

PROTOCOL

of the 9th 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 9th session of the Hungarian-Slovenian Minority Joint Committee (hereafter MJC) took place on September 21, 2007, in Ljubljana. The leader of the Hungarian delegation, Ferenc Gemesi, Deputy Secretary of State for Minority and Nationality Policy, and the leader of the Slovenian delegation, State Secretary Zorko Pelikan, Head of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia's Office for Slovenians Abroad, served as Co-Presidents of the MJC.

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. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 the support from the Hungarian Government for the National Slovenian Self-Government (hereafter NSS) does not take into account its real value, which has not increased for five years. It nevertheless welcomes the provision of additional budgetary resources for the operation of Radio Monoster in 2006 and 2007.

The MJC welcomes that the Slovenian government continuously ensures budgetary resources for the Hungarian national community in the Mura Region, in addition to its consistent observance of the relevant legislation.

2. The MJC establishes that the RH has not yet produced a law on the parliamentary representation of national minorities. Nevertheless it recognizes that the development of the legislative conception has begun.
3. The MJC welcomes the successful cooperation among the Vas County Assembly, the Zala County Assembly and the Mura Region Hungarian Self-Government National Community, and further the similar good cooperation of the NSS and the Association of Slovenians in Hungary (hereafter ASH) with the Lendava/Lendva, Murska Sobota, Kuzma, Gornji Petrovci, Salovci, Puconci, Grad and Moravske Toplice self-governments in the border area.
4. The MJC establishes that although the technical conditions for the scheduled bus line between Murska Sobota and Szentgotthard/Monoster came into being, it has still not materialized.
5. The MJC welcomes that, within the framework of the Hungarian-Slovenian-Croatian INTERREG III/A projects, the expansion of the Felsoszolnok/Gornji Senik drinking water network and the renovation of the Ketvolgy/Verica community house received support.

The MJC welcomes the commitment of the RH Government to decide within a short time on the route of the connecting road between the Raba Region's two extreme points, Felsoszolnok/Gornji Senik and Ketvolgy/Verica, and to guarantee the financial resources necessary for its realization.

6. The MJC establishes that support continued for Slovenian minority funding applications within the framework of the Public Foundation for Minorities. The ASH, which runs the Slovenian Cultural and Information Center in Szentgotthard, and the Slovenian community in Apatistvanfalva/Stevanovci received enhanced support.

In the area of education

1. Based on the decision of the NSS, the Slovenian minority organizations and the nationality schools, bilingual instruction began in the Raba Region, in the nationality elementary school in Felsoszolnok.
2. In Hungary public education, and within this the financing of nationality education, is a task assigned by law to self-governments. The central budget ensures support for this on the basis of normatives. The state budget, beside the normatives, ensures further special

support for the operation of the two nationality elementary schools in the Raba Region and the nationality programs of the high school in Szentgotthard on the basis of a decree. In 2006, the greatest portion of the expenses for the maintenance the elementary school in Apatistvanfalva and the elementary school in Felsoszolnok were covered from this source.

The MJC establishes that the body maintaining the Szentgotthard schools, without advance agreement with the Slovenian national community, changed the Slovenian language teaching and nationality programs of the high school in Szentgotthard.

The MJC likewise establishes that the maintainer of both nationality schools in the Raba Region continues to struggle with serious financial problems.

3. The MJC welcomes the signature of the contract related to settling the status of the Slovenian language advisor necessary for bilingual instruction in the Raba Region, who in the future will operate within the framework of the National Slovenian Self-Government. At the same time it establishes that the financing has not risen in years.
4. The MJC establishes 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 MJC established that as a result of the funding competition announced by the RH Ministry of Education and Culture the reconstruction of the school in Felsoszolnok was completed and the building was handed over in February 2007.
6. The MJC establishes that further measures are necessary in the area of renewing nationality textbooks on the part of the competent ministries on both sides.
7. The MJC establishes with satisfaction that from the 2006/2007 academic year, the possibility opened for the continuation of Slovenian Studies within the framework of basic studies at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, and further that in the Faculty of Arts at Maribor University Hungarian language teaching is underway. It welcomes that cooperation developed between the University in Nova Gorica and 3 Hungarian universities.

In the area of general education and information

1. Operation of Radio Monoster, broadcasting in the Slovenian language under the ownership of the minority self-government, began in June 2000. The expansion of its broadcasting time is underway. In the interest of improving the reception possibilities of the Hungarian Slovenian-language radio broadcast in the Felsoszolnok area, it was possible to ensure with the assistance of the Austrian institutions the use of the 97.7 MHz frequency. Thus from 2006 it can be heard well there too.
2. The MJC establishes that there is a need for further resources, beside those currently available, for renovating and realizing the programs of the Slovenian general education institutions in the Raba Region.
3. The MJC welcomes that the working committee which aims to discover a positive solution for the status of the library and museum in Lendava came into being.

4. The MJC welcomes that the RH in 2006 increased its support for the publication of the newspaper *Porabje*, which from July 2005 appears not biweekly but weekly, but the Hungarian Party's support comes to merely 60% of costs. Because of this the RS also continues to support the publication of *Porabje*. With the current workload and regular financing, the paper's staff urgently needs to be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The MJC makes the following recommendations to the two governments:

I. Priority recommendations

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 minorities.

The MJC recommends that the Governments urge the self-governments and minority communities in the mixed-population areas to apply for EU funding, and offer assistance to the self-governments and minority communities in ensuring their own resources necessary for obtaining those funds.

The MJC recommends that the legislative package regulating the new public administration units in the RS take into the account the implemented situation of the autochthonous minorities and not derogate the rights they have gained.

2. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party, on the basis of the Minority Protection Agreement and in conjunction with the national legal-enactment and voting rights reform process, make it possible in the coming parliamentary cycle that the Slovenian minority in Hungary can select its own parliamentary representative in the next parliamentary elections.
3. The MJC recommends that the Slovenian Government examine in what way the NSS can receive more support, in keeping with its increased number of tasks.
4. 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 national communities. 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.
5. The MJC recommends that both governments, in the sense of the Minority Protection Agreement and the constitutional laws, do everything in the interest that bilingualism be realized consistently and in practice in both mixed-nationality regions.

The MJC welcomes the initiative of both Parties to prepare an agreement about the organization of further training for the public administration workers in the bilingual areas.

The MJC further recommends to the RH Government that it offer special support for the Raba Region self-governments in the bilingual area for financing the extra expenses arising from the practical realization of bilingualism.

6. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party begin the construction of a public road between the isolated settlement of Felsoszolnok and Ketvolgy at the earliest. It recommends that the Slovenian Party renovate the road between Sredisce/Szerdahely and Prosenjakovci/Partosfalva.

The MJC welcomes the efforts made by the two Governments toward realizing the railway connection between Redics and Lendava/Lendva.

The MJC likewise recommends again that the competent authorities of the two Parties do everything in the interest that the bus line between Szentgotthard and Murska Sobota can start.

7. The MJC calls upon the concerned ministries to continue to make 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.
8. The MJC recommends that, primarily in the interest of improving the quality of Slovenian language instruction schools in the Raba Region, the bodies maintaining the schools examine the possibility of employing one more Slovenian teaching assistant.

The MJC likewise recommends that in place of the periodic professional visits to the Raba Region by kindergarten teachers from Slovenia, the body that maintains the institutions examine the possibility of hiring a permanent kindergarten teaching assistant for the kindergartens in the Raba Region.

The MJC recommends the restoration of Slovenian nationality instruction in the high school in Szentgotthard, in keeping with Hungarian legislation and according to the demands of the parents.

9. The MJC calls upon the Hungarian Party to provide enhanced support for the maintenance and operation of the nationality educational institutions. It shall especially support the regular and uninterrupted operation of the educational institutions in Felsoszolnok and Apatistvanfalva.

The MJC further recommends that the Hungarian Party examine the possibility of renovating the elementary school in Apatistvanfalva, take stock of the available resources, and in light of these work out the schedule of the renovation.

10. The MJC recommends the earliest completion of the current textbook series. The ministries shall directly agree upon the further professional preparation and publication of textbooks needed by the nationality and bilingual schools.

The MJC recommends that the competent ministries take stock of the situation regarding the textbooks necessary for bilingual education for the Slovenians in Hungary and the Hungarians in Slovenia, and write up a recommendation for a high-standard solution to the issue.

11. The MJC recommends to the Hungarian Government that – while respecting university autonomy – it examine the possibility of starting a Slovenian translator and interpreter training program in the Slovenian Language and Literature Department of the Daniel Berzsenyi Teacher Training College in Szombathely.
12. The MJC recommends that the competent ministries in both countries – likewise while respecting university autonomy – support the collegiate institutions in providing the opportunity for further study or part-time training for 5-6 nationality youth. In setting the application deadlines, they shall take into account the existing discrepancies concerning final-examination times.
13. The MJC recommends to the Hungarian Government that it increase the support for the operation of Radio Monoster 24 hours per week.
14. The MJC welcomes that the SR Government turned emphasized attention to supporting the cultural institutions of the Mura Region Hungarian Self-Government National Community. In the interest that the Institution receive regional status, the Hungarian and Slovenian Parties shall examine further budgetary support for the General Education and Promotion Center in Lendava. They further recommend that the Co-founders jointly approve the program plan.

The MJC recommends to the Co-founders, the self-government of Lendava and the Mura Region Hungarian Self-Government National Community, that they prepare a joint recommendation to the Hungarian and Slovenian Governments about ensuring the operation of the Institution.

15. The MJC recommends that the two Governments make a decision in principle to support the purchase of the parsonage in Felsőszolnok, for the purpose of the ethnographical museum Slovenian national community.
16. The MJC calls upon the Parties to make joint efforts to renovate the Roman Era church in Domanjsevc/Domonkosfa.

II. Long-term recommendations

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. The MJC recommends that the Hungarian Party take stock of how it can increase its support for the realization of the programs of the Slovenian Cultural and Information Center in Szentgotthard.
3. The MJC recommends to the Hungarian Government that it also support the

renovation of the Slovenian national community centers in the Raba Region in such a way that they have help in preparing applications of a high standard, with which they can successfully apply for funding from European and domestic sources.

4. The MJC recommends to the two governments that the representatives of the competent ministries meet this year in the interest of discussing the outstanding questions in the area of general education and cultural heritage.
5. The MJC authorizes the Co-Presidents to request in a letter that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 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.
6. The MJC again recommends that the RH open a consulate general in Lendava on the model of the RS consulate general in Szentgotthard.

The Parties agreed that they shall hold their next session in Hungary in the first half of 2008.

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

Ljubljana, September 21, 2007

President of the Hungarian

President of the Slovenian

Joint Committee delegation

Joint Committee delegation