

Protocol

of the 8th session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee convened to monitor the agreement guaranteeing the special rights of the Slovenian national minority community living on the territory of the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian national community living on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia

The 8th session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee (hereafter MJC) took place on May 24, 2005, in Budapest. The leader of the Hungarian delegation, Jozsef Balint-Pataki, President of the Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, and the leader of the Slovenian delegation, State Secretary Franc Puksic, Head of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia's Office for Slovenians Abroad, served as Co-Presidents of the MJC. The session continued on April 3, 2006, in Felsoszolnok. Vilmos Szabo, State Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister led the Hungarian delegation and State Secretary Zorko Pelikan, Head of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia's Office for Slovenians Abroad, led the Slovenian delegation.

The MJC, keeping in view the basic principles and provisions of the agreement on guaranteeing the special rights of the Slovenian national minority living on the territory of the Republic of Hungary and the Hungarian national community living on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter Minority Protection Agreement), during the exchange of views about timely questions regarding the situation of Hungarian and Slovenian minorities living in both countries, agreed upon the following:

1. The Minority Protection Agreement signed between the two countries in 1992 regarding guaranteeing the special rights of the Slovenian national minority living on the territory of the Republic of Hungary (hereafter RH) and the Hungarian national community living on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter RS) as well as the members of both minorities ensures at a high level the preservation of the Hungarian and Slovenian communities' traditions, cultural values and historical heritage, and by this assists in the fulfillment of their sense of national identity.
2. It contributes to the high-level guarantee of minority rights that relations between the two friendly strategic partner countries are stable, which their joint accession to the European Union in 2004 further strengthened.
3. The MJC welcomes that in the course of the 2002 Hungarian elections and the 2004 Slovenian election, the minority self-government elections also fruitfully took place, as well as the Hungarian national self-government community local elections. As results of the elections in the RH, minority self-government bodies and national minority self-governments were selected.
4. The MJC concurs that ensuring the subsistence and welfare of the Hungarians in Slovenia and the Slovenians in Hungary on their native lands and improving their situation within the framework of the European Union necessitates more concentrated attention than ever at the state and self-government levels as well as the complete validation and fulfillment of the principles and goals in the Minority Protection Agreement.

5. The Parties formulated recommendations arising from the bilateral agreement to their governments, which they recorded in the Protocol, and suggested that – in keeping with practice to date – they confirm the recommendations in Government Decisions and make them the tasks and responsibilities of individual ministries.
6. Representatives of both minorities called to the MJC's attention that, in contrast with the welcome results, some of the MJC's recommendations have only slowly been realized, or have not been realized at all.

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 MJC establishes that in 2004 an increase in the budgetary resources ensured for the National Slovenian Self-Government did not follow the increase of 2003, and in 2005 the minority self-government's budget decreased. The financial resources of others entitled to support increased.

The MJC welcomes that the Slovenian government continuously ensures budgetary resources for the Hungarian national community in the Mura Region.

2. The MJC welcomes the 2004 formation of the Hungarian-Slovenian Cross-Border Regional Development Council, which with the participation of the border areas (for example, within the framework of the Alps-Adria Euroregion) can result in closer and more efficient regional economic cooperation. It welcomes further the successful cooperation among the Vas County Assembly, the Zala County Assembly and the Mura Region Hungarian Self-Government National Community. Similarly, the National Slovenian Self-Government and the Association of Slovenians in Hungary established good cooperation with the Murska Sobota, Kuzma, Gornji Petrovci, Salovci, Puconci, Grad and Moravske Toplice self-governments in the border area.
3. The MJC welcomes that the Slovenian Party in the 2005 supplementary budget ensured further financial resources for the realization of the Hungarian national community's constitutional rights in those self-governments where the Hungarian national minority lives, namely: Dobronak self-government, Moravske Toplice self-government, Hodos self-government and Lendava self-government. The MJC especially welcomes the guarantee of financial resources for the creation of the Prosenjakovci/Partosfalva industrial zone. The development of the industrial zone will have a lasting favorable effect on the growth of the entire area and, as a consequence, on the provision of workplaces in the mixed-nationality territory.
4. The MJC welcomes that from May 31, 2004, the "agreement regarding execution of the Agreement between the Republic of Hungary and the Republic of Slovenia on the inspection of road and rail border traffic" is in effect.
5. The MJC establishes with regret that the Hungarian Parliament did not accept the bill on parliamentary representation, and thus the Slovenian national community in Hungary is

still without its own representative in the Hungarian Parliament. The Hungarian national community in Slovenia has had a representative in the RS Parliament for years already.

6. The MJC welcomes that the technical conditions came about for the start of scheduled bus service between Murska Sobota and Szentgotthard.
7. **In the Republic of Slovenia, where the Hungarian national community lives, bilingualism (personal documents, topography, state bodies, local community bodies and procedures of bodies entrusted with public authority) is defined in the legal order and consistently realized. In Hungary (Raba Region) where the Slovenian national minority lives, bilingualism in large part is not realized (partially only in topography).**

In the area of education

1. Both Parties continue to assist with the improvement of Slovenian language teaching in the Raba Region and Hungarian language teaching in the Mura Region. This is in large part due to the professional work of a Slovenian language advisor, as well as to the publication of Slovenian language and folklore textbooks. On the basis of the decision of the National Slovenian Self-Government, the Slovenian minority organizations and the nationality schools, the first steps took place in the gradual introduction of bilingual instruction in the Folsoszonok nationality elementary school in the Raba Region.

The MJC acknowledges with satisfaction that investment into one the SR's most modern and excellently equipped bilingual elementary schools was completed in Dobrovnik in the bilingual area in 2004. Likewise in 2005 the construction of one of the most modern and well equipped bilingual secondary school in the RS was completed in Lendava in the bilingual area.

2. In Hungary public education, and within this the financing of nationality education, is a task assigned by law to self-governments. The self-governments of the settlements tend to the maintenance of the institutions. The central budget ensures support for this on the basis of normatives. The central budget, in addition to the allotted normatives, ensures enhanced support for the operation of the two nationality elementary schools in the Raba Region and the nationality programs of the high school in Szentgotthard through funding competitions. In 2005, partial expenses for the maintenance the elementary school in Apatistvanfalva and the elementary school in Felsoszolnok were covered from this source. The MJC establishes with regret that the two Slovenian schools in the Raba Region are still struggling with financial problems.
3. Despite the MJC's recommendation and a carefully prepared application, the reconstruction of the school in Felsoszolnok could not begin – despite the fact that the MJC in its last 2003 protocol unanimously recommended that the Hungarian Party financially support it.
4. The MJC establishes with regret that the committee concerned with the professional preparation and publication of textbooks necessary for nationality and bilingual instruction did not come into being.

5. The Hungarian education ministry by inviting funding applications ensures the publication of nationality language, literature and folklore textbooks, for which the necessary resources are available. Development is a function of the capacity of the authors. They acknowledge with pleasure that since the last session of the Joint Committee 9 Slovenian language and literature textbooks were published, and that the publication of 3 more textbooks is expected within the shortest time.
6. The MJC welcomes that in the Hungarian Language and Literary History Department of the University of Maribor Teacher Training School steps took place toward starting a translator-interpreter training program beside the teacher training program. The Slovenian Party recommends that the Hungarian Party examine the possibility and demand for starting a similar program at Szombathely University.

In the area of general education and information

1. The Slovenian Party in September 2004 finished the new building in Lendava for the editorial office of the Hungarian RTV programs.
2. In June 2000 operation of the Slovenian-language, minority self-government-owned Szentgotthard Radio began, and it broadcasts for one hour per day. Its operating conditions were ensured in 2003 and 2004. In the first half of 2005 problems experienced with the funding-competition system made its smooth and uninterrupted work significantly more difficult. For 2005, the National Slovenian Self-Government received from the Hungarian government the amount necessary for its operation. The operation of the Slovenian-language studio of the public-service-type Győr Radio is guaranteed twice weekly.
3. The MJC welcomes that the construction of the Community Center in Lendava was completed in 2004.
4. The MJC welcomes that the Banffy Center, functioning within the framework of the Hungarian Nationality General Education Institute, began operating in August 2004 with joint material support from the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Hungary.
5. The MJC establishes that the protection of the Hungarian cultural heritage in the Mura Region is taking place under orderly conditions.
6. The MJC established that the Slovenian Government ensured the necessary financial resources for the renovation of the community center in Dobrovnik and the construction of the ethnographical museum. The MJC at the same time established that the Hungarian party did not ensure funding for the renovation of the Slovenian community centers in Felsőszolnok, Apatistvánfalva and Orfalu.
7. The MJC establishes that the Hungarian Party only to a modest degree supported the realization of the program of the Slovenian Cultural and Information Center in Szentgotthard. The National and Ethnic Minorities Office also supported the realization of the programs of the Slovenian organizations and cultural groups in 2006.

8. The MJC establishes that in 2005 in Hungary funding-competition possibilities in the area of culture narrowed significantly.
9. The KVB establishes that the RH in 2004 only partially supported the publication of the newspaper *Porabje*; at least half was financed by the Republic of Slovenia from its own budgetary resources. In 2005, the RH increased the support for *Porabje*, which from July 2005 became a weekly newspaper, and the MJC emphatically welcomes this. The RH continues to support publication of the mentioned newspaper. With the given tasks and regular financing, the paper's staff urgently needs to be strengthened.
10. The MJC establishes that the Hungarian government did not ensure separate financial resources for the operation of the Slovenian community center in the Raba Region beyond the normative support.
11. The MJC welcomes that the Slovenian Party in the 2005 supplementary budget ensured further financing for the Culture House in Domanjsevc, the ethnographical collection in Krplivnik, and the arrangement of the culture house in Hodos.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

of the 8th Session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee

The MJC makes the following recommendations to the two governments:

1. The MJC recommends the consistent realization of the provisions of the Minority Protection Agreement and the recommendations of the sessions of the Joint Committee in the interest of improving the situation of both minority communities.
2. Consistent with the commitments in the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Protection Agreement, in the coming parliamentary cycle 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 Slovenian minority can select its own parliamentary representation in the next parliamentary elections.
3. The MJC recommends the introduction of such economic programs that will solve the employment, infrastructure and economic development difficulties in the areas inhabited by both minorities. Both Governments shall stimulate the economic and infrastructural development of the areas inhabited by the nationality communities, and, with the construction of public roads and railways, ensure connections between them and between the national centers through the EU – INTERREG projects as well.
4. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party begin the construction of a public road between the isolated settlements of Felsőszolnok and Ketvolgy at the earliest. It recommends that the Slovenian Party renovate the road between Sredisce and Prosenjakovci.

5. The MJC recommends to **both governments** that they create sufficient legislation, in the sense of the Minority Protection Agreement and the constitutional laws, and do everything in the interest that in the mixed-nationality regions bilingualism be realized, in a legally-guaranteed way and also in practice, in an ever more complete form, and with this effectively guarantee the use of the minorities' mother-tongues in everyday practice, particularly in the area of public administration.

As the self-governments operating in the bilingual areas of the Raba Region partake of virtually no supplementary support for the practical realization of minority language use, the MJC further recommends to the Government of the RH that it find an appropriate solution.

6. The MJC recommends that the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Hungary and the Academy of Sciences and Arts of the Republic of Slovenia organize a joint scientific consultation about the socio-economic position of the Slovenian national community in Hungary and the Hungarian national community in Slovenia.

In the area of education

1. The MJC calls upon the concerned ministries to continue to intensively assert efforts toward improving the quality of mother-tongue instruction in the Slovenian nationality schools in the Raba Region and the bilingual schools in the Mura Region. The MJC urges that the National Slovenian Self-Government continue the process of taking over the nationality elementary school in Felsőszolnok and converting it into a bilingual school. The Slovenian educational consultant shall continue to actively take part in the process.
2. The MJC calls upon the Hungarian Party to increase the support for maintaining the Slovenian nationality educational institutions. It shall especially support the smooth and uninterrupted operation of the educational institutions in Felsőszolnok and Apatistvánfalva. The MJC acknowledges with pleasure that at the secondary-school level in Murska Sobota sufficient conditions are ensured for optional Hungarian-language teaching, and recommends to the Hungarian Party that it likewise ensure sufficient conditions for optional Slovenian-language teaching at the secondary-school level in Szombathely.
3. The MJC again calls the attention of the Hungarian Party to ensuring the necessary financial resource to the reconstruction of the elementary school in Felsőszolnok.
4. The MJC recommends that the publication of the textbooks necessary for Slovenian-language instruction in the nationality schools in the Raba Region continue as soon as possible. The ministries should directly agree upon about further professional preparations and the publication of the textbooks necessary for the nationality and bilingual schools.
5. The MJC acknowledges with pleasure that the translator-interpreter program of the Hungarian Language and Literary History Department of the University of Maribor Teacher Training School has started. The MJC at the same time recommends to the Hungarian government that it examine the possibility of starting a translator-interpreter training program within the Slovenian Language Department of the Szombathely Teacher Training College.

In the area of general education and information

1. The MJC recommends to the Hungarian government that it continue operational support for Szentgotthard Radio. In the case of support, they shall take into account the need of the Radio to operate 24 hours per week. The competent bodies concerned shall continue to make efforts toward the awarding of a permanent radio frequency.
2. The MJC again recommends to the Hungarian Government that in 2006 it ensure resources for the renovation of the Slovenian nationality community centers in the Raba Region.
3. The MJC again recommends that the Hungarian Party support the realization of the program of the Slovenian Cultural and Information Center in Szentgotthard.
4. The MJC recommends to the two governments that the leaders of the competent ministries meet in the interest of discussing the outstanding questions in the area of general education and cultural heritage.

The Parties agreed that they shall hold their next session in Slovenia in 2006, timed so that it takes place before the budget planning process for 2007.

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

Felsoszolnok, April 3, 2006

President of the Hungarian
Joint Committee delegation

President of the Slovenian
Joint Committee delegation