these on the agenda also continues to be necessary.
2. The Hungarian community in Slovenia and the Slovenian minority in Hungary continue to need greater support from their mother countries for the purpose of preserving their linguistic and cultural identities.
3. In Slovenia bilingual documents are ensured for members of the national minorities. In Hungary from January 1, 2000, every Hungarian citizen belonging to a minority can claim bilingual personal identity documents.
4. The members of the two minorities and people living on both sides of the border favorably received border crossings using personal identity cards, but at the same time delays occur.
5. The six border crossings on the Hungarian-Slovenian border have a positive effect on the area's economic development, and on the minorities' relations with their mother countries. At the same time there has not been success in solving the problems that have arisen in connection with the opening hours and other restrictions. Preparations continue in the interest of the classification of the Pince-Tornyiszentmiklos and Felsőszonok-Martinje border crossings as international border crossings. There still has not been success in opening the Cepinci-Ketvolgy border crossing. Planning for the construction of the highway between Ketvolgy and Felsőszonok (Verica-Gornji Senik) has started.
6. The intensive construction of the Hungarian-Slovenian railway continues, as the result of which a direct rail connection is being established between Hungary and the Republic of Slovakia. According to the bilateral agreement the work will be completed at the end of 2000.
7. The Slovenian Consulate General in Szentgotthard began its work, and on the Hungarian side the appointment of honorary consul is in progress.
8. The National Slovenian Self-Government reelected in February 1999, which is the Slovenian community's highest elected self-government body, operates effectively. Slovenian minority self-governments operate in a total of 10 settlements. The Association of Slovenians in Hungary, in cooperation with the National Slovenian Self-Government, coordinates and organizes the activities of the Slovenian community's cultural and other associations.

The Hungarian national community in Slovenia elected Hungarian national council representatives in 5 villages (public administration units). The Hungarian Public Education Institute, *Népújság*, and Hungarian Radio and the RTV Hungarian Editorial Office in the Mura Region carry out the minority's cultural and information activities.

9. The Slovenian-Hungarian Cross-Border Regional Council, in which Vas and Zala Counties as well as the Slovenian villages bordering Hungary take part, is working effectively.

10. With Hungarian state support, the renovation of the churches in Apatistvanfalva and Felsoszolnok. There is still no final solution in the matter of the Slovenian mother-tongue priest.

Reconciliation between the bishoprics of Maribor and Szombathely has begun in the interest of settling the unsolved question of the mother-tongue religious life of the Slovenians in Hungary and the Hungarian community in the Mura Region.

11. Professional discussions about the employment agreement between the two countries are taking place.

III.

The Joint Committee continues to consider valid those recommendations that have not been, or only partly been, fulfilled. Beside these, it makes the following recommendations to both governments:

In the area of general issues

1. The two governments in the future shall pay even more attention to the needs and interests of the minority communities and more consistently carry out the recommendations of the Joint Committee.

2. The Joint Committee considers it justified that in 2000 the two countries shall open the border crossing between Cepinci and Ketvolgy, which would favorably affect the maintenance of the relationship of the Slovenians living in this area of the Raba Region with their mother country.

The Parties shall do everything in the interest of classifying the Pince-Tornyiszentmiklos and Martinje-Felsoszolnok border crossings as international. At the crossings for local border traffic, they shall arrange the opening hours according to the needs. They shall examine the possibility that the citizens of other countries, primarily Austria, can also take advantage of these crossings.

The Joint Committee recommends that a professional committee be established for tending to these tasks.

3. The Parties - according to the possibilities - shall satisfy the higher and justified budgetary needs of the two minority communities.

4. The Parties shall even more consistently continue the economic development of the area inhabited by the two minorities, and shall take advantage of the possibilities and instruments of the EU programs.

5. The Committee welcomes and supports the joint efforts of the bishops of Maribor and Szombathely to appoint the Slovenian parish priest in Felsőszonok and the Hungarian parish priest in Lendava, and asks that within this framework they also solve the religious textbook problem.

6. The Parties shall do everything in the interest that the bilateral employment agreement be signed in the first half of this year.

7. The Joint Committee recommends to the governments that the representatives of the Hungarian and Slovenian minorities also receive places in the national delegations to minority conference to be organized in 2000 by Slovenia and the Council of Europe within the framework of the Stability Pact, for the purpose of presenting and representing the Hungarian-Slovenian cooperation in minority protection.

In the area of education

1. The Parties shall do everything in the interest of improving the quality of mother-tongue and bilingual education in the Raba Region nationality primary schools and the Mura Region bilingual primary schools.

2. The Hungarian Party shall support the efforts for the small nationality schools to receive a larger measure of support (with the help of supplementary normative payments) from the state budget. It shall ensure the sufficient conditions for the operation of these schools.

3. The Hungarian Party, in the framework of the signed educational, general-educational, and scientific cooperation program, shall ensure the professional advisor on education for the Hungarian bilingual schools in the Mura Region. The two competent ministries shall regulate the scope of activities and working conditions for the two advisors - Slovenian in the Raba Region and Hungarian in the Mura Region.

4. The Slovenian Party shall ratify the agreement ensuring mutual recognition of diplomas.

5. In accordance with the educational, general-educational, and scientific cooperation program signed by the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Slovenia, the competent ministries shall establish an expert joint committee on the issue of textbooks for both concerned minorities.

In the area of general education and information

1. The Parties shall ensure that the construction of Community Center in Lendava finishes - if possible - by the end of 2000. The Hungarian Party shall examine the possibility of one-time financial support in the interest of completing the construction. The Joint Committee recommends a working discussion among the Culture Ministry of the Republic of Slovenia, the Town of Lendava, the Lendava Hungarian Self-Government Community and the Office for Hungarians Abroad.
2. The National Slovenian Self-Government shall take further steps in the interest of equipping the radio studio. The Hungarian Party shall also financially support the establishment of the studio and the operation of the editorial office from the resources at its disposal, so that broadcasting can begin in 2000.
3. The Slovenian Party, within the legal possibilities, shall take steps in the interest of settling the status of the Lendava Museum and Library, taking into account the recommendations of the Hungarians in the Mura Region.
4. The Slovenian Party begins the settlement of the problem with the premises of the Hungarian TV in Lendava.
5. The Hungarian Party shall provide support to the Hungarian community in Slovenia for the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of Hungarian statehood and for the erection of the Saint Stephen statue.

The Parties agreed to hold their next session in Hungary.

The Protocol was prepared in two copies, in Slovenian and in Hungarian. Both versions are authoritative.

President of the Slovenian Section
of the Joint Committee

President of the Hungarian Section
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Ljubljana, February 4, 2000