

REPORT

ON THE SITUATION AND RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES 2016

2016



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Introduction

In its *Manifesto for 2016–2020*, the Government of the Slovak Republic avows the European democratic traditions of freedom, human dignity and tolerance in combating fascism and rightist extremism. Based on this democratic conviction, the Slovak Government is prepared to strengthen the policy of understanding and reconciliation of all Slovak citizens regardless of their ethnicity and use this unique opportunity to launch a new phase of support to national minorities. At the same time, according to the Manifesto, the Government views the protection and support for the development of national minorities as its natural role in shaping modern society and it will afford effective protection to national minorities and the rights and freedoms belonging to such minorities in a state governed by the rule of law, while respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

In this spirit, the Government guarantees decent conditions for the development of any national minority in line with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international treaties and conventions, while maintaining balanced relations between the majority population and national minorities through tolerant dialogue in Slovak society. According to this policy document, national minorities form an important part of our society contributing their extensive cultural wealth and substantial historical heritage, therefore, the Government undertook to protect national minorities and lay the groundwork for their development in terms of preserving and developing their identity, language, culture and traditions.

In this context, the key tasks include measures and activities aimed at preserving, developing and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and implementing system-level measures to improve the situation of persons belonging to national minorities, i.e. public policies falling under the competence of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter also the ‘Plenipotentiary’) as an advisory body to the Slovak Government. One of the Plenipotentiary’s key roles is to monitor, analyse and evaluate respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities by government authorities, local self-government authorities and other relevant bodies. In this context, the Plenipotentiary presents to the Slovak Government annual reports on the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The 5th Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons belonging to National Minorities 2016 (hereinafter referred to as the "Report") was compiled by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities, in accordance with the Art. 4 paragraph (1) (a) of the Statute of the Plenipotentiary. The present report was discussed and by resolution no. 109 approved by the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups at its XXV. meeting held on May 29, 2017. The Report was approved by the Government on 14 June 2017 by the Resolution No. 289.

Presented report, fifth Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities for 2016 (hereinafter ‘Report’) deals with the implementation of the rights of national minorities guaranteed by the Constitution, international treaties binding on the Slovak Republic and national legislation, i.e. the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the protection of the culture of national minorities and their participation in public governance. As in previous years, the Report focuses, in particular, on updating the relevant data, information and evaluations, while concentrating on those subject areas where

changes have occurred since the previous year. Where the context so requires, the content of the Report also covers periods before and after the period under review. The present report was elaborated in liaison with the relevant ministries, which prepared supporting documents for the subject areas falling under their competence.

The first of the Report's five parts is dedicated to the national legislative, conceptual and programming framework related to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and contains an overview of the key legislative changes, but also the relevant new legislative, conceptual and programming intentions from the period under review. This part deals in detail with the process of preparing and approving the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2016–2020 as the first document of this type, which, both conceptually and at the level of specific measures, creates room for cross-sectional and broad-spectrum implementation of the Government's policy in relation to national minorities. An equally important component of the first part are the Slovak Republic's international commitments regarding the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, which maps out the course of the monitoring processes under the control mechanisms for each commitment.

The second part analyses the current situation with regard to the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in affairs that concern them, in particular in terms of the various participatory mechanisms and results of their activities in the period under review, including the Plenipotentiary's activities focusing on creating room for participation. Within the broader context of political and civil rights, the Report also pays attention to the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Slovak Parliament) in 2016. In view of the fact that only parliamentary elections were held in last year, the report does not analyse the election of the Slovak President, elections to the European Parliament or elections to local and regional self-government authorities, and only provides references to previous reports in this regard¹.

The third part of the present Report provides comprehensive information on all subject areas where the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities is promoted by the relevant ministries. Education and training for persons belonging to national minorities is the subject of the fourth part, which offers a comprehensive picture of all aspects relating to education and training for this target group, including informal education. The fifth part is dedicated to the issue of the use of national minority languages, including in practical terms.

The *Conclusion* sums up the key findings of the Report and the resulting recommendations in relation to addressing the current issues of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities for the next period. The Report also contains Annexes, which provide additional information and data related to the individual parts of the Plenipotentiary's Report.

In the interest of using a gender-sensitive language, whenever the masculine gender is used in the text of this Report, it will be deemed to include the feminine to a reasonable extent.

¹ See, for example, the 2014 Report available at: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/spravy-a-koncepcne-materialy/>.

Part I – National and international commitments of the Slovak Republic with regard to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

1.1 National commitments of the Slovak Republic with regard to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

The rights of national minorities and ethnic groups are constitutionally guaranteed in the Slovak Republic, in particular under Article 34 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter also the ‘Constitution’). The Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic has produced many legal opinions important for the interpretation and basic rules of application of Article 34 of the Constitution². The constitutional provisions are further elaborated into more than 30 pieces of legislation on the protection of the rights of national minorities³. Some of the legislation listed below was amended or replaced with new legislation in 2016. These include, in particular:

- amendment to Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain acts;

Amendment: Act No 216/2016 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain acts, as amended, with effect from 1 September 2016.

Within the meaning of § 29(18) of the Education and Training Act (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain acts (hereinafter the ‘Schools Act’), primary school classes using a minority language as the language of instruction are exempted from the minimum threshold for the number of pupils in a class.

Amendment: Act No 188/2015 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain acts, as amended, and amending certain other acts.

Thanks to the amendment to § 107 of the Schools Act, the legislation now directly provides that children or pupils whose special educational needs result solely from the fact that they are growing up in a socially disadvantaged background may not be enrolled in a special school, special kindergarten class, special primary school class or a special class in a secondary school. In practice, this means that the fact that a child comes from a socially disadvantaged background may not constitute the reason for placing the child in a special school. This measure, aimed at preventing segregation, explicitly and directly established the obligation to place children and pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in classes with other children and pupils.

- amendment to Act No 300/2005 Coll., the Criminal Code and Act No 301/2005 Coll., the Code of Criminal Procedure;

Amendment: Act No 316/2016 Coll. on the recognition and enforcement of judgements given in criminal proceedings in the European Union and on amendments to certain acts.

² Drgonec, J. Ústava Slovenskej republiky. Komentár. [Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Commentary.] 3rd edition. Šamorín : Heuréka, 2012.

³ See, for example, the 2012 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities.

The Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure were amended with effect from 1 January 2017. The objective of the amendment is more effective investigation of offences of extremism and racially motivated crimes. With regard to pursuing this objective, the definition of extremist material has been changed. The formulation, according to which a material is extremist only if there is evidence that it is linked to incitement to hatred, violence and other undesirable phenomena, has been dropped. The establishment of a movement directed at suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms has also become a criminal offence, not only the promotion and propagation thereof, as was the case before. The amendment also further clarifies the definition of a racially motivated criminal offence. In order for an offence to be classified as racially motivated, the injured party's actual affiliation to a certain race, nation, nationality, ethnic group, etc. will no longer be necessary – its assumed affiliation will be sufficient. At the same time, the exclusive authority to judge and decide on these criminal offences has been transferred to the Specialised Criminal Court in Pezinok. In connection with the relevant draft, the Ministry of Justice also extended the scope of expert witness specialisations and branches, namely to include the specialisation in extremism, since practice has shown that the absence of this specialisation hinders the thorough investigation of these criminal offences. The new expert witness specialisation Social Sciences and Humanities is divided into two branches: Political Extremism and Religious Extremism.

- repeal of Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, as amended;

Amendment: Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, was repealed by Act No 160/2015 Coll., the Code of Adversarial Procedure. The Code of Adversarial Procedure entered into force on 1 July 2016.

Under § 155, the new Act lays down that every person has the right to address the court in a language they understand. Under the Code of Adversarial Procedure, translation of submissions and evidence in a language other than the State language is provided for by the parties themselves or it is provided for by the State, which, however, does not cover the cost of translation; instead, the general provisions on the recovery of the costs of proceedings apply. The previously applicable § 18 of Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, as amended, in force until 30 June 2016 stipulated that the parties to civil proceedings had the right to act before the court in their mother tongue or in a language they understand and it was an obligation of the court to provide them with equal opportunities for exercising their rights. At the same time, within the meaning of § 141(4) of the Code of Civil Procedure in force until 30 June 2016, the costs associated with enabling the parties to act before the court in their mother tongue or a language they understand were borne by the State.

- adoption of Act No 162/2015 Coll., the Code of Administrative Procedure;

According to § 54(1) of the new Code of Administrative Procedure, every person has the right to address administrative courts in a language they understand. Under this Code of Administrative Procedure, translation of submissions and evidence in a language other than the State language is provided for by the participants themselves or it is provided for by the State, which, however, does not cover the cost of translation; instead, the general provisions on the recovery of the costs of proceedings apply. The previously applicable § 18 of Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, as amended, in force until 30 June 2016 stipulated that the

parties to civil proceedings had the right to act before the court in their mother tongue or in a language they understand and it was an obligation of the court to provide them with equal opportunities for exercising their rights. At the same time, within the meaning of § 141(4) of the Code of Civil Procedure in force until 30 June 2016, the costs associated with enabling the parties to act before the court in their mother tongue or a language they understand were borne by the State.

The following amendments to relevant legislation, which do not have a direct impact on the issue of persons belonging to national minorities, were adopted:

- amendment to Act No 596/2003 Coll. on State administration in the school system and school self-government and on amendments to certain acts;

Amendment: Act No 422/2015 Coll. on the recognition of educational diplomas and recognition of professional qualifications, and on amendments to certain acts.

Amendment: Act No 91/2016 Coll. on criminal liability of legal persons and on amendments to certain acts.

– amendment to Act No 211/2000 Coll. on free access to information and on amendments to certain acts (Freedom of Information Act);

Amendment: Act No 125/2016 Coll. on certain measures related to the adoption of the Code of Adversarial Procedure, the Code of Non-Adversarial Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure, and on amendments to certain acts.

- amendment to Act No 564/2001 Coll. on the Public Defender of Rights;

Amendment: Act No 125/2016 Coll. on certain measures related to the adoption of the Code of Adversarial Procedure, the Code of Non-Adversarial Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure, and on amendments to certain acts.

- amendment to Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 38/1993 Coll. on the organisation of, proceedings before and status of the judges of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic;

Amendment: Act No 125/2016 Coll. on certain measures related to the adoption of the Code of Adversarial Procedure, the Code of Non-Adversarial Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure, and on amendments to certain acts.

1.1.1 Strategic and policy documents and action plans

Within the scope of competence defined by the Plenipotentiary's statute, the Plenipotentiary formulates, proposes and implements short-, medium- and long-term measures, in cooperation with the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'Office of the Government'), ministries and other central government authorities, relating to the preservation, development and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities (hereinafter the 'Office of the Plenipotentiary'), in collaboration with the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (hereinafter the 'Committee'), continued the process following up on the

National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic, including the part of the strategy concerning the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups. The draft *National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic* (hereinafter also the ‘Strategy’), which includes the *Base document for the preparation of the part of the Strategy relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups* in Annex 1, was approved by the Government through Resolution No 71/2015 of 18 February 2015, which instructed the Head of the Office of the Government to formulate an *Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups*. In 2015, the Office of the Plenipotentiary, in cooperation with the Committee, prepared a draft of the *Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2016–2020* (hereinafter the ‘Action Plan’) in a participative manner, with the involvement of representatives of national minorities.

The key objective identified by the Action Plan is to ensure an effective, transparent and reliable system of protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, including the strengthening of the relevant institutional framework. This objective is elaborated into seven operational objectives, which focus on:

1. ensuring a comprehensive approach to drafting legislation on the rights and status of national minorities;
2. improving the system of support for the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups;
3. taking the specific aspects of the educational needs of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups into consideration more effectively;
4. improving the conditions for the practical use of the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups;
5. improving public awareness of national minorities and ethnic groups through the media;
6. improving the mechanisms for participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in decision-making on matters that concern them;
7. extending the knowledge base for better identification of target groups – national minorities and ethnic groups and their needs, through statistical surveys and research.

Each of these operational objectives is elaborated into specific measures and activities that include performance indicators, deadlines for implementation, responsible guarantors, collaborative entities and sources of funding.

The final draft of the Action Plan has been approved by the Committee (17 December 2015) and the Council of the Government for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter the ‘Government Council’) (20 June 2016). At the same time, the Government Council recommended that the Government approve this draft.

The Government approved the Action Plan through Resolution No 492/2016 at its 33rd session held on 26 October 2016. In this Resolution, the Government also instructed the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports, the Head of the Government Office and the Plenipotentiary to ensure the implementation of the tasks arising from the Action Plan by 31 December 2020 and submit information on the implementation of the tasks from the Action Plan to the Head of the Office of the Government by

31 December 2020; in addition, it instructed the Head of the Government Office to prepare and submit at a Government session a report on the implementation of the tasks from the Action Plan with proposals for updates of the tasks by 31 March 2021. At the same time, the Government recommended that the Chairperson of the Statistical Office, the Executive Director of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia, the President of the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia, the General Director of Radio and Television of Slovakia and the General Director of the Slovak National Museum participate in the implementation of the tasks arising from the Action Plan and, by 31 December 2020, provide the Head of the Office of the Government with supporting documents for preparing the report on the implementation of the tasks from the Action Plan.

In order to achieve the key objective of the Action Plan, which is to ensure an effective, transparent and reliable system of protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, including the strengthening of the relevant institutional framework, in December 2016, the Plenipotentiary set up a Coordinating Committee to ensure the implementation of the tasks arising from the Action Plan. The members of the Coordinating Committee include thirteen representatives of national minorities nominated by members of the Committee, one for each national minority, and 18 representatives of State authorities.

Another policy document relevant to the issue of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is the *Concept for the Fight Against Extremism for 2015-2019* (hereinafter the 'Concept'). This Concept was adopted through Government Resolution No 129 of 18 March 2015. The Concept defines Slovakia's strategic priorities with regard to the prevention and elimination of radicalisation, extremism and the associated anti-social activities threaten fundamental rights and freedoms and the foundations of the democratic rule of law and refuses to accept manifestations of hate against certain population groups for reasons such as gender, race, colour of skin, ethnic or national origin, language, sexual orientation, religion or affiliation with a social class.

The *Action Plan to Prevent and Eliminate Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance for 2016-2018* was approved through Government Resolution No 12 of 13 January 2016. The draft of this action plan was presented to the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MI SR') on the basis of Government Resolution No 71 of 18 February 2015. This strategic document follows up on the priorities identified in the Strategy and its main objective is to prevent prejudices, stereotypes and hate speech based on national, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar intolerance, and prevent the emergence and spread of attitudes and activities aimed at promoting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. In connection with the implementation of the tasks under the *Action Plan to Prevent and Eliminate Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance for 2016-2018*, the Office of the Plenipotentiary provided the MI SR with an overview of activities carried out by the Office of the Plenipotentiary in the context of combating extremism in 2016.

Through Government Resolution No 5 of 13 January 2016, the Government approved the *Action Plan to Prevent All Forms of Discrimination for 2016-2019* submitted by the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter 'MJ SR') and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter 'MLSAF SR') based on Government Resolution No 71 of 18 February 2015. The objective of this action plan is to focus

on raising public awareness of non-discrimination and seek to streamline the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, as well as to renew the practice from previous years by adopting a strategic document with a general focus on this issue. This action plan follows on from the previous strategic documents on the prevention of discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities, in particular the *Action Plan to Prevent All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance*.

In connection with the implementation of the *Action Plan to Prevent All Forms of Discrimination for 2016–2019*, in the context of general training in the public administration sector, based on which training should form part of the prevention of discrimination (Operational Objective 4, task no 16), the MLSAF SR prepared a background document – the ‘Protection against Discrimination’ handbook, which is followed by the Civil Service Office of the MLSAF SR. The Civil Service Office uses the content of the handbook to provide systematic training on non-discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance as part of introductory training for newly recruited staff. Hence, newly recruited staff are familiarised with the provisions of Act No 365/2004 Coll., on equal treatment in certain areas, protection against discrimination and on amendments to certain acts, as part of introductory training, with emphasis on the principles of equal training in labour-law relations. The staff of the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Department act as lecturers in introductory training. In the calendar year of 2016, 7 introductory training sessions were completed by 89 persons.

The MLSAF SR has launched and operates an official information website on non-discrimination, including an on-line help service (Operational Objective 5, task no 25). The information website dedicated to discrimination issues is available at www.diskriminacia.gov.sk. The website on (non-)discrimination provides information to both the expert community and entities required to comply with the prohibition of discrimination, as well as basic advice to persons at risk of discrimination. A specific chapter is the application of the horizontal principle of non-discrimination in programmes and projects supported from Structural Funds in the 2014 – 2020 Programming Period. The expert community can use the website to find information on the theoretical background of equal treatment and prohibition of discrimination (such as forms of discrimination, protected grounds and application of the prohibition of discrimination) in respect of employment and occupation, among others. It also provides rulings of the Court of Justice of the EU, the European Court of Human Rights and national courts that are relevant to assessing the interpretation of anti-discrimination law. The information is complemented by an overview of documents and institutions forming the basis of the anti-discrimination framework. In addition, the website provides practical information about protection against discrimination and possibilities for individual counselling.

As part of the activities aimed at raising awareness of, and methods of protection against, discrimination (Operational Objective 5, task no 26), in 2016, the MLSAF SR, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations In Minorita and Savore, organised workshops under the title *Position of Roma Women in the Community*. One of the objectives of the workshops was to develop Roma women’s competencies and education on their rights and anti-discrimination legislation in a manner appropriate to them. The workshops were organised in Banská Štiavnica, Rankovce, Vtáčkovce, Varhaňovce and Bratislava and a special workshop was

organised at the MLSAF SR, attended by the Ministry's staff and Roma women directly from the relevant localities.

In 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities (hereinafter the 'OGPRC') continued to implement the tasks under the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020. This strategy, originally adopted through Government Resolution No 1/2012, also included action plans, namely the Revised Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 updated for 2011-2015 as an action plan under the strategy for education, employment, health and housing. The individual tasks were also implemented in 2016 and updated action plans for the strategy were prepared again for the subject areas above and for financial inclusion. The approved updated plans and the new action plan are a result of cooperation between central government authorities, including the Office of the Plenipotentiary, the expert community and third sector organisations focusing on the issue of Roma integration. The objective of the participatory process was to validate the global and partial priority areas and prepare feasible action plans for each subject area for the 2016-2018 period. This process involved the creation of a mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the objectives under the strategy.

Important support measures relating to areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities, including marginalised Roma communities, include the activities under Act No 336/2015 Coll. on the promotion of the least developed districts and on amendments to certain acts. In accordance with this Act, the Government has gradually adopted several action plans for the development of specific districts with the aim of eliminating the backwardness of the least developed districts. These action plans included measures targeted specifically on members of marginalised Roma communities or, in the context of a broader target group, on person belonging to these communities⁴.

2017-2020 National Action Plan for the 2021 Population and Housing Census

As a follow-up to the Information on the 2021 Population and Housing Census in the Slovak Republic, of which the Government took note on 17 August 2016, the Statistical Office set up an expert team to prepare the 2017-2020 National Action Plan for the 2021 Population and Housing Census (hereinafter the 'NAP 2021 PHC'). Representatives of the relevant ministries, other central government authorities and organisations under their competence, as well as the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia (hereinafter the 'ATVS') and the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia were appointed as members of the NAP 2021 PHC expert team. The director of the secretariat of the Office of the Plenipotentiary was appointed to represent the Office of the Plenipotentiary on the expert team. The expert team's mission was to prepare a draft NAP 2021 PHC in line with the conceptual objective of the census as submitted to the Government in the Information on the 2021 Population and Housing Census in Slovakia. The expert team held sessions in accordance with its statute and followed the rules of procedure approved by the Chairperson of the Slovak Statistical Office. The expert team held a total of three sessions. The NAP 2021 PHC does not cover the whole preparation of the census; it focuses on those subject areas and activities where cooperation and liaison with

⁴ For further details on the adopted action plans for the least developed districts, please visit <http://www.nro.vlada.gov.sk/pomoc-najmenej-rozvinutym-okresom/>.

selected ministries, other central government authorities, organisations under their competence and self-government authorities are needed. It contains a timetable of specific tasks which need to be completed in order to carry out the first integrated census in Slovakia. In 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary provided assistance to the Statistical Office in the context of preparing the NAP 2021 PHC.

Strategic Objective No 5: *Pay closer attention to specific groups of citizens who require a specific approach in the census*, was elaborated in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary. In addition to other population groups, inhabitants belonging to a national or ethnic minority were included among the groups requiring a specific approach due to their mother tongue, including due to the requirements of national legislation (in particular, Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages as amended).

Within the meaning of Resolution No 109 of 1 March 2017 concerning the NAP 2021 PHC, in which the Government gave instructions for the implementation of the activities resulting from the NAP 2021 PHC, a population census methodology will be prepared with regard to national or ethnic minorities, taking their mother tongue into account. The responsible guarantors of the aforementioned working group are the Office of the Plenipotentiary and the Slovak Statistical Office. As in 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary will continue to implement the tasks arising from the NAP 2021 PHC in accordance with the principle of participation of persons belonging to national minorities in matters that concern them and, hence, also in close liaison with the Committee.

1.1.2 Manifesto of the Slovak Government for 2016–2020⁵

The elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the ‘Parliament’) were held on 5 March 2016. Based on the election results, on 23 March 2016, the President appointed a new cabinet composed of representatives of Direction – Social Democracy (Smer-SD), Slovak National Party (SNS), Most-Híd and #Network (#Siet’). In its *Manifesto for 2016–2020* (hereinafter the ‘Manifesto’), the newly-constituted Slovak Government avows the European democratic traditions of freedom, human dignity and tolerance in combating fascism and rightist extremism. Based on this democratic conviction, the Slovak Government is prepared to strengthen the policy of understanding and reconciliation of all Slovak citizens regardless of their ethnicity and use this unique opportunity to launch a new phase of support to national minorities.

The Manifesto also notes that the Government views the protection and support for the development of national minorities as its natural role in shaping modern society. At the same time, it undertakes to afford effective protection to national minorities and the rights and freedoms belonging to such minorities in a state governed by the rule of law, while respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The Government guarantees decent conditions for the development of any national minority in line with the Slovak Constitution, international treaties and conventions, while maintaining balanced relations between the majority population and national minorities through tolerant dialogue in Slovak society. National minorities form an important part of modern Slovak society, contributing their cultural wealth and substantial historical heritage. The Government undertakes to protect national minorities, which is

⁵ See: <http://www.vlada.gov.sk/programove-vyhlasenie-vlady-sr-na-roky-2016-2020/> .

important for the stability, democracy, security and peace across the entire continent. It will lay the groundwork for the development of national minorities in terms of preserving and developing their identity, language, culture and traditions.

As far as practical measures are concerned, the Government undertook to ensure **alignment of the Railways Act with the Act on the Use of Minority Languages** as regards the displaying of the names of railway stations and stops in ethnically mixed areas. Furthermore, the Government undertook to build upon and continue the changes in the financing of culture, which should gradually take on public and self-government forms instead of falling within the direct competence of the State. Following the establishment of the Audiovisual Fund and the Slovak Arts Council, the Government set itself the objective of establishing a similar public institution to finance the culture of national minorities. In doing so, it built upon the objective of supporting the activities pursued by national minorities living in Slovakia which contribute substantially to the shaping and evolution of cultural diversity as a traditional and integral part of the development of Slovak society. To this end, the Government **undertook to adopt an act establishing the Fund to Finance Minority Cultures (a public fund)** with the aim of ensuring a system-level support to cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

With regard to the policy of support for national minorities, the Slovak Government also undertook to:

- support excluding all schools with composite classes from the application of mandatory quotas in the areas inhabited by mixed language groups;
- increase support to and ensure the development of education and training of children and students belonging to national minorities in their native language;
- support a change in the methodology of teaching the Slovak language at minority schools in order to improve the command of the Slovak language among their students;
- support vocational education and training at schools having a minority language as a teaching language, including vocational education and training under the dual education system;
- boost material and technical conditions at schools, support preparation of textbooks and other teaching materials and continuous training of pedagogical and expert personnel at schools having a minority language as a teaching language;
- prepare a strategy for the development of teaching of the Ruthenian language and culture in kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools;
- support, at primary schools and secondary schools, classes about the life and history of national minorities living in Slovakia in the context of prevention and fight against extremism, nationalism and other extreme behaviours;
- support specific tasks pursued by tertiary schools with respect to the development of national minorities, their culture, language, historical research, ethnology, etc., and reflecting these specific tasks when assessing activities of tertiary schools.

Based on an analysis in ethnically-mixed territories, the Government undertook to create conditions for **aligning the practice with the applicable Act on the Use of National Minority Languages**.

With respect to the integration of **marginalised communities**, the Government undertook to:

- support changes in the criteria for the provision of social benefits, especially in order to increase the number of people active on the labour market;
- support creating additional job opportunities for the long-term unemployed through activation work, employment under public contracts and extension of second-chance education;
- extend the network of field social workers and Roma civil patrols;
- support the completion of the network of a network of pre-school facilities and community centres in areas with a high concentration of marginalised communities;
- support enhanced access to pre-school education;
- prepare changes in the diagnosis of primary school students in order to minimise the number of students from marginalised communities placed in special schools and classes;
- ensure more experts, especially teacher assistants, at primary and secondary schools;
- provide further training to pedagogical employees working with children from marginalised communities;
- encourage the extension of extramural activities as part of day-long education;
- enhance financial literacy of people living in marginalised communities;
- prepare a draft law to introduce an effective mechanism of personal bankruptcy;
- effectively fight usury, with the involvement of affected communities;
- support better access of marginalised communities to healthcare;
- broaden programmes to settle ownership titles to lands under illegal buildings in marginalised communities;
- support self-built social housing, while ensuring their sustainability.

1.2 International commitments of the Slovak Republic regarding the status and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

In accordance with the Plenipotentiary's statute, the Plenipotentiary participates in the preparation of reports on the implementation of international treaties binding on the Slovak Republic that relate to the status and rights of persons belonging to national minorities. In this context, the Office of the Plenipotentiary continued to work with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MFEA SR') in 2016 to draft reports and conduct a dialogue on the implementation of the commitments arising from Council of Europe and UN human right conventions, as well as commitments arising from bilateral agreements.

In 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary participated in the Report on the Course and Results of the Fourth Cycle of Monitoring of the Standard of Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Slovakia, the Report on the Course and Results of the Fourth Cycle of Monitoring of the Standard of Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the Slovak Republic and the 3rd Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the preparation of the XIIIth session of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission on Minority

Affairs and the session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture.

1.2.1 International treaties

1.2.1.1 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

In 2016, the Slovak Republic completed the fourth cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the 'Framework Convention') on 13 April 2016 when the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution No CM/ResCMN(2016)6.

The MFEA SR prepared a report on the course and results of the fourth cycle of monitoring of the standard of implementation of the Framework Convention in Slovakia, which was approved at the XXIst session of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups by Resolution No 85 of 13 September 2016 and, subsequently, submitted at a session of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality, which took note of the report by Resolution No 163 of 9 December 2016.

The Government approved the document by Resolution No 6 of 11 January 2017 instructing the Plenipotentiary and the relevant representatives of central government authorities to familiarise themselves with the results of the fourth cycle of monitoring of the standard of implementation of the Framework Convention and the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, assess the possibilities for implementing the recommendations and, in the context of drafting the fifth implementation report, inform the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs about the measures adopted.

As regards the content of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from the fourth monitoring cycle, the Committee considers the following three recommendations addressed to Slovakia to be the most urgent:

- strengthen the institutional framework for the protection of human rights;
- comprehensively address anti-Gypsyism in the education system;
- intensify efforts to effectively protect Roma from discrimination.

Further recommendations related to collecting data on the situation of persons belonging to national minorities, providing adequate political and financial support to the Office of the Public Defender of Rights, maintaining support to national minority cultural activities, disseminating inter-cultural understanding, establishing an independent and specialised body to investigate all alleged cases of police abuse and misconduct, increasing support to minority language media, developing a flexible approach towards the implementation of the legislative framework on the use of minority languages, ensuring that teachers of minority language schools have adequate access to relevant training, ensuring that textbooks contain adequate portrayals of all national minority communities and their history in Slovakia, preventing the closure of small schools using a minority language as the language of instruction and intensifying efforts to counter anti-Gypsyism.

1.2.1.2 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

In 2016, the Slovak Republic also completed the fourth cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter the 'Language Charter').

Based on Slovakia's fourth report on the implementation of its commitments arising from the Language Charter submitted to the Council of Europe in March 2015, the September 2015 visit by a delegation of the Committee of Experts of the Language Charter (hereinafter the 'Committee of Experts') to Slovakia and the findings from the visit, the Committee of Experts adopted Report No MIN-LANG(2015)23 in relation to Slovakia at its plenary session on 30 November 2015.

After approving the report of the Committee of Experts on the implementation of the Language Charter, Slovakia used the opportunity to comment on its contents. Slovakia's opinion on the Fourth Report of the Committee of Experts on the Implementation of the Language Charter responded to the most urgent statements and comments and provided updated information relating to the individual findings. The final version of the opinion formulated by the MFEA SR was verified by each ministry and institution involved in the preparation of the opinion and approved through Conclusion No 39 of the leadership of the MFEA SR of 11 February 2016 and subsequently forwarded to the Secretariat of the Committee of Experts on 12 February 2016.

The fourth cycle of monitoring of the standard of implementation of the Language Charter in Slovakia was completed by adopting Recommendation CM/RecCHL(2016)2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 27 April 2016, which was approved by consensus. The MFEA SR prepared a report on the course and results of the fourth cycle of monitoring of the standard of implementation of the Language Charter by Slovakia, which was approved at the XXIst session of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups by Resolution N. 86 of 13 September 2016 and subsequently submitted at a session of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality, which took note of the report by Resolution No 162 of 9 December 2016.

The Government approved the document by Resolution No 7 of 11 January 2017 instructing the Plenipotentiary and the relevant representatives of central government authorities to familiarise themselves with the results of the fourth cycle of monitoring of the standard of implementation of the Language Charter and the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, assess the possibilities for implementing the recommendations and, in the context of drafting the fifth implementation report, inform the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs about the measures adopted.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe gave the following recommendations to Slovak authorities as a matter of priority:

- review the requirements related to thresholds in order to make the undertakings in the field of administration operational;
- strengthen efforts to provide teaching in or of all regional or minority languages at all appropriate levels (primary, secondary and tertiary education);
- take measures to improve teacher-training for regional or minority language education;

- strengthen the support to television, radio and newspapers in all regional or minority languages;
- continue measures to abolish unjustified enrolments of Roma children in special schools or classes and start to introduce Romani-language education for Roma children on a large scale;
- raise awareness and promote tolerance in the Slovak society at large vis-à-vis the regional or minority languages and the cultures they represent.

1.2.2 International mechanisms for verifying respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities

1.2.2.1 Universal periodic review by the UN Human Rights Council and implementation of universal human rights conventions

The universal periodic review (hereinafter ‘UPR’) is a special mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council, which has been in place since 2008. This is a universal process, in which the State concerned is evaluated by other Member States. The aim of the review is to provide a comprehensive and objective picture of the state of human rights in all UN Member States. The review follows a regular 4.5-year cycle. From the perspective of the human rights agenda, the UPR is a key event at national level.

In the second round of the UPR, 146 recommendations were addressed to the Slovak Republic (3 February 2014). Most recommendations related to the issue of inclusion of the Roma population, application of the principle of gender equality, whether in labour relations or in relation to gender-based violence, as well as the fight against extremism. Slovakia accepted most of the recommendations. Of the total of 146 recommendations, it only rejected 13 recommendations, of which 5 were only partially rejected.

In connection with the adoption of the recommendations, for the first time in the history of the UPR, Slovakia voluntarily committed itself to providing the Council with a preliminary review of the implementation of the recommendations in the middle of the review cycle. The interim review was prepared by the MFEA SR in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary and the relevant ministries.

In May 2016, Slovakia successfully defended its consolidated third, fourth and fifth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee noted that Slovakia continued to make progress in ensuring children’s rights in violence prevention, health, living standards and education. The Committee was also interested in Roma children, especially in segregated settlements, with regard to ensuring their equal right to education, healthcare and adequate living standard, and also addressed the increasing number of verbal and physical attacks and incidents of Roma bullying, as well as the punitive use by the State of violent police raids in Roma settlements.

In October 2016, Slovakia successfully defended its fourth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights before the UN Committee for Human Rights. The Committee appreciated the adoption of the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Slovakia and the Strategy for the Integration of Roma by 2020 among other documents. The Committee was also interested in

the situation of Roma, in particular the discrimination against Roma children in education and the sterilisation of Roma women.

In July 2016, Slovakia presented its eleventh and twelfth periodic reports regarding the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

1.2.2.2 Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission on Minority Affairs

Bilateral cooperation with Hungary is based on the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation signed on 19 March 1995. Over the past period, the Office of the Plenipotentiary cooperated intensively with the MFEA SR to prepare the XIIIth session of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission on Minority Affairs (hereinafter the 'Mixed Commission'), whose members include the Plenipotentiary, and to implement the measures and tasks resulting from the conclusions of previous sessions of the Mixed Committee. The XIIIth session of the Mixed Commission was held on 3 November 2016 in Budapest. The session was chaired by co-chairpersons Ambassador Miroslav Mojžita for the Slovak party and Ministerial Commissioner for the Development of Neighbourhood Policy Ferenc Kalmár for the Hungarian party. Plenipotentiary László Bukovszky also took part in the session as part of the Slovak delegation.

The subjects addressed at of the Mixed Commission's XIIIth session included the current issues of the status of persons belonging to the Slovak national minority in Hungary and that of the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia. During the session, 60 recommendations were adopted, of which 19 were new: 4 for both parties, 6 for the Slovak party and 9 for the Hungarian party. The original recommendations evaluated as implemented were removed, other recommendations were modified according to progress of implementation or newly arisen problems.

The Government took note of the information on the course and results of the XIIIth session of the Mixed Commission and, through Resolution No 59/2017 of 1 February 2017 instructed the heads of the relevant central government authorities to familiarise themselves with the conclusions and recommendations from the Mixed Commission's session, assess the possibilities for implementing them and, subsequently, review progress continuously. The Office of the Plenipotentiary is continuously carrying out activities to implement the 15 recommendations falling within the scope of the Plenipotentiary's competence.

1.2.2.3 Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture

Bilateral cooperation with Ukraine is based on the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine (Kiev, 29 June 1993). In accordance with this Treaty and on the initiative of the Ukrainian party, the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education, Culture and Scientific Contacts was set up through Government Resolution No 362/1994. In agreement with the Ukrainian party, since 2003, it has been using the name Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture.

Due to changes at the level of the Commission's chairpersons on the Ukrainian and Slovak side, as well as changes in the Commission's membership, no joint session of the Commission took place in 2016. The MFEA SR provided the Ukrainian party with comprehensive information – evaluation of progress of implementation of the Report from the XIIIth session. In this context, the Office of the Plenipotentiary prepared and forwarded a review of the implementation of recommendations and tasks resulting from the conclusions of the preceding sessions of the Mixed Commission.

In 2016, the MFEA SR prepared a joint session of the Ukrainian and Slovak sides of the Commission in Slovakia, which was cancelled by the Ukrainian party at the last minute for objective reasons and due to the events taking place in Ukraine. At the end of 2016, the Ukrainian party initiated another session of the Commission in the first half of 2017 and the XIVth session took place on 23 March 2017 in Bratislava. The session was co-chaired by the Commission's co-chairpersons, State Secretary of the MFEA SR Lukáš Parížek for the Slovak party and First Deputy of the Minister of Culture of Ukraine Svitlana Fomenko for the Ukrainian party. Alena Kotvanová, the director of the secretariat of the Office of the Plenipotentiary, took part in the session as part of the Slovak delegation. The subjects addressed at of the Commission's XIVth session included the current issues of the status of persons belonging to the Slovak national minority in Ukraine and that of the Ukrainian national minority in Slovakia.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary worked closely with the MFEA SR to prepare the sessions with the Ukrainian party and to ensure progress in implementation of the recommendations and tasks resulting from the conclusions of the Mixed Commission's sessions. The MFEA SR, in cooperation with the relevant ministries, government authorities, self-government authorities and institutions, including the Office of the Plenipotentiary, continuously monitored the implementation of these tasks.

The Commission deals with the complex issue of the Slovak national minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian national minority in Slovakia to support the preservation and development of their identities and cultures. In addition, it monitors the overall bilateral relations in culture, education, science, research and national minority education and pays attention to supporting national minority media and exchanges of programming between RTVS and its media partners in Ukraine.

A major contribution to the Commission's work is the fact that national minorities are represented in the Commission at the level of members (a representative of the Slovak national minority on the Ukrainian side of the Commission and a representative of the Ukrainian minority in the Slovak side of the Commission) who participate in the implementation of the tasks adopted in the Reports from each joint session.

1.2.2.4 Visit by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors

Following invitation from Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák, the first official visit by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors (hereinafter the 'HCNM') to Slovakia took place between 16 and 18 May 2016. As part of her official program, the HCNM met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Lucia Žitňanská, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Robert Kaliňák, Minister of

Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports Peter Krajňák, as well as Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities László Bukovszky and Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities Ábel Ravasz. The HCNM also held meetings with the Public Defender of Rights and non-governmental organisations, which were organised directly by the HCNM's Office.

The situation of the Hungarian national minority, including in the context of bilateral relations between Slovakia and Hungary, and the situation of the Roma minority in Slovakia were of priority interest to the HCNM. The HCNM was also interested in topics such as the current architecture of human rights institutions, the preparation and approval of the individual action plans under the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Slovakia (in particular, the draft Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for 2016–2020) and the gradual radicalisation of the society and the related need to concentrate on human rights education.

Information on the regional visit formed part of the HCNM's speech at the 1102nd Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on 2 June 2016. In her speech, the HCNM stated that Slovakia and Hungary enjoyed in general a positive relationship and recommended that they take advantage of these conditions to address any existing long-term disagreements on the issues of citizenship and 'kin'-State minority support. Also, she recommended that the countries resume the sessions of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission on Minority Affairs. As regards the situation in Slovakia's policy on minorities, the HCNM stated that she was happy to note the inclusion of national minority issues in the Government's Manifesto for 2016-2020, however, the facts that the fragmented institutional structure dealing with national minorities is to remain was a source of disappointment for persons belonging to national minorities. The HCNM also expressed her support for the adoption of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and the activities of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities in education and housing. At the same time, the HCNM encouraged the Slovak Government to pay adequate attention to her recommendations and provide her office with the necessary support.



László Bukovszky meeting Astrid Thors (Source: Office of the Government archives)

Part II – Participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance

2.1 Legislative and conceptual frameworks

The participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance is guaranteed by the Constitution and international treaties, in particular the Framework Convention. Under Article 34(2)(c), the Constitution **guarantees citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups the right to participate in addressing matters relating to national minorities and ethnic groups.**

The **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities** guarantees fundamental rights that are also conferred by Article 34(2) of the Constitution. According to Article 15 of the Framework Convention, the Parties must create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them. The objective of such effective participation is to encourage real equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those forming part of the majority by promoting consultation with these persons, by means of appropriate procedures and through their representative institutions. In Slovakia, the role of the representative and consultation institution is played by the **Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups**, which is an expert body of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality – an advisory body to the Slovak Government.

The legislation governing the right to vote fully respects the provisions of Article 30 of the Constitution, under which citizens have access to elected and other public offices under equal conditions, while the right to vote is universal, equal, direct and exercised by secret ballot. In addition to nationals, the right to participate in public governance in Slovakia directly or by means of a free vote is also granted to foreign nationals with permanent residence in its territory, namely in municipal elections and elections to the bodies of self-governing regions.

2.2 Consultation mechanisms

2.2.1 Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality

The Government Council is a standing expert, advisory, coordinating and consultative body of the Government for the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, political and civil rights, rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, right related to the protection of the environment and cultural heritage, children's rights and respect for the best interests of the child, as well as the rights of persons with disabilities and senior citizens, and for the promotion of the principle of equal treatment, equal opportunities and gender equality.

Given the fact that 2016 was a year of parliamentary elections followed by the process of forming and appointing the Government, including the Minister of Justice and the Chairperson of the Government Council, and with a view to work on challenging tasks related to Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Government Council held only two sessions in 2016.

Members of the Council include the Plenipotentiary and the Chairperson of the Committee, as well as the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee representing a national minority or ethnic group. In 2016, Plenipotentiary László Bukovszky submitted a number of documents at the Government Council's sessions, namely the Committee's evaluation reports on the promotion of minority cultures, national minority education and the use of national minority languages for 2015, the Action Plan and the Report on the Use of National Minority Languages in the Territory of the Slovak Republic for 2015–2016.

2.2.2 Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

The Committee, which is the Government Council's standing expert body for issues relating to national minorities and ethnic groups and persons belonging to them regarding the implementation of the Language Charter within the meaning of Article 7(4) of the Charter and Article 15 of the Framework Convention, plays the role of an institutionalised consultative mechanism on matters related to the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in addressing matters that concern them.

The Committee is chaired by the Plenipotentiary and its members include representatives of all thirteen national minorities (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Czech, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Moravian, Russian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Jewish and Serbian) and representatives of the relevant government authorities:

- MFEA SR;
- MLSAF SR;
- MI SR;
- MJ SR;
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MESRS SR');
- Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MC SR');
- Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities.

National minorities are represented on the Committee as follows:

- 5 representatives of the Hungarian national minority;
- 4 representatives of the Roma national minority;
- 2 representatives of the Czech national minority;
- 2 representatives of the Ruthenian national minority;
- 2 representatives of the Ukrainian national minority;
- 1 representative of the German national minority;
- 1 representative of the Polish national minority;
- 1 representative of the Moravian national minority;
- 1 representative of the Russian national minority;
- 1 representative of the Bulgarian national minority;
- 1 representative of the Croatian national minority;
- 1 representative of the Jewish national minority;
- 1 representative of the Serbian national minority.

The Committee's scope of competence covers, above all, suggestions to the Government Council aimed at increasing the standard of promotion, protection and respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; it participates in the drafting of reports under the control mechanisms of international treaties on human rights and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and draws up annual evaluation reports on the key areas relating to persons belonging to national minorities, which are presented for approval to the Government Council.

The Committee has a specific position among the Government Council's committees. The members of the Committee representing persons belonging to national minorities are elected directly by national minority organisations. Only the representatives of national minorities, using the 'one vote per minority' principle, and the Chairperson of the Committee have voting rights. Representatives of government authorities take part in the Committee's sessions without the right to vote. Hence, the Committee can be considered as a self-governing body of national minorities, which decides on its own matters independently and sovereignly. The issues of a particular minority are not dealt with at the Committee's sessions unless a representative of that minority is present at the session.

Last year, specifically on 28 January 2016, the Committee held an election session to elect an alternate member of the Committee representing the Ruthenian national minority. The candidate was proposed by organisations demonstrably engaged in promoting the preservation and development of the identity and culture of persons belonging to the Ruthenian national minority. The alternate member was elected by a representative of two organisations that had registered for the election session. The election session, attended by a notary, was overseen by an electoral committee comprising representatives of the State administration and institutions active in the field of human rights. The nominee who received the highest number of votes from national minority organisations was appointed an alternate member of the Committee by the Committee's Chairperson.

In 2016, the Committee held four regular sessions and adopted a total of 22 resolutions (resolutions No 80–101), all of which have been implemented. All resolutions and minutes of the Committee's sessions have been posted on the Plenipotentiary's website⁶.

In accordance with its statute, the Committee draws up annual evaluation reports on the promotion of cultures of national minorities, the state of national minority education and the use of national minority languages (hereinafter also 'evaluation reports'), which are presented for approval to the Government Council. In the interest of ensuring the participatory nature of the process of preparation of the evaluation reports for 2015 and making it as effective as possible, a temporary working group comprising 13 representatives of the various national minorities – experts on the relevant issues nominated by members of the Committee, and 8 representatives of the State administration, was set up and drew up the reports. The member of the temporary working group representing the Hungarian national minority failed to present the 2015 Report on the Use of National Minority Languages and the 2015 Evaluation Report on the Promotion of Culture of National Minorities.

The evaluation reports, in which national minorities look at the relevant issues from the perspective of national minorities, are a means to verbalise their evaluation of the current

⁶ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/vybor-pre-narodnostne-mensiny-a-etnicke-skupiny/>.

situation and present their priorities and critical opinions. At the same time, the process of preparing the reports is an opportunity to discuss these priorities and views of national minorities with representatives of the relevant government authorities. The reports were approved by the Committee through Resolution No 92 at its XXIIInd session on 11 November 2016. The Government Council approved the evaluation reports through Resolution No 165 at its 25th session of 9 December 2016.

In the course of 2016, the Committee was also regularly informed about the Culture of National Minorities grant programme, the process of approval of the Action Plan, the drafting of the new act on the National Minority Culture Fund, and the 2017-2020 National Action Plan for the 2021 Population and Housing Census. The Committee was also informed about the structure of RTVS national minority broadcasting and addressed the issue of national minority museums. In addition, the committee discussed all the reports drawn up in accordance with the statutes of the Committee and the Plenipotentiary, together with the Report on the Use of National Minority Languages in the Territory of the Slovak Republic for 2015-2016. The Committee adopted a total of 22 resolutions in 2016, the full text of which is available in the minutes of each session at the Plenipotentiary's website⁷.



A session of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (Source: Office of the Government archives)

⁷ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/vybor-pre-narodnostne-mensiny-a-etnicke-skupiny/>.



A session of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (Source: Office of the Government archives)

2.3 Results of the parliamentary elections from the standpoint of national minorities

Parliamentary elections are held in accordance with Act No 180/2014 Coll. on the conditions for exercising the right to vote and on amendments to certain acts. According to § 21(3) of this Act, municipalities are required to deliver to every household, no later than 25 days before the date of the elections, a notice stating the date of the elections, the electoral district, the polling station, a brief description of how to complete the ballot paper and the voters' obligation to prove their identity using an identity card. In municipalities referred to in special legislation, the information about the place and date of the elections is also given in the relevant national minority language.

The parliamentary elections were held on 5 March 2016. Several political parties whose electoral programme contained an explicit intention to pay attention to the protection and rights of persons belonging to national minorities ran in these elections. The results of the parliamentary elections, the number of valid votes, as well as the allocation of /seats to political parties are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Election results of parties whose electoral programme paid attention to the protection and rights of persons belonging to national minorities as a matter of priority.

Name of the party	Number of valid votes	Share of valid votes in %	Number of seats
Hungarian Christian-Democratic Alliance – Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség	2 426	0.09	0
MOST-HÍD	169 593	6.50	11
Party of the Hungarian Community – Magyar Közösség Pártja	105 495	4.04	0

As the election results show, the Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance – Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség and the Party of the Hungarian Community – Magyar Közösség Pártja received less than five percent of the total number of votes cast and did not pass the threshold for winning seats in the parliament. Of the above political parties, only MOST-HÍD, which won 11 seats, passed the five-percent threshold for winning seats in the parliament. According to information made available on the parliament’s website, twelve members of the Slovak parliament in the VIIth election term are persons belonging to national minorities, representing 8 % of the total number of MPs in the parliament. For comparison, Table 2 shows the number of elected MPs belonging to national minorities in the preceding election term.

Table 2: Number of elected MPs belonging to national minorities

National minority	Number of MPs (VIIth election term)	Number of MPs (VIth election term)
Hungarian	10	9
Roma	1	1
Ruthenian	1	2
Total	12	12

(Source: http://www.nrsr.sk/web/default.aspx?sid=poslanci/zoznam_abc)

On 23 March 2016, the President appointed a new cabinet composed of representatives of Direction – Social Democracy (Smer-SD), Slovak National Party (SNS), Most-Híd and #Network (#Siet’). In its Manifesto, the newly-constituted Slovak Government avows the European democratic traditions of freedom, human dignity and tolerance in combating fascism

and rightist extremism. Based on this democratic conviction, the Slovak Government committed itself to strengthening the policy of understanding and reconciliation of all Slovak citizens regardless of their ethnicity and use this unique opportunity to launch a new phase of support to national minorities (for more details on the Manifesto, please see Chapter 1.1.2).

2.4 Activities of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities with regard to the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and an overview of key meetings and consultations

The Plenipotentiary's scope of competence covers roles related to the preservation, development and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and implementation of systemic measures to improve their situation. The Plenipotentiary's activities are supported by the Office of the Plenipotentiary, which is included within the organisational structure of the Office of the Government. After the parliamentary elections held on 5 March 2016, the Slovak Government appointed László Bukovszky as the Plenipotentiary on 13 April 2016. Before this date, the roles of the Plenipotentiary were performed by Mária Jedličková as the acting plenipotentiary. The expert units of the Office of the Government performing tasks related to the implementation of Slovak policy on national minorities in accordance with the legislative framework for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the Government's Manifesto include the Office of the Plenipotentiary, the Office of the Head of the Civil Service Office and other cooperating organisational units of the Office of the Government⁸.

The promotion of the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance is one of the areas of competence of the Plenipotentiary who, within the meaning of the Plenipotentiary's statute, is tasked with duties relating to the preservation, development and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and implementation of systemic measures to improve their status. In this context, the Plenipotentiary, in particular, chairs the Committee, holds regular consultations with persons belonging to national minorities and organisations representing them and promotes greater participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance.

In accordance with the statute, after taking up the office, the Plenipotentiary consulted with representatives of all national minorities represented on the Committee and several national minority organisations. At the same time, he held several working meetings to exchange information and consult on proposals to improve the status of national minorities and promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities with representatives of central government authorities, relevant embassies in Slovakia and international organisations.

The Plenipotentiary's most important meetings last year undoubtedly included the meeting with HCNM **Astrid Thors**, who was received at the Office of the Government on 16 May 2016. The meeting was dominated by issues relating to the policy on minorities and possibilities for mutual cooperation. Both parties discussed a broad range of issues related to

⁸ For more details on the definitions of the roles and interactions between the organisational units of the Office of the Government, see: http://www.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/6822_organizacny-poriadok-uplne-znenie.pdf.

the Plenipotentiary's priorities, the draft Action Plan, education and training for persons belonging to national minorities and print and electronic minority media.



László Bukovszky meeting Astrid Thors (Source: Office of the Government archives)

László Bukovszky also initiated and held several meetings with representatives of certain embassies. In this context, he received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Hungary to the Slovak Republic **Éva Czibalmosné Molnár**. The purpose of the meeting held on 23 May 2016 at the Office of the Government was to exchange information and experience in the context of national minority policies in Slovakia and Hungary. László Bukovszky informed his guest about the support provided to the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia and his priorities for the forthcoming period.

A visit by **Lívia Klausová**, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Slovakia, took place in September 2016. The purpose of this working meeting was to exchange information on national minority policies in both countries. The outcome of the meeting was a joint initiative aimed at preparing actions focused on exchange of experience and good practice in national minority policies within the V4 countries.



Meeting with Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Slovakia Lívia Klausová (Source: Office of the Government archives)

At the invitation of **Miroslav Lajčák**, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the Plenipotentiary attended a working meeting at the Ministry on 29 September 2016. The objective of the meeting was to exchange information about the current issues related to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia. László Bukovszky informed the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs about the vision and priorities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the forthcoming period and the process of adopting the Action Plan. Miroslav Lajčák expressed his support for these activities and appreciated the high standard of cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary.

At the initiative of Plenipotentiary László Bukovszky, a working meeting with **Jana Dubovcová**, the Public Defender of Rights, was held at the offices of the Public Defender of Rights on 4 November 2016. The purpose of this working meeting was to exchange information about the current issues related to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia and recent complaints addressed to both offices. László Bukovszky informed the Public Defender of Rights about the vision and priorities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for the forthcoming period.

On 7 December 2016, the Plenipotentiary received Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports **Peter Plavčan** and State Secretary Peter Krajňák at a working meeting at the Office of the Plenipotentiary. They reviewed several topical issues related to national minority education and the plan for implementing the tasks arising from the Action Plan. Their joint discussion also paid attention to further possibilities for mutual cooperation.

In order to ensure a system-level support for cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities in Slovakia, the Government undertook to adopt an **act on the Fund to Finance Minority Cultures** in its Manifesto. In this context, Minister of Culture Marek Mad'arič, as the Chairperson of the Government Council for Culture set up a Temporary Working Group to draft

the act on the Fund to Support Minority Cultures at the Council of the Government for Culture. The Plenipotentiary was appointed the Deputy Chairperson of the Temporary Group and the director of the secretariat of the Office of the Plenipotentiary was appointed a member of the group.

In the interest of ensuring the broadest possible participation by representatives of minorities in the drafting of this key legislative measure, the Plenipotentiary, in accordance with the Plenipotentiary's statute, set up a Temporary Working Group to draft the act on the Fund to Support Minority Cultures for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016. The working group comprised the Plenipotentiary as the head of the group and ten members appointed by the Plenipotentiary, who represented national minorities. In accordance with its procedural principles, the working group held a total of three sessions last year.

In order to ensure public information about the activities of the Plenipotentiary and the Committee, the website at www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk was regularly updated in 2016 to reflect interactively the most recent information relating to the Office of the Plenipotentiary and statements of the Plenipotentiary on memorial days, as well as information about events of national minority organisations, both for persons belonging to national minorities and the majority society⁹.



László Bukovszky, the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities and Chairperson of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (Source: Office of the Government archives)

⁹ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/>.

Part III – Culture of national minorities

3.1 Legislative and policy frameworks

The basic legislative framework for the right of national minorities to develop their own cultures is given by the Constitution and international documents of the Council of Europe ratified by Slovakia, namely the Framework Convention and the Language Charter. According to Article 34 of the Constitution, the comprehensive development of persons belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic is guaranteed, in particular the right to develop their own cultures, the right to disseminate and receive information in their mother tongue, associate in national minority associations, and set up and maintain educational and cultural institutions. Since this concerns a large variety of affairs, this domain is governed by several pieces of legislation.

The Government's Manifesto set clear priorities with regard to minority cultures. In the document, the Government committed itself to protecting national minorities as an important part of the society for stability and to laying the groundwork for the development of national minorities in terms of preserving and developing their identity, language, culture and traditions.

In this respect, a specific priority of the Slovak Government is to continue the changes in the financing of culture, which should be gradually take on public and self-government forms instead of falling within the direct competence of the State so that a public institution is created to finance minority cultures. In doing so, the Government built upon the objective of supporting the activities pursued by national minorities, which contribute substantially to the shaping and evolution of cultural diversity as a traditional and integral part of the development of Slovak society.

In accordance with the elaboration of the Manifesto into specific tasks by the MC SR (task no 13) and based on the Government's Plan of Legislative Tasks (task no 1), on 6 December 2016, the Ministry submitted a draft act on the Fund to Support Minority Cultures and on amendments to certain acts for an interdepartmental consultation exercise (hereinafter the 'ICE') (the deadline for completing the ICE was 27 December 2016). The objective of this draft act is to transform the current grant system of the Office of the Government and create an institution providing effective and system-level support to cultural and artistic activities of all national minorities in Slovakia, which is administratively independent of central government authorities and represented by experts from all national minorities. Both the Plenipotentiary and the Office of the Plenipotentiary closely participated in the preparation of the draft act in close liaison with the Committee (see Chapter 2.2) in accordance with the principle of participation of persons belonging to national minorities in matters that concern them.

3.2 Edification facilities and libraries

State administration with regard to intangible cultural heritage and cultural and edification activities is performed by the Department for Intangible Cultural Heritage and Disadvantaged Population Groups of the MC SR's Cultural Heritage Section in accordance with legislation of general application, in particular Act No 189/2015 Coll. on cultural and edification activities (hereinafter 'Act No 189/2015 Coll. '), and international treaties, in particular the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The key purpose of

cultural and edification activities is to develop cultural identity and inter-cultural dialogue at national, regional and local levels, further develop the cultural potential of municipalities and regions of Slovakia, protect and develop intangible cultural heritage, develop leisure artistic activities and non-professional artistic pursuits or informal education on culture and prevention of negative social phenomena. According to Act No 189/2015 Coll., cultural and edification activities are performed by culture and edification facilities.

Within the meaning of Act No 189/2015 Coll., the activities carried out by the National Edification Centre (hereinafter ‘NEC’) ¹⁰ contribute to the respect for human rights and diversity of cultural expressions, enhancement of the cultural and educational level of the Slovak population and development of creativity as the basic culture-forming value in a society. The role of the NEC is to ensure, build, protect and encourage the spiritual development of citizens and the live non-professional culture that forms part of the intangible cultural heritage in Slovakia.

Minority cultures in individual regions also fall within the scope of competence of self-governing regions. The institutions operating under the administration of self-governing regions include edification centres, culture centres, libraries, theatres, and regional museums and galleries. According to Act No 189/2015 Coll., in the context of performing their functions, self-governing regions establish or set up, abolish or merge culture and edification facilities operating on local or regional scale within the territory of the self-governing region, provide for and coordinate cultural and edification activities by means of culture and edification facilities or designate the culture and edification facilities to perform expert, consulting, methodological, information and documentation activities for culture and edification facilities, and other legal and natural persons carrying out cultural and edification activities within the territory of their self-governing region. According to Act No 302/2001 Coll. on the self-government of higher territorial units (Act on Self-Governing Regions), as amended (hereinafter the ‘Self-Governing Regions Act’), when performing their functions, self-governing regions ensure, in particular, the creation and implementation of programmes for social, economic and cultural development of the self-governing region, create conditions for the development of education and training, lay the groundwork for the creation, presentation and development of cultural values and cultural activities and ensure that cultural heritage is protected, meet the needs of the inhabitants of the self-governing region and the development of the self-governing region, or develop cooperation with territorial units and authorities of other states.

Edification centres

An important role with regard to minority cultures is played by edification centres set up as publicly or partly publicly-funded organisations with a separate legal personality, which, within the meaning of the aforementioned Act, fall under the administration of self-governing regions. According to Act No 189/2015 Coll., edification centres provide methodological advice on cultural and edification activities; support the activities of collectives and individuals in the field of leisure artistic activities and non-professional artistic pursuits; in addition, they organise multi-round contests and displays; organise educational, presentation and competitive events related to cultural and edification activities; seek, preserve, protect, make available,

¹⁰ See: <http://www.nocka.sk/>.

document, take inventory of and creatively employ intangible cultural heritage. Table 3 provides an overview of regional edification centres carrying out activities related to minority cultures.

Table 3: Overview of regional edification centres carrying out activities related to minority cultures

Self-governing region	Edification centre name	Website
Banská Bystrica self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novohrad Edification Centre in Lučenec • Gemer-Malohont Edification Centre in Rimavská Sobota • Hont-Ipeľ Edification Centre in Veľký Krtíš • Podpolianske Edification Centre in Zvolen • Pohronie Edification Centre in Žiar nad Hronom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.noslc.sk • www.gmos.sk • www.h-ios.sk • www.osvetazvolen.sk • www.osvetaziar.sk
Bratislava self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Carpathian Edification Centre in Modra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.moska.sk
Košice self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zemplín Edification Centre in Michalovce • Gemer Edification Centre in Rožňava • Spiš Edification Centre in Spišská Nová Ves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.zosmi.sk • www.gos.sk • www.osvetasnv.sk
Nitra self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Edification Centre in Nitra • Tekov Observatory in Levice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.kosnr.sk • www.hvezdarenlevice.sk
Prešov self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Šariš Edification Centre in Bardejov • Podtatranské Edification Centre in Poprad • Vihorlat Edification Centre in Humenné • Ľubovňa Edification Centre in Stará Ľubovňa • Podduklianske Edification Centre in Svidník; • Upper Zemplín Edification Centre in Vranov nad Topľou 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.hosbardejov.sk • www.osvetapoprad.sk • no website available • www.osvetalubovna.sk • www.osveta.sk • www.osvetavranov.sk
Trnava self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galanta Edification Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.osvetaga.zupatt.sk/
Žilina self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orava Cultural Centre in Dolný Kubín • Liptov Cultural Centre in Liptovský Mikuláš • Žilina Cultural Centre in Žilina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.osvetadk.sk • www.lks.sk • www.krkszilina.sk

Libraries

Libraries play an important role in providing support to minority cultures. In accordance with Act No 126/2015 Coll. on libraries and on amendments to Act No 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries, protection of cultural objects and on amendment to Slovak National Council Act No 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended, as amended by Act No 38/2014 Coll., libraries make use of and provide access to their holdings, provide librarian and information services, help to satisfy cultural, information, science and research and educational needs of their users, promote information literacy, creative personal development and linguistic diversity of their users and promote lifelong learning. Regional libraries, set up as publicly or partly

publicly-funded organisations administered by self-governing regions, have a specific role in respect of minority cultures. Table 4 provides an overview of regional libraries carrying out specific activities related to minority cultures.

Table 4: Overview of regional libraries carrying out activities related to minority cultures

Self-governing region	Library name	Website
Banská Bystrica self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eudovít Štúr Regional Library in Zvolen • Novohrad Library in Lučenec • Hont-Novohrad Library in Veľký Krtíš • Matej Hrebenda Library in Rimavská Sobota 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.kskls.sk • www.nklc.sk • www.hnk-vk.sk • www.kmh.sk
Bratislava self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bratislava City Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.mestskakniznica.sk
Nitra self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anton Bernolák Library in Nové Zámky • Tekov Library in Levice • Karol Kmeťko Regional Library in Nitra • József Szinnyei Library in Komárno 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.abkniznica.sk • www.kniznicalevice.sk • www.krajskakniznicanitra.sk • www.kjszkom.sk
Prešov self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Gutgesel District Library in Bardejov • Podtatranská Library in Poprad • Podduklianska Library in Svidník • Vihorlat Library in Humenné • Ľubovňa Library in Stará Ľubovňa • Upper Zemplín Library in Vranov nad Topľou • P.O. Hviezdoslav Library in Prešov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.gutgesel.sk • www.kniznicapp.sk • www.podduklianskakniznica.sk • www.vkhe.sk • www.kniznicasl.sk • www.vthk.sk • www.kniznica-poh.sk
Trnava self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galanta Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.galantskakniznica.sk/
Žilina self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Library in Žilina • Kysuce Library in Čadca • Liptov Library of G.F. Belopotocký in Liptovský Mikuláš • Orava Library of Anton Habovštiak in Dolný Kubín • Turiec Library in Martin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.krajskakniznicazilina.sk • www.kniznica-cadca.sk • www.kniznicagfb.sk • www.oravskakniznica.sk • www.tkmartin.sk

In addition, in the period under review, numerous activities also targeted on persons belonging to national minorities were organised by the University Library in Bratislava, the Roma Culture Documentation and Information Centre and the State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica.

3.3 Professional national theatres, artistic ensembles, and cultural centres

3.3.1 Professional national theatres and artistic ensembles

An important role in edification and culture is also played by professional national theatres and artistic ensembles. In accordance with Act No 103/2014 Coll. on theatre and music activities and on amendments to certain acts, their principal activity is rehearsing and public presentation of theatrical and musical works, including with a view to the needs of persons belonging to national minorities. Given the fact that these are professional ensembles, they have a particularly important role in the culture of national minorities. These are ensembles listed in Table 5 and the Ifjú Szívek Dance Theatre administered by the Office of the Government in 2016.

Table 5: Overview of regional professional theatres carrying out activities related to minority cultures

Self-governing region	Theatre name	Website
Košice self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Romathan Theatre• Thália Színház Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.romathan.sk/sk/• www.thaliaszinhaz.sk
Nitra self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jókai Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.jokai.sk
Prešov self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexander Duchnovič Theatre• Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.divadload.sk• www.puls-slovakia.sk

Alexander Duchnovič Theatre in Prešov¹¹

Alexander Duchnovič Theatre (hereinafter the ‘ADT’) is a professional, cultural and artistic institution active in the field of theatre. The ADT is administered by the Prešov self-governing region. The role of the ADT is to cultivate and disseminate culture for persons belonging to the Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities living in Slovakia. ADT gave 120 theatrical performances, including 4 premières: *Moskva – Petušky (Biblia alkoholika)* [Moscow-Petushki (The Bible of an Alcoholic)], *Krčma pod zeleným stromom* [Pub under the Green Tree], *Faraóni* [Pharaohs], *Posadnutí* [Possessed]. Two of the premières were in Ruthenian and one was in Ukrainian. ADT’s performances were seen by an audience of almost 12 thousand in 2016. Its most successful theatrical performances continue to include *Pytačky* [Courting], *Medved’* [Bear], *Moscow-Petushki* and *Kapitán Budzogán* [Captain Budzogán]. The financial transfer from the administrator to cover operating costs and costs of the ADT’s activities amounted to €566 228 last year. The theatre received €14 000 from the NMC grant programme of the Office of the Government.

Jókai Theatre in Komárno

The Jókai Theatre in Komárno (hereinafter the ‘JTK’) is a professional drama theatre which also performs in Hungarian and operates under the administration of the Nitra self-governing region. The JTK has had a permanent venue in Komárno since 1952. Its key mission is to disseminate theatrical culture in Hungarian in areas mostly inhabited by persons belonging

¹¹ See: <http://www.divadload.sk/>.

to the Hungarian national minority. For this reason, its touring activities primarily focus on Hungary. Around 30 % of its premières are performed on tours, whether in Slovakia or Hungary.

In 2016, the JTK premièred five new productions of various theatrical genres, namely *Obroda* [Revival], *Opona hore!* [Curtain up!], *Smrt' obchodného cestujúceho* [Death of a business traveller], *Ako slepci v bani* [Like blind men in a mine] and *O ôsmej na arche* [At eight on the ark], and performed 13 plays from its own repertoire. The theatre performed a total 137 shows in the year under review, 36 of which were performed in Hungary. Guest theatre companies gave 43 performances in the JTK's venue. The theatre's events and performances were attended by an audience exceeding 58 thousand. An important part of the theatre's work is cross-border cooperation with the Monostori Erőd summer theatre in Komárom, Debrecen's Csokonai Színház theatre, the Hungarian National Theatre in Budapest, Budapest's József Attila Színház theatre and Soproni Petöfi Színház theatre, as well as the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin and the Thália Theatre in Košice. The JTK has a diverse audience. It comprises children of preschool age, primary and secondary school pupils, higher education students, adults and seniors, as well as an audience from Hungary. The financial transfer from the administrator to cover operating costs and costs of the JTK's activities amounted to €974 802.40 in 2016. Its own revenues amounted to €256 652.00 and funding from project activities amounted to €33 399.

Romathan Theatre

The Romathan Theatre is a publicly-funded organisation under the administration of the Košice self-governing region with a unique mission of national importance. The Romathan Theatre is a music and drama ensemble, which equally employs spoken word, singing, music and dance. As a minority Roma theatre, it plays an important cultural, artistic, social and educational role. In 2016, most of the theatre's activities focused on children and youth. It rehearsed 2 première plays, namely *Kúzelný večer Romathanu* [Romathan's Magical Night] and *Kúzelný zvonček* [Magical Bell], performed 67 reprises and organised other performances and activities. The ensemble's most successful shows include *Romathan v novom šate* [Romathan in a new dress] and *Kúzelný zvonček* [Magical Bell]. Of these, 38 were performed in the city of Košice and 29 were performed in other locations within the Košice self-governing region and in other regions or abroad, specifically in the Czech Republic. Audiences at Romathan Theatre performances totalled almost 9 000. Romathan Theatre's 2016 budget amounted to €385 816.73, €368 002 of which was a transfer from the administrator to cover operating costs and costs of activities and the remainder were funds that the theatre received from the CNM grant programme of the Office of the Government (€4 800), funds from cultural vouchers €3 843 and revenues from its own activities €9 171.73.

Thália Színház Theatre in Košice

The Thalia Színház theatre (hereinafter the 'TST') is a professional minority culture theatre operating as a partly publicly-funded organisation under the administration of the Košice self-governing region. The TST is a theatre with national reach as evidenced by the fact that over 40 % of its performances take place outside the territory of the Košice self-governing region. In 2016, the theatre premièred five plays. The number of reprises and other

performances and activities totalled 138, of which 77 were in the Košice self-governing region (58 in Košice and 19 in other municipalities in the region) and 61 took place in other regions of Slovakia (33) and abroad (28). The total number of audiences at TST's performances exceeded 25 thousand. The financial transfer from the administrator to cover operating costs and costs of the TST's activities amounted to €557 665 in 2016. The theatre received €18 650 from the NMC grant programme of the Office of the Government. The TST is also very successful in presenting the Hungarian minority culture abroad, including on a commercial basis.

*Ifjú Szivek Dance Theatre*¹²

The Ifjú Szivek Dance Theatre (hereinafter the 'ISDT') is a partly publicly-funded organisation, which is financing its activities from both State budget contributions and its own revenues. Administered by the Office of the Government until 31 December 2016, the theatre has been transferred under the administration of the MC SR effective from 1 January 2017. The ISDT operates using its own funds according to the approved budget. As a professional dance ensemble, it has artistic, educational, organisational and documentary roles in the field of traditional culture.

The ISDT's mission is to rehearse and perform professionally both in Slovakia and abroad folk dances, music, songs and classic vocal and instrumental works from the European and world cultural heritage, building upon, above all, the folk-art traditions of Hungarians living in Slovakia, but also the nations and nationalities of Central Europe.

In the context of its mission and scope of activities, it has the following roles:

- cultivate both the existing and revived folk traditions of Hungarians living in Slovakia and nations and nationalities of Central Europe and integrate them into existing cultures in the context of maintaining continuity;
- on the basis of these traditions, produce dance and theatre performances and scenic performances of folklore traditions, using primarily its own capacities;
- provide opportunities for presentation to all major folk-art ensembles and ensembles in other genres at its own venue;
- provide professional creative and artistic assistance for the needs of both the professional and amateur scenes and support to edification activities;
- maintain relations and cooperation between the folklore movement and the third sector and represent the folklore movement before decision-making bodies at the local, regional and national levels.

In 2016, the ISDT toured with much success both domestic and foreign venues presenting a repertoire consisting of four shows. The ensemble danced in various corners of Slovakia and in Hungary and, in July 2016, it performed at the prestigious Off d'Avignon theatre festival in Avignon, France. The popular shows from recent years – *Kukučie vajíčko* [The Cuckoo's Egg] and *Vyvlastenie* [Expropriation] remained in the repertoire in 2016 due to demand from promoters; in addition, the ISDT premièred two new shows – *Bartók 135* and *Finetuning*. In 2016, the ISDT gave 49 solo performance, 23 of which were in Slovakia and 26 were abroad. It performed to audiences totalling in excess of 10 000 in 2016.

¹² See: <http://www.ifjuszivek.sk/sk>.

The ISDT's venue at Mostová 8 in Bratislava hosted several cultural events in 2016. Twelve guest performances were given by theatres, dance ensembles, music groups and solo artists in 2016.

The ISDT's artistic staff also engaged in artistic and educational activities outside the ISDT. Members of the dance section regularly teach folk dance in workshops, give dance lessons, etc. In 2016, they gave 324 dance lessons in workshops, performed in 95 shows of the non-professional movement and directed 5 new choreographies. During its 61 years of existence, the ISDT was able to win a stable audience both in Slovakia and abroad. The ISDT places great emphasis on bringing up a new generation, which has respect for folk traditions, and gives opportunities to artistic creators from the younger generation for producing their own works. The main audience groups in Slovakia are schools and culture houses; abroad, it mostly performs at international festivals. In 2016, the ISDT gave 65 performances, of which 39 were in Slovakia and 26 were abroad.

*Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble*¹³

The Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble (hereinafter the 'DAFE') is a partly publicly-funded organisation under the administration of the Prešov self-governing region. As a professional artistic ensemble, it engages in public and community activities. This folk-art ensemble's main activity are vocal and dance productions, creation and presentation of folklore programmes comprising vocal, dance and music productions on stages at home and abroad, with a particular focus on the development of the cultural life of Ruthenians and Ukrainians living in Slovakia.

Last year, the DAFE premièred one performance called *Ščedryj večur* [Christmas Eve], which was performed on 15 December 2016 in the small venue of the Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov. The premièred was attended by an audience of 809. Its successful shows include *Návraty* [Returns], *V objatí* [In an embrace] and *Na dvore* [On the yard]. The DAFE also performed in Český Těšín and at a folklore festival in Dolní Lomná in the Czech Republic. Important domestic events included, for example, the DAFE's performance at the charity concert *Objatie tónov* [The embrace of notes] for the mentally disabled in Levice, the reprise of DAFE's celebrations and participation in the *Východná 2016* folklore festival, as well as other performances. The DAFE gave a total of 136 performances in 2016. The theatre's events and performance were attended by an audience exceeding 56 thousand. The financial transfer from the administrator to cover operating costs and costs of the DAFE's activities amounted to €622 055 last year. The theatre received €2 000 from the NMC grant programme of the Office of the Government.

3.3.2 Cultural centres

Cultural centres also play an important role with regard to national minority cultures. In accordance with Act No 189/2015 Coll., cultural centres provide methodological advice for cultural and edification activities; support the activities of collectives and individuals in the field of leisure artistic activities and non-professional artistic pursuits; in addition, they organise multi-round contests and displays; organise educational, presentation and competitive events related to cultural and edification activities; seek, preserve, protect, make available, document,

¹³ See: <http://www.puls-slovakia.sk/>.

take inventory of and creatively employ intangible cultural heritage. Table 6 provides an overview of regional cultural centres carrying out activities related to minority cultures.

Table 6: Overview of regional cultural centres carrying out activities related to minority cultures

Self-governing region	Cultural centre name	Website
Košice self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abova Cultural Centre in Bidovce • Medzibodrožie and Použie Cultural Centre in Kráľovský Chlmec • Bodva Valley and Rudohorie Cultural Centre in Moldava nad Bodvou • South Zemplín Museum and Cultural Centre in Trebišov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.kulturaabova.sk • www.kcmap.sk • www.kcubar.sk • www.muzeumtv.sk
Trenčín self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Cultural Centre in Prievidza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.rkcpcd.sk

3.4 Television and radio broadcasting for national minorities

As in the preceding period, television and radio broadcasting in minority languages is ensured, in particular, through Act No 532/2010 Coll. on Radio and Television of Slovakia and on amendments to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter ‘Act No 532/2010 Coll.’). Under § 5(1)(b) and (g), Act No 532/2010 Coll. lays down the obligation of Radio and Television of Slovakia (hereinafter ‘RTVS’) to broadcast no less than four radio programming services, at least one of which is intended to provide programming, balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia. Another RTVS service are broadcasts, balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia with a broadcasting time corresponding to the minority and ethnic composition of the population in Slovakia. In order to ensure the production and broadcasting of programming for national minorities and ethnic groups, RTVS set up a separate organisational unit of Slovak Radio and Slovak Television at the level of a section, namely the National Minority Broadcasting Centre, whose director is directly subordinated to the General Director of RTVS.

The use of languages in television and radio broadcasting for national minorities is governed by Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 270/1995 Coll. on the State language of the Slovak Republic, as amended (hereinafter ‘Act No 270/1995 Coll.’). According to this Act, television and radio broadcasting in the territory of the Slovak Republic is provided in the State language. Act No 270/1995 Coll., however, lays down exceptions, when broadcasting in the languages of national minorities is allowed. In the case of television broadcasting, this applies under the condition that broadcasts in a minority language are accompanied by subtitles in the State language or immediately followed by broadcasts in the State language. In cases not covered by the exceptions provided in § 5(1), Act No 270/1995 Coll. still allows television broadcasters to air all television programming in a minority language as long as the broadcasts are accompanied by Slovak subtitles. In the case of radio broadcasting, Act No 270/1995 Coll. lays down an exception for broadcasts for national

minorities on Slovak Radio and regional or local broadcasting intended for persons belonging to national minorities, including live broadcasts from events, for which the use of the Slovak language is not required, and the whole programming service of private radio broadcasters may be aired exclusively in a minority language, without the need to provide a Slovak language version.

In public media, i.e. in RTVS, broadcasting in minority languages is governed by § 5(1)(g) of Act No 532/2010 Coll., according to which the key activities of RTVS include broadcasts, balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia with a broadcasting time corresponding to the minority and ethnic composition of the population in Slovakia. In order to ensure the production and broadcasting of programming for national minorities and ethnic groups, the Plenipotentiary initiated and held several meetings with the leadership of the National Minority Broadcasting Centre of RTVS in 2016.

RTVS radio broadcasting

RTVS broadcasts radio programming for national minorities using a separate programming service – Radio Patria. Radio Patria broadcasts on its own frequencies in southern Slovakia in Hungarian, on Radio Regina frequencies in Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Romani, Czech, German and Polish, and on the Bratislava FM frequency of Radio Patria in Croatian, Serbian and Bulgarian.

Hungarian editorial office

The editorial office delivers 12 hours of broadcasting a day in Hungarian. Radio Patria is a standard, full-format information radio, airing mostly live information streams that alternate with artistic, cultural and current affairs programming. Its programming structure is stabilised. According to the RTVS-commissioned listenership survey conducted in 2016 by the Šamorín-based Fórum Institute on a representative sample of 1 000 Hungarian-speaking respondents, Radio Patria had a listenership of 82 thousand, which means a 22 % share in the Hungarian population in Slovakia; hence, Radio Patria can be considered as the dominant media outlet for the Hungarian minority. The radio achieved this share despite the fact that as many as 46 % of respondents reported poor or no reception of the programming service. The biggest problem of Radio Patria is insufficient FM coverage in the area inhabited by persons belonging to the Hungarian national minority. The AM coverage is of poor quality. For this reason, solutions are being sought involving coordination of new FM frequencies and integrating Radio Patria into the DAB+ digital broadcasting package.

Radio Patria's programming reaches highest listenership in the prime time – the morning three-hour information stream *Reggeli/Breakfast* and the afternoon three-hour information and entertainment stream *Hangadó/Afternoon with the radio*. News are also broadcast as part of these shows. In addition to information streams, this programming service focuses on high-quality current affairs and artistic content. One exception is its own dramatic works, which are stagnating mainly due to insufficient funding for public service broadcasting. The music dramaturgy of the programming service is very varied and provides a selection based on quality. This comprises top-quality recordings from the popular music scene, including

around 16 % of domestic production from authors and artists from the Hungarian national minority living in Slovakia.

National minority broadcasting editorial office in Košice

This editorial office delivers 17 hours of broadcasting per week in six languages. Part of the broadcasts – 5 and a half hours a week – is daily information programming in Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Romani broadcast on the national circuit of the Radio Regina programming service in the evening prime time. The remaining time is reserved for magazine-type and art formats in six languages in weekend evenings on the Radio Regina Východ [East] circuit.

Ruthenian broadcasting underwent the most significant changes in 2016. New programs replacing older abolished formats are successful and have been very well received by listeners. This is particularly true of the news and information format *Rádio Noviny* [Radio News], which now has the character of an original news-reporting programme from areas inhabited by Ruthenians, while *My, Rusíni* [Us Ruthenians] is the first interactive live stream, in which municipalities where Ruthenians live are presented. Ruthenian broadcasting was also the first to take on the secondary role of national minority broadcasting – to present the national minority to listeners from the majority community.

Qualitative changes occurred in *Ukrainian broadcasting* in 2016. The Ukrainian *Rádio Noviny* [Radio News] now has the character of a current affairs programme. The problem of Ukrainian broadcasting is the absence of original radio plays, which cannot be produced until the issue of public service financing in Slovakia is addressed. Nevertheless, literature and art are continuously presented in Ukrainian broadcasting as part of current affairs programming on art.

Changes to *Roma broadcasting* were made in the second half of 2016, when the regional reach of the information format *Rómske slovo* [Roma Word] was extended. The arrival of new news and event coverage contributors extended the number of regions providing information for the broadcasts. In 2016, the editorial office sought to switch from out-sourced production of Roma programming to its own production. The effort was successful and in 2017 the format is already produced as RTVS' own production. Roma broadcasting succeeded in creating a programme in Vlax Romani in addition to the Rumungri language, which is the standardised Romani language. This extends the reach of Roma broadcasting to another part of the Roma population.

RTVS' Roma and Ruthenian broadcasting is unique compared with other public broadcasters associated in the European Broadcasting Union. The principle that Roma broadcasting is predominantly in Romani is not so common in the world. **Today, Slovakia is the only country where public service broadcasting follows the principle of minority broadcasting in minority languages in respect of Romani, too. Ruthenian broadcasting is unique by being the only daily Ruthenian broadcasts in the world.**

Broadcasts for the numerically smaller minorities are split evenly among the minority broadcasting editorial staff in proportion to minority populations. These are magazine-type formats, mapping out above all the community and social life of the minorities and partly broadcasting literary and artistic content. A total of 20 magazines in Czech and 10 magazines in German and Polish were broadcast.

Having been broadcast since 2015, *Bulgarian, Serbian and Croatian* programming is relatively new. RTVS outsources the production to external reporters. Five magazines were produced in these languages in the year. They focus on the community and cultural life of the respective minorities who mostly live in and around Bratislava.

RTVS television broadcasting

The National Minority Broadcasting Centre produces and broadcasts a half-hour daily slot dedicated to minorities on the Dvojka [Channel Two] television programming service. The Hungarian magazine *Sme doma/Itthonvagyunk* [We are home], the discussion format *Szemtől szembe/Tvárrou v tvár* [Face to face] and the Roma magazine *Sme doma/Samkhere* [We are home] are broadcast weekly. Once a week, the *Ruthenian magazine* alternates with the *Ukrainian magazine* and, once a week, magazines for the numerically smaller minorities broadcast in German, Czech, Russian, Polish, Serbian, Croatian and Bulgarian alternate. In 2016, the Dvojka programming service premiered 16 Ruthenian magazines, 11 Ukrainian magazines and 32 magazines for the German, Czech, Russian, Polish, Serbian, Croatian and Bulgarian minorities. The Jewish magazine is broadcast in Slovak. All magazines share the same title – *Sme doma* [We are home] and are dedicated to community and cultural life and minority languages.

A seven-minute format *Správy/Hirek* [News] in Hungarian is produced on a daily basis and national minority news in other languages are produced on a weekly basis. These are produced and broadcast by the Hungarian editorial office in Bratislava and the editorial office for minorities in Košice. For many years, national minority programming has been stabilised and well-established and in a relatively consistent broadcasting time. Significant changes occurred in the production of Roma formats by expanding the scope of contributors. The Roma magazine has not only extended its regional, but also thematic reach. RTVS is working to gradually build an editorial office producing Roma programming as its own production, albeit with elements of programming content outsourced to external parties. All programming for national minorities is prepared by persons belonging to the respective minorities, in the languages of the minorities, and it mostly deals with topic involving the national minorities themselves. Thanks to this approach of RTVS to national minority broadcasting, unique content is produced and broadcast. RTVS is the only broadcaster of Ruthenian television content in Europe and the Roma programming is the only television content in Europe broadcast exclusively in Romani.

All minority TV programming carries Slovak subtitles. This statutory obligation of RTVS is also considered as a benefit: the broadcaster contributes to the majority's inclusive awareness of minorities. The average viewership of minority television programming is between 6 and 10 thousand and, according to people meter figures, around 40 % of viewers of national minority programming are not persons belonging to national minorities, which means that these programmes are also watched by Slovak viewers.

In addition to the scheduled magazines, there were also special television broadcasts in 2016 – a Catholic church service in Hungarian and a broadcast from the Želiezovce 2016 Folklore Festival. The Dvojka programming service also broadcast a recording of the RomaSpirit awards ceremony from the RTVS Large Concert Studio. Minorities living in Slovakia and the broadcasts for these minorities have become an organic part of RTVS' regular

anniversary programming marking 60 years of television and 90 years of radio broadcasting in Slovakia.

3.5 Minority culture museums

Museums and galleries also play an important role with regard to minority cultures. In accordance with Act No 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries, protection of objects of cultural value and on amendments to Slovak National Council Act No 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended, museums and galleries protect and present objects of cultural value as part of cultural heritage. Museums, as specialised legal persons or organisational units of legal persons, acquire and ensure professional management and scientific examination of objects of cultural value and provide access to them as collection items. Galleries, as specialised legal persons or organisational units of legal persons ensure professional management and scientific examination of collection items from all disciplines of visual art and produce creative and artistic outputs and presentations. A register of museum and gallery facilities is maintained by the MC SR.

The **Slovak National Museum** (hereinafter the ‘SNM’), which falls under the administration of the MC SR, is the most significant national collection, documentation, science and research, methodology and presentation museum institution. The SNM ensures comprehensive museum documentation of the development of Slovakia’s society and culture, including the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups that lived and live in the Slovak territory. These activities are carried out on the basis of surveys and scientific research, in accordance with the SNM’s focus and specialisation as defined in Act No 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries, protection of objects of cultural value and on amendments to Slovak National Council Act No 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended, as amended by Act No 38/2014 Coll. and Act No 523/2004 Coll. on budgetary rules of public administration and on amendments to certain acts, as well as in the SNM’s deed of foundation. The development of material and spiritual culture of national minorities is documented by the following organisational units of the SNM:

- Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava;
- Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník;
- Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava;
- Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov;
- Museum of Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava;
- Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava;
- Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin;
- Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia in Martin.

Table 6: Overview of financing of the SNM’s organisational units – 8 specialised ‘national minority museums’, in 2014-2016 (in EUR)¹⁴

Museum	2014	2015	2016
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¹⁴ Note: the amounts represent total funds allocated from the State budget – the Culture chapter, as of 31 December 2016, for operating expenses, capital expenditure and priority projects.

Museum of Jewish Culture (including the Holocaust Museum in Sered')	510 783	510 209	1 835 623
Museum of Ukrainian Culture	343 628	453 805	333 817
Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia	287 974	259 120	276 364
Museum of Ruthenian Culture	110 204	110 863	127 776
Museum of Carpathian German Culture	109 943	104 420	113 720
Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia	66 044	62 448	73 694
Museum of Roma Culture	40 373	33 754	49 547
Museum of Czech Culture	37 241	34 010	42 597
Total	1 506 190	1 568 629	2 853 138

SNM – Museum of Jewish Culture

The Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava (hereinafter the 'MJC') is a specialised science and research, documentation and methodological museum unit focusing specifically on the exploration of the history and development of material and spiritual culture of Jews in Slovakia¹⁵. **Brief overview of displays:** 1. *Museum of Jewish Culture (Zsigray's mansion)* – a permanent display presenting the history of Jews since their arrival in the territory of today's Slovakia in the 1st century AD until present time. It provides an insight into both day-to-day life and festivities of the Jewish population, an overview of the most important holidays and the interior of the synagogue, as well as important personalities of Jewish origin who made Slovakia famous in various fields of artistic, cultural, social and scientific life. 2. *Holocaust Museum in Sered'* – in 2016, the MJC installed a permanent display in the premises of the former labour and concentration camp in Sered', which is an authentic place linked to the tragic period of the Final Solution to the Jewish Question in Slovakia during World War II; 3. *Display of Jewish artefacts from the collection of Eugen Barkány – Prešov*, 4. *Display of Jewish artefacts – Spišské Podhradie Synagogue*.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 4. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1 commemorative day, 1 commemorative event, 2 new publications.

Educational activities: International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust, European Day of Jewish Culture, multiple educational activities as part of the School in a Museum project, multiple accompanying educational activities.

Acquisition activities: in 2016, the Museum of Jewish Culture acquired 303 collection items (180 incremental items), of which 259 items (169 incremental items) were purchased and 44 items were donated (11 incremental items). Part of the holdings of the Museum of Jewish Culture was relocated to the newly-built Holocaust Museum in Sered'. The standard of the museum's holdings is constantly rising in terms of both quality and quantity. The development

¹⁵ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-zidovskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>.

of the museum's holdings is entirely determined by the objective possibilities related to the situation of the Jewish community in Slovakia. The staff of the MJC seek to obtain the types of items that are not sufficiently represented in the museum's holdings.

SNM - Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník

The key mission of the Museum of Ukrainian Culture (hereinafter the 'MUC') is to document and present the basic stages of the cultural, historical, political and social development of Ukrainians in Slovakia, from the earliest times to the present day. In 2016, the MUC offered three permanent displays to its visitors. Brief overview of the displays: 1. *Main Culture and History Display* (since 1974); 2. *Open-Air National History Display* (since 1983); 3. *Art and History Display* – Dezider Milly Gallery (since 1986)¹⁶.

Culture and History Display – provides brief characteristics of the natural and climatic conditions in the region together with an overview of the history of settlement, economy, government, and social, national and cultural development of the ethnicity from the earliest times to the present day. Covering the period from the Neolithic age to the eighties of the 20th century, it presents the region of north-eastern Slovakia with a focus on the development of inter-ethnic relations. Its thematic structure is as follows: Introduction; Man and Nature; In the Footsteps of the Ancestors; Traditional Folk Culture; Czechoslovak Period (since 1918); *Open-air National History Display* – in addition to the main types of dwellings, the display showcases all kinds of traditional farm buildings: barns, sties, granaries, hay barns, cellars, wells and other smaller structures. Traditional farming tools (various types of wagons, ploughs, gates, grain chests, grain baskets and a variety of other tools) have been installed in these structures; The *Art and History Display* showcases the development of folk and professional arts of Ukrainians in Slovakia from the 16th century to the present day.

Exhibition activities: 5 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. the thematic exhibition *Priadky (večurky, večornyci, prjadky, chodžiňa z kudel'om)* [Yarn-spinning sessions] (MUC, Svidník); 2. the *Easter Eggs 2016* exhibition – 17th edition of the competitive exhibition (MUC, Svidník); 3. the exhibition *60 Years of the SNM's Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník* (MUC, Svidník); 4. the exhibition *Dezider Milly and Ruthenian-Ukrainian Graphics of Slovakia* (MUC, Svidník); 5. exhibition of photographs *Vojna za mier* [War for Peace] (Centre of Ukrainian Culture, Prešov).

Exhibition and display activities: 8 events/13 382 visitors.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 11. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1. *Vianoce idú, srdcia zohrievajú...* [Christmas is coming warming up our hearts...]; 2. *Ševčenko klopal na ťažké dvere Karpát...* [Shevchenko knocked on the heavy door of the Carpathians...]; 3. *Children's folk music festival*; 4. *World Red Cross Day*; 5. *Makovická struna 2016* [Makovica String festival]; 6. *Night of Museums and Galleries*; 7. *Na krídlach túžby* [On the wings of desire]; 8. *Folk Traditions Day and Pierogi 2016*; 9. *Chodničkami Alexandra Pavloviča* [Through the ruts of Alexander Pavlovič]; 10. *Tokajik*; 11. *Vianočná hviezdička* [Christmas star].

Educational activities: number of activities: 9. Brief overview of educational activities: 1. *Knihy – Knižka – Knižočka*; 2. *ABC – azbuka*; 3. *Každý obraz má svoj príbeh* [Every painting

¹⁶ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-ukrajinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>.

has a story]; 4. *Maľujeme kraslice* [Painting Easter eggs]; 5. *Remeslá* [Crafts]; 6. *Život na dedine v minulosti* [Village live in the past]; 7. *Farby, farbičky a papier patria det'om* [Colours, paints and paper belong to children]; 8. *Deti poznávajú svet rukami* [Children learn with their hands]; 9. *Huncútsky deň v skanzene* [Pranksters' day in the outdoor museum].

Science and research activities: number of projects: 13. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): 1. *Ethnicity in folk culture in north-eastern Slovakia* (M. Sopoliga et al. – almanac); 2. *Folk architecture of Ukrainians in Slovakia* (M. Sopoliga – monograph); 3. *Ethnic aspect of spiritual culture in north-eastern Slovakia* (J. Varchol – N. Varcholová – a study in specialised press); 4. *Tinkering in customs and folkloric expressions of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in Slovakia* (J. Varchol - N. Varcholová – conference); 5. *Marking the anniversary of an important scientist in Slovakia* (J. Varchol – article in specialised press); 6. *Artistic collections of the SNM – Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník from the perspective of ethnicity* (L. Puškár – a study in specialised press); 7. *Epic projection of the Carpathian village (selo) in Ukrainian literature in Slovakia* (J. Džoganík CSc. – a study in specialised press); 8. *On the topic of ethnicity of collection items and library collections of the SNM – Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník* (M. Sopoliga – a study in specialised press); 9. *Ukrainians in the history and culture of the Carpathians* (M. Sopoliga – almanac); 10. *Symbol of Slovak-Ukrainian Mutuality. The Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník in the structure of Slovak museology* (M. Sopoliga – a study in specialised press); 11. *Marking the anniversary of a leading ethnologist in Slovakia* (J. Varchol – article in specialised press); 12. *Komunikujeme na hranici* [Communicating on the border] (J. Džoganík – other); 13. *Twenty-five pauses when translating between the Carpathians and the Tatras* (J. Džoganík – a study in specialised press).

Acquisition activities: The museum's library holdings were supplemented by 443 units and the library lent out 48 items during the year.

SNM - Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia

The SNM – Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the 'MHCS'), is a specialised science and research, documentation and methodological museum unit specialising in the exploration of the history and development of material and spiritual culture of Hungarians in Slovakia. The museum has the following branches: Memorial House of Kálmán Mikszáth in Sklabiná (Sklabiná, 188) and Imre Madách Manor House in Dolná Strehová¹⁷.

In 2016, the MHCS installed three permanent displays. Brief overview of the displays: 1. *Kde som to vlastne, kde sú moje sny?* [Where am I and where are my dreams?] (Madách Family manor house, Dolná Strehová) – a commemorative display presenting life in the castle in the 19th century and the settings where a literary work of worldwide relevance was created; 2. *Tradície a hodnoty – Maďari na Slovensku* [Traditions and values – Hungarians in Slovakia] (Brämer's mansion) – the display presents material and spiritual monuments of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia; 3. *Tu prežil...* [Here lived...] (Kálmán Mikszáth's memorial house, Sklabiná) – the display presents the life and literary work of famous Hungarian writer Kálmán Mikszáth and life in Sklabiná in the 19th century.

¹⁷ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-madarov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>.

Exhibition activities: 12 exhibitions (of which 5 were reprises). Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. the exhibition *Vymenené domovy – Felcserélt otthonok – Austausch der Heimat* [Exchanged homes] (MHCS, Bratislava) – the exhibition presents the parallel fates of different population groups who became victims of the displacement and resettlement between 1945 and 1948; 2. the exhibition of photographs *Body pohľadu/Nézőpontok* [Points of perspective] (MHCS, Bratislava); 3. the exhibition *Mojim národom! Rodinné príbehy z prvej svetovej vojny* [To my nations! Family stories from World War I] (reprise) (MHCS, Brämer's mansion, Bratislava).

Exhibition and display activities: 15 events/16 312 visitors.

Cultural and social events: 6 discussions; 1 expert symposium; 1 commemorative event; 1 cultural event; 1 international symposium; 1 event – the Night of Museums; multiple lectures, presentations and educational programmes.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 6. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): 2 studies; 2 popularisation articles; 4 exhibition bulletins.

SNM - Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov

The SNM's Museum of Ruthenian Culture (hereinafter the 'MRuC') in Prešov is a unique and youngest museum within the SNM's structure. It is a museum of national stature operating a documentary, science and research and methodological unit specialising in the history and culture of Ruthenians living in Slovakia. Its focus is to acquire, protect, scientifically and technically process, and provide public access to museum collections showcasing the development of the material and spiritual culture of the Ruthenians in Slovakia and all over the world¹⁸. In 2016, the MRuC offered one permanent display to its visitors. Brief overview of the displays: 1. *History of Ruthenians in Slovakia* – the exhibition comprises a rural 'chyža' (house) and a room documenting the Ruthenian identity in old writings, icons and ecclesiastical traditions of the eastern ceremony in the territory of Slovakia.

Exhibition activities: 9 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. *Paintings of Ruthenian painters* (MRuC, Prešov); 2. *Wooden temples* (MRuC, Prešov); 3. *Easter customs and traditions of Ruthenians in Slovakia* (MRuC, Prešov); 4. *Roky bojov, obetí a nádejí* [Years of fights, sacrifices and hopes] (1914 – 1920) (MRuC, Prešov); 5. *Vasil' Čurej's artworks* (MRuC, Prešov); 6. *Embroidered decorations* (MRuC, Prešov); 7. *Guna and son – Harmoniums* (MRuC, Prešov); 8. *Miloslav Sočka's woodcarvings* (MRuC, Prešov); 9. *Ruthenians' Christmas traditions* (MRuC, Prešov).

Exhibition and display activities: 10 events/878 visitors.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 6. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1. Night of Museums and Galleries – an event connected with a seminar dedicated to the figure of Vasil' Sočko; 2. 4 exhibition presentations; 3. 2 seminars; 4. presentation of a Ruthenian-English fairy tale book; 5. implementation of the School in the Museum project at the SNM's Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov; 6. provision of the MRuC's premises for activities of Ruthenian organisations.

Acquisition activities: The museum's library holdings were supplemented by 856 units.

¹⁸ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-rusinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>.

SNM – Museum of Carpathian German Culture

The Museum of Carpathian German Culture (hereinafter the ‘MCGC’) focuses on collecting, protecting, processing and presenting artefacts documenting the material and spiritual culture of Carpathian Germans. The collections cover all aspects of the life of Carpathian Germans: parts of clothing, textiles, home and trade crafts, industrial products, works of art, sacral objects and newspapers. The MCGC has branches in Nitrianske Pravno and Handlová in the Meeting Houses of the Carpathian German Association, which hold permanent displays dedicated to the history and culture of the Hauerland. The MCGC includes a documentation and information centre specialising in the topic of the history and culture of Carpathian Germans. It is centred around a library comprising periodic press and literature published in Slovakia and abroad¹⁹. The MCGC is the most comprehensively equipped institution in Slovakia. Its library is used by students and professionals from both Slovakia and abroad. The MCGC publishes its own edition *Acta Carpatho-Germanica*.

The MCGC organised seven permanent displays in 2016. Brief overview of the displays: 1. *History and Culture of Carpathian Germans* – a display presenting the nearly 900-year history and culture of Germans living in Slovakia; 2. *History and Culture of Hauerland* – a display providing visitors with the opportunity to learn about the traditions and life of Carpathian Germans in central Slovakia (the so-called Hauerland), with emphasis on Nitrianske Pravno and its surrounding area; 3. *History and Culture of Handlová* – a display presenting the history and culture of Germans living in Handlová. The display also offers the opportunity to learn about the history of settlement and the tradition of mining and crafts, as well as a number of items presenting the traditional material, spiritual and art culture of the German minority in Handlová; 4. *House of the Carpathian German Association in Handlová* – the display offers the opportunity to learn about the history of settlement and the tradition of mining and crafts, as well as a number of items presenting the traditional material, spiritual and art culture of the German minority in Handlová. 5. *House of the Carpathian German Association in Nitrianske Pravno* – this house hosts the permanent display *History and Culture of Hauerland*. Visitors can learn about the traditions and life of Carpathian Germans in central Slovakia (the so-called Hauerland), with emphasis on Nitrianske Pravno and its surrounding area. 6. *Homestead of a German family from Turček* – this is a two-storey log house located in the SNM’s open-air museum in Martin. 7. *Hucokári – people from our mountains* – a display of the SNM’s Červený Kameň Museum in cooperation with the MCGC, located directly in the courtyard of the castle and dedicated to the memory of the inhabitants of Small Carpathian forests.

Exhibition activities: 2 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. *Transformations of Zuckerman del* – an exhibition about the development and transformations of the area below the Bratislava Castle (MCGC Bratislava); 2. *Divided memories – Czechoslovakia 1937-1948 (Czechs, Germans, Austrians and Slovaks)* (University Library, Bratislava).

Exhibition and display activities: 9 events, 5 068 visitors.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 7. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1. *Celebration of culture and mutuality* (Museum in Kežmarok); 2. The MCGC organised a further six cultural and social events.

¹⁹ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-karpatskych-nemcov-uvodna-stranka>.

Educational activities: The museum was visited by more than 1 000 pupils and students who received a lecture. The staff also delivered several lectures outside the museum's premises. Educational activities for children were also held at exhibition locations outside the museum.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 37. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): 1. *Traditional clothing of Carpathian Germans*; 2. *Andrej Metzl und Mitarbeiter: Unvergessene Frömmigkeit* [Andrej Metzl and collective: Unforgettable piety]. The museum's expert staff have also published studies and specialised and popularisation articles – a total of 35 articles.

SNM - Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia

The SNM – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the 'MCrCS'), is a specialised museum of a national stature. The MCrCS is a documentation, scientific-research and methodological museum unit focusing on the history and culture of the Croatian minority since its arrival in Slovakia to the present day. The MCrCS's mission is the targeted acquisition, preservation, processing and provision of access to museum collections and holdings documenting the roots, history and culture of the Croats living in Slovakia or in other countries – in particular, the Burgenland Croats²⁰.

In 2016, the MCrCS installed four permanent displays. Brief overview of the displays: 1. *History and Culture of Croats in Slovakia* – the display focuses on presenting the material and cultural heritage of the Croatian minority in Slovakia. It concentrates on the following subject areas, in particular: Croatian settlements, ethnic awareness and language, folk architecture and housing, apparel and textile culture, folk art and family customs; 2. *Four thousand years of the settlement of Devínska Nová Ves* – the display presents the past of the municipality, which was a separate municipality for some time in the past called Chorvátska Nová Ves [New Croatian Village]; 3. *History and Culture of Croats in Devínska Nová Ves* – the display reflects old-day Devínska Nová Ves and mapping the life in the village in the 19th and 20th century. It is divided into several blocks: history, clothing, spiritual life and the church, recruits, and work and crafts. The greater part of the display consists of collection items of the SNM-MCrCS originating from Devínska Nová Ves. Other items have been loaned from local residents, the municipality and the church in Devínska Nová Ves; 4. *Croats in Slovakia* – the display presents the work of Croatian cultural associations and activities of folk ensembles whose main mission is to preserve the living Croatian culture – the cultural heritage of the ancestors.

Exhibition activities: 6 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. *Stopy Chorvátov na Slovensku* [Trails of Croats in Slovakia] (MCrCS Bratislava) – the exhibition presented to the public the causes and consequences of the migration of Croats to our territory, as well as their settlement in this area until the present day; 2. *Zlaté nite Panónskej roviny* [Golden threads through the Pannonian Plain] (MCrCS Bratislava); 3. *Deti Európy šijú pre radosť* [Children of Europe sewing for pleasure] (MCrCS Bratislava); 4. *Čunovo a Čunovčania/Čunovi i Čuniovci* [Čunovo and Čunovo's people] (MCrCS Bratislava); 5. an exhibition of the *Elementary School of Arts and the Devínska Nová Ves district* (MCrCS Bratislava); 6. *FotoFórum 2016* (an exhibition of photographers, MCrCS Bratislava).

Exhibition and display activities: 10 events/1 776 visitors.

²⁰ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-chorvatov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 2. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1. *Trails of Croats in Central Europe* – international conference; 2. Night of Museums and Galleries.

SNM – Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia

The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the ‘MRCS’) is a specialised unit of the SNM in Martin. The museum’s basic activity is to source, process and protect collection holdings and present Roma culture²¹. In 2016, the MRCS installed one permanent display. Brief description of the displays: 1. *Romano Drom/The Path of the Roma* (manor house from Blážovce, Slovak Village Museum in Martin) – the display presents the origins and history of Roma from the time of the exodus of their ancestors from India to their arrival in Europe.

Exhibition activities: 2 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. *Miro jilo/Moje srdce* [My Heart] (MRCS Martin); 2. *Pribeh detí vetra* [Story of the Children of the Wind] (Museum of Slovak National Councils in Myjava and MRCS Martin).

Exhibition and display activities: 3 events, 2 553 visitors.

Cultural and social events: number of activities: 7. Brief overview of cultural and social events: 1. *International Day of the Roma*; 2. *Te prindžaras amen/Spoznajme sa* [Let’s Get to Know Each Other] – the 14th edition of the annual event focused on the presentation of the traditional aspects of Roma culture in Slovakia, which showcases Roma music, dance, dramatic ensembles and performers, as well as important personalities and young talents.

Educational activities: number of activities: 4. Brief overview of educational activities: 1. *Romaňi buŕi/Rómske povolania* [Roma occupations] – screening of the documentary film *Romaňi buŕi/Rómske povolania* followed by discussion; 2. *Rómovia a II. svetová vojna* [Roma and World War II] – an educational activity focused on the Slovak state period, with an emphasis on the status of the Roma in the Slovak society during World War II; 3. *National minorities in Slovakia* – an activity focused on the multi-ethnic character of Slovakia and traditional ways of life of selected ethnic groups; 4. lecture on Roma holocaust.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 2. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators): 1. *Slovakia and its identity (Inspirations)* – partial participation in the implementation of the science and research project related to the preparation of permanent displays; 2. study of archive documents on the status of the Roma in the Turiec region during World War II, the persecution of the Roma in Slovakia in the World War II period.

Acquisition activities: The museum’s library holdings were supplemented by 30 units.

SNM – Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia

The SNM’s Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the ‘MCzCS’) was established in 1999, in accordance with the SNM’s statute, for the purpose of acquiring, preserving, processing and presenting objects documenting the culture of persons belonging to the Czech minority in Slovakia and studying the Czech phenomenon in Slovakia. It is a specialised documentation and science and research museum unit of a national stature, which is profiling itself as an institution placing emphasis on acquisition, methodological, expert,

²¹ See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-romov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>.

cultural and educational activities. The MCzCS has its own building in Martin, where its permanent display, showrooms, offices and archive rooms are located²².

In 2016, the MCzCS installed one permanent display. Brief description of the display: 1. *Museum display* – a display dedicated to two significant figures, the original owners of the museum building, PhDr. Anna Horáková-Gašparíková and academician Jiří Horák. In 2016, a donation originating from the property of the extended family of prominent Czech figure, academician Jiří Horák, completed the display. This acquisition comprises extremely valuable furniture solitaires and personal effects.

Exhibition activities: 3 exhibitions. Brief overview of exhibition activities: 1. *České stopy v Turci* [Czech trails in Turiec] (MCzCS Martin); 2. *Mať pevný koreň v domovine...* [To have strong roots in the homeland...] (MCzCS Martin); 3. *Skauting* [Scouting] (MCzCS Martin).

Exhibition and display activities: 4 events/523 visitors.

Educational activities: number of activities: 21. Brief overview of educational activities: 1. 3 educational programmes; 2. 17 exhibition lectures; 3. 1 discussion.

Science and research activities: researching archive records (Žilina State Archive, Bystrička branch; Slovak National Archives), the period press (Slovak National Library), analysis of the SNM's collection holdings in Martin.

Acquisition activities: The museum's library holdings were supplemented by 21 units.

In addition to specialised minority museums, an important role is also played by other museums and galleries. In this context, we should mention a major undertaking by the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, which organised the exhibition *Sen × skutočnosť. Umenie a propaganda 1934-1945* [Dream and reality. Art and propaganda 1934-1945]. Dedicated to art and propaganda during the Slovak state period in 1939-1945, this exhibition was the first major museological contribution to the unresolved and, in many ways, traumatising topic. Hence, the exhibition contributed to better understanding of historical consequences and, hence, to deepening tolerance and mutual respect, including in relation to national minorities. In this context, it is equally important to mention the activities of the *Museum of the Slovak National Uprising*, which organises the annual remembrance event *Memorial Day of the Roma Holocaust* (since 2005), in cooperation with other entities. Table 7 provides an overview of regional museums and galleries carrying out activities related to minority cultures.

Table 7: Overview of regional museums and galleries carrying out activities related to minority cultures

Self-governing region	Museum or gallery name	Website
Banská Bystrica self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gemer-Malohont Museum in Rimavská Sobota • Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica • Novohrad Museum and Gallery in Lučenec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.gmmuzeum.sk • www.ssmuzeum.sk • www.nmg.sk
Nitra self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ján Thain Museum in Nové Zámky • Podunajské Museum in Komárno 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.muzeumnz.sk • www.muzeumkn.sk

²² See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-cechov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tekov Museum in Levice • Jozef Nécsey Gallery in Levice • Nitra Gallery in Nitra • Ernest Zmeták Gallery of Art in Nové Zámky 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.muzeumlevice.sk • www.muzeumlevice.sk • www.nitrianskagaleria.sk • www.galerianz.eu
Prešov self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vihorlat Museum in Humenné • National History Museum in Hanušovce nad Topľou • Ľubovňa Museum – Stará Ľubovňa castle • Museum in Kežmarok • Tatra Gallery in Poprad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.muzeumhumenne.sk • www.muzeumhanusovce.sk • www.hradlubovna.sk/sk/home-sk • www.kezmarok.com • www.tatragaleria.sk
Trnava self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National History Museum in Galanta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.muzeum.sk/?obj=muzeum&ix=vmga
Žilina self-governing region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liptov Gallery of Peter Michal Bohúň in Liptovský Mikuláš • Liptov Museum in Ružomberok • Turiec Gallery in Martin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.galerialm.sk • www.liptovskemuzeum.sk • www.turiecgallery.sk

3.6 Periodical and non-periodical publications of national minorities

Within the meaning of Act No 167/2008 Coll. on periodicals and news agency services and on amendments to certain acts (Press Act), as amended, periodicals are newspapers, magazines or other publications issued at least twice a year under the same title, with the same type of content and a unified graphic design. An issue of a periodical is a set of equivalent copies of the periodical, or a set which differs only in regional sections or language versions. Periodicals are registered by the MC SR by entering them in a list, amending an entry in the list or deleting them from the list. (See Annex 4) Non-periodical publications are special-purpose press products, copies of literary, photographic, scientific or artistic works, usually published once, including by parts, regardless of the form and method of design, publication or production. The publication of periodicals, non-periodical publications and reproduction of audiovisual works in languages other than the State language is not restricted.

As of 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals maintained by the MC SR included:

- 45 periodicals published in Hungarian;
- 8 periodicals published in Czech;
- 6 periodicals published in German;
- 3 periodicals published in Russian;
- 3 periodicals published in Polish;
- 3 periodicals published in Ruthenian;
- 2 periodicals published in Ukrainian;
- 1 periodical published in Croatian²³.

In addition, as of 31 December 2016, the List of Periodicals included:

- 74 periodicals published in Slovak and Hungarian;

²³ See Annex 4: List of periodicals published in minority languages registered by the MC SR. Source: <http://old.culture.gov.sk/pertlac/modul/tlac>.

- 30 periodicals published in Slovak and Czech;
- 3 periodicals published in Slovak and Romani;
- 3 periodicals published in Slovak and Ruthenian;
- 1 periodical published in Slovak and Russian;
- 1 periodical published in Slovak and Ukrainian;
- 1 periodical published in Slovak and Bulgarian²⁴.

Periodicals and non-periodical publications also receive financial support from the CNM grant programme on an annual basis (see Annex 3).

A sub-programme also provides support to publishing activities, periodicals and non-periodical publications, audio and multimedia carriers and electronic content. The objective of sub-programme *1.1.1 Periodicals* is to support the publication of periodicals focused on cultural life and education of persons belonging to national minorities, especially news and information periodicals, literary, children's and youth, socio-educational and edification periodicals and inserts in religious periodicals focusing on the culture and language of national minorities and inserts in national minority periodicals focusing on the culture and language of national minorities. The publication of the following is supported, in particular:

- daily newspapers;
- weeklies and bi-weeklies;
- monthlies and bi-monthlies;
- quarterlies and irregular publications.

The priority objective is the publication of at least one periodical for each national minority. As stipulated by § 2(1) of the Press Act, a periodical must be published at least twice per calendar year. According to the Act, periodicals must be registered with the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. For each new periodical, a copy of application for entry in the list of periodicals must be presented. When submitting the application project for the publication of a periodical which contains inserts, it is not possible to present another separate application project for these inserts. When publishing inserts in religious and national minority periodicals, applicants may only apply for grants for inserts focusing on national minority culture.

The objective of sub-programme *1.1.2 Non-periodical publications* is to support the publication of books aimed at supporting the development of the culture and language of national minorities. Only works for which a manuscript exists or which have been published can be supported. The following publications are supported, in particular:

- original works of minority authors in the minority language and translations thereof into Slovak, • books for children and youth;
- translated literature from Slovak to a minority language or from a minority language to Slovak;
- artistic monographs of municipalities and their cultural heritage, with emphasis on their importance for the development of the culture and languages of national minorities;
- art history literature and professional and socio-scientific literature, selective reissues of works absent in the book market;

²⁴ See: <http://old.culture.gov.sk/pertlac/modul/tlac>.

- selective translations of significant works of world literature into a minority language.

3.7 2016 Culture of National Minorities grant programme

Persons belonging to national minorities are supported by means of the CNM grant program of the Office of the Government. The objective of the grant programme is to ensure the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education on the rights of national minorities, and inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority community and national minorities and ethnic groups. The Plenipotentiary acts as the guarantor of the grant programme. The purpose, conditions, scope and method of provision of grants under the competence of the Office of the Government are laid down in Act No 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of grants under the competence of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, as amended (hereinafter the 'Grants Act').

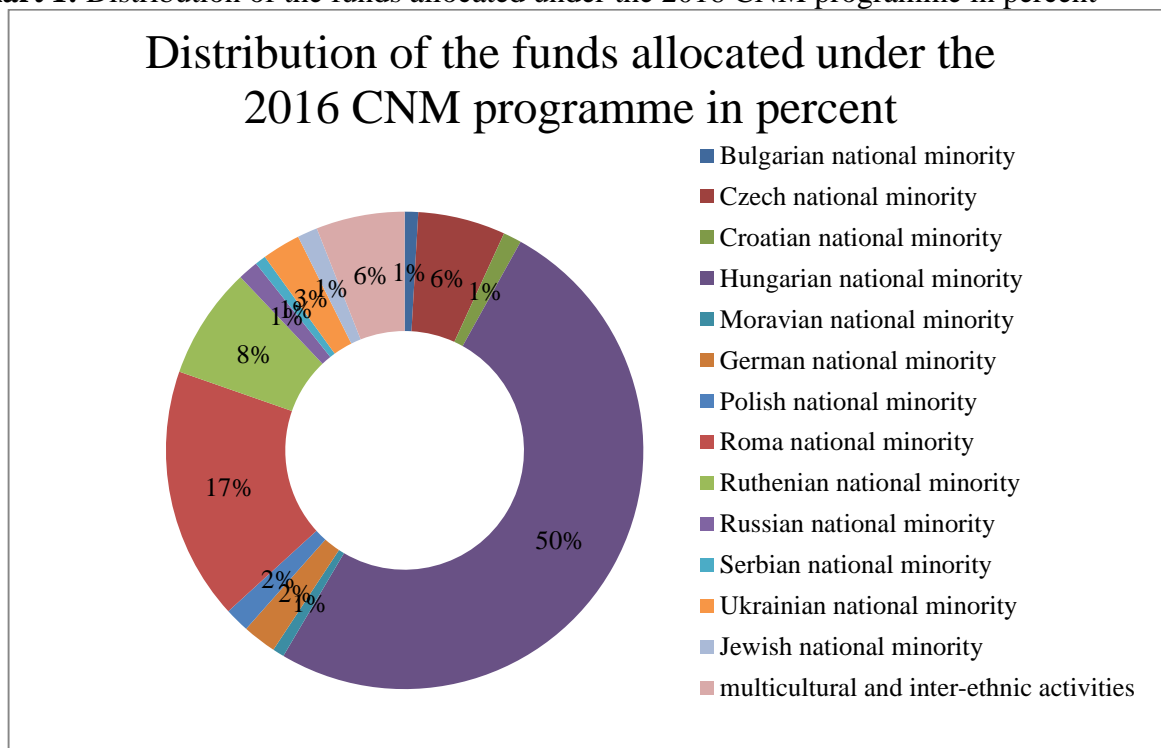
In 2016, €3 879 250 was earmarked in the State budget for the promotion of minority cultures. The method of redistribution of the funds among the various national minorities is based on a mathematical model, which takes into account multiple criteria to calculate the amounts to be allocated to the individual national minorities with the aim of transparent and equitable distribution of funding. These funds redistribution rules have been elaborated and approved by the Committee²⁵.

²⁵ For details on the method of funds redistribution, please see page 29 of the 2013 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities.

Table 8: Funds allocated in 2016

national minority	funds provided on the basis of the 2016 allocation (in EUR)
Bulgarian national minority	35 504
Czech national minority	229 815
Croatian national minority	48 064
Hungarian national minority	1 955 296
Moravian national minority	30 489
German national minority	88 880
Polish national minority	64 683
Roma national minority	664 152
Ruthenian national minority	294 032
Russian national minority	53 377
Serbian national minority	28 706
Ukrainian national minority	100 673
Jewish national minority	52 825
inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue	232 754
total:	3 879 250

Chart 1: Distribution of the funds allocated under the 2016 CNM programme in percent



In accordance with § 8(1)(c) of the Grants Act, the guarantor of the grant programme published a Call for Grant Applications under the 2016 CNM programme (hereinafter the ‘Call for Applications’) on 11 November 2015 and set 18 January 2016 as the final deadline for applications. In accordance with the Call for Applications, the 2016 CNM programme was divided into sub-programmes and priorities (see Annex 2: Structure of the CNM 2016 programme). In connection with the Call for Applications, the Office of the Plenipotentiary organised information seminars in six cities of Slovakia between 4 and 11 December 2015. The purpose of these seminars was to inform prospective applicants for grants from the 2016 CNM grant programme about the terms of the Call for Applications and the procedure for electronic registration of applications.

Table 9: Information seminars for applicants for CNM 2016 grants

place	date	number of participants
Bratislava, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	4.12.2015	66
Banská Bystrica, the Bystrica Special-Purpose Facility	7.12.2015	16
Komárno, Officers’ Pavilion	7.12.2015	83
Rimavská Sobota, Municipal Culture Centre	10.12.2015	54
Košice, Thália Theatre	11.12.2015	72
Prešov, A. Duchnovič Theatre	11.12.2015	23
total		314

In accordance with the Call for Applications, the applicants could submit only one grant application which could include several projects falling under one or more sub-programmes, priorities or subject areas. In the first phase of review, the grant applications were examined for formal compliance. The applications were checked for completeness as to the mandatory attachments and specific details that the application projects must contain within the meaning of the Grants Act and the Call for Applications.

Complete projects and projects corrected within the time limit set in requests for the elimination of shortcomings were forwarded for assessment to the panel for the evaluation of projects submitted under the 2016 Culture of National Minorities programme (hereinafter also ‘evaluation panels’).

In accordance with the Call for Applications and other binding rules, 15 evaluation panels were set up, one for each national minority and two evaluation panels for the Hungarian national minority – one for the so-called ‘written culture’ and one for the so-called ‘live culture’. In addition, a separate panel was set up for multicultural and inter-ethnic activities. The evaluation panels were set up in accordance with Decree of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 21/2011 Coll. of 24 January 2011 laying down the details of the composition, decision-making and organisation of work of, and the procedure to be taken by, the panels when evaluating grant applications and the criteria for the evaluation of grant applications under the competence of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, as

amended by Decree No 281/2012 Coll. The members of the panels were mostly persons belonging to national minorities, representatives of regions and experts on the individual sectors of culture, as well as representatives of State administration. The process of evaluation of CNM projects follows the relevant legislation²⁶ governing the process of submission and formal review of grant applications, evaluation of individual projects, as well as the whole process of entering into contracts with successful applicants, including the statements of expenditure for the grants under the relevant Call for Applications.

The role of the evaluation panels is to examine the projects in technical terms, according to the criteria specified in the Call for Applications and legislation of general application. They evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the grants and whether the amounts applied for are justifiable and reasonable. The panels evaluate individual projects without identifying the applicant and propose whether a project should be supported or not and how much funding it should receive. The panels evaluate each project individually, on the basis of scores. Seven criteria are evaluated: the relevance of the project's objectives and goals, its quality and uniqueness, tradition and continuity of the project presented and its cultural and social relevance, the project's specific contribution to the preservation and development of minority cultures, its target groups and feasibility of its budget. Each criterion consists of a scale of five indicators for the given criterion. The purposeful and eligible use of grants provided in the past is also examined, including compliance with the deadline for the submission of statements of expenditure.

In 2016, the Office of the Plenipotentiary sought to maintain the trend of prompt conclusion of agreements and payment of the grants. In 2016, the first agreements were signed already at the end of February 2016. Already in the first half of the year, €2 668 185 was provided and the amount rose to €3 094 110 in mid-August 2016, which was more than 80 % of the total amount allocated for support to minority cultures. The availability of funding is the basic requirement for promoting the culture and languages of national minorities living in Slovakia and it enables applicants to implement activities that make it possible to preserve and further develop their cultures. The accelerated approach of the Office of the Government to the provision of funding to applicants helped stabilise and enhance the standard of a number of organisations and made it possible to carry out activities for the development of the culture, language and education of national minorities living in Slovakia.

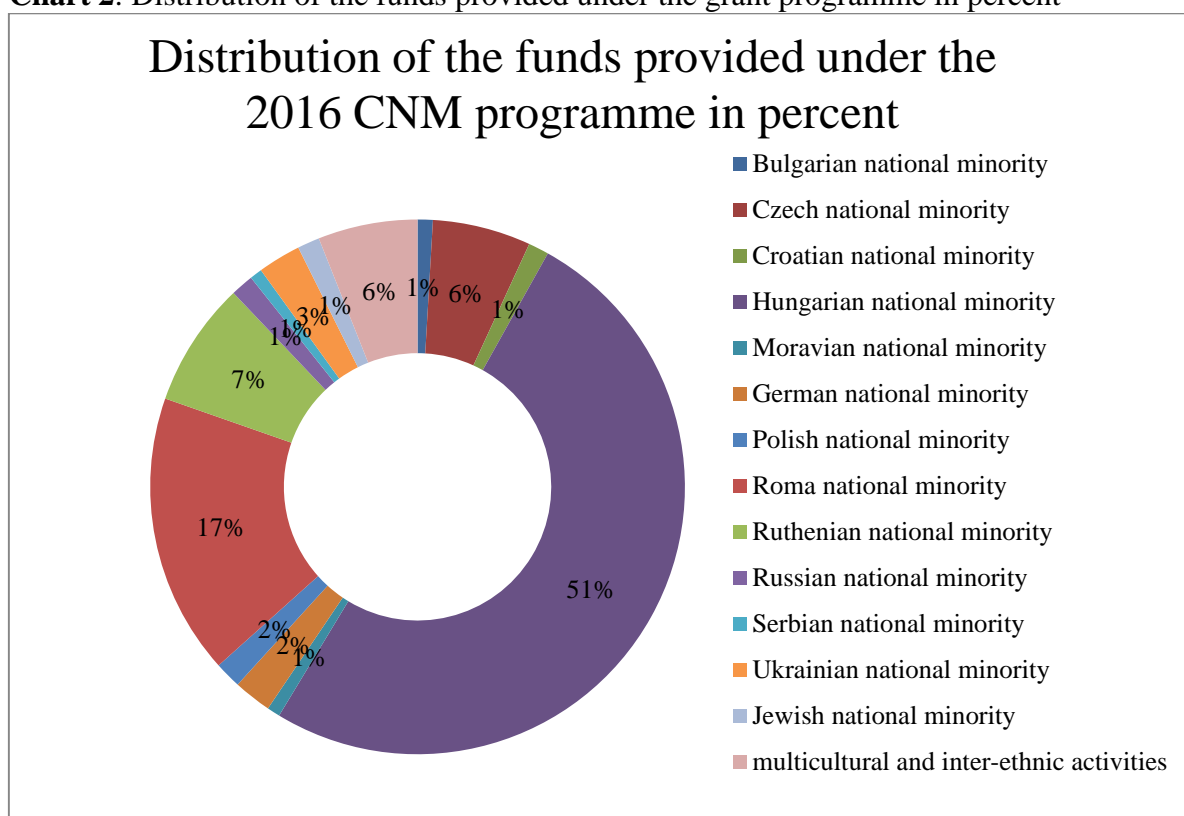
Table 10: Review of the number of projects recommended by the panels for approval, broken down by minority

national minority	number of supported projects	grant amount (in EUR)
Bulgarian	8	35 504
Czech	45	229 815
Croatian	8	48 064
Hungarian	718	1 955 296

²⁶ See the website of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/legislativa-svsrrnm/>, <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/kultura-narodnostnych-mensin-2016/>.

Moravian	7	30 489
German	10	88 880
Polish	20	64 683
Roma	152	664 152
Ruthenian	122	294 032
Russian	13	53 377
Serbian	9	28 706
Ukrainian	21	100 673
Jewish	20	52 825
inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue	78	232 754
total	1 231	3 879 250

Chart 2: Distribution of the funds provided under the grant programme in percent



A total of 1 846 projects were submitted under the 2016 CNM programme's Calls for Applications. Of these:

- 103 were not evaluated and were excluded, in particular due to incomplete applications, delivery after the deadline specified in the Call for Applications or due to the fact that the applicant was not authorised to perform the activity for which the grant was sought, etc.;
- 512 were evaluated, but did not receive support for a number of reasons, including poor project quality and limited amount of available resources;

- 26 projects were evaluated and approved, but not implemented, e.g. due to the fact that the applicant was not willing to enter into the grant agreement or in cases where the beneficiaries returned the grants provided, etc.;
- 1 205 projects were evaluated, approved and completed.

In the context of the Call for Applications, the evaluation panels recommended for approval a total of 1 231 projects from 555 applicants totalling €3 879 250.

Chart 3: Number of supported and unsupported projects under the 2016 CNM programme

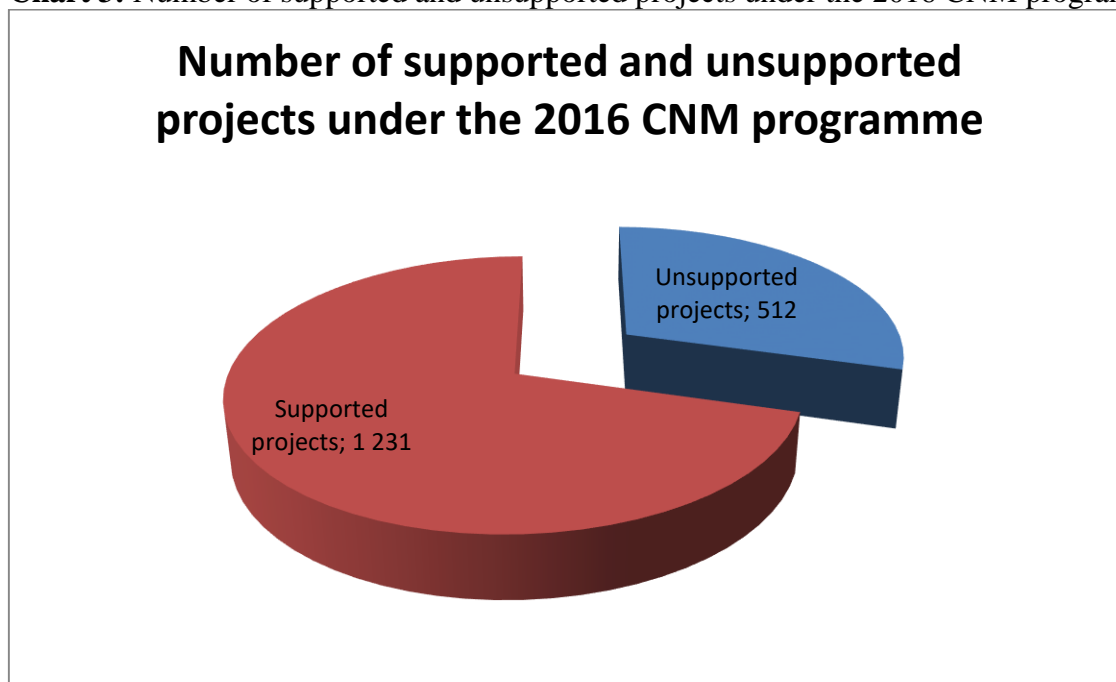
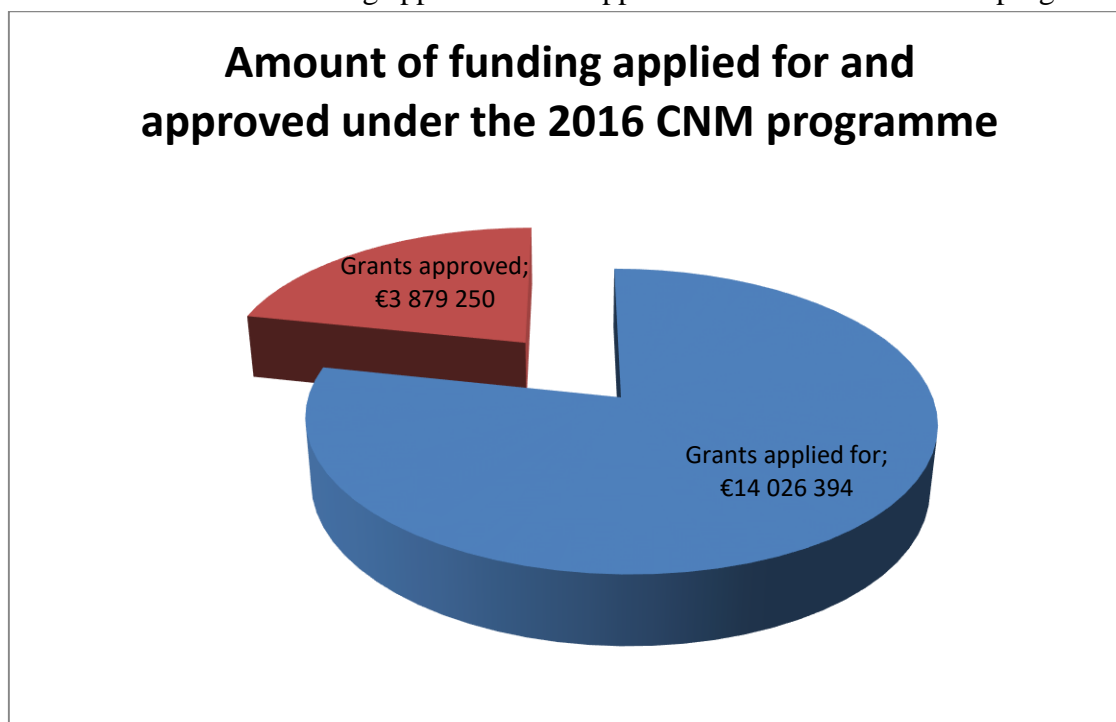


Chart 4: Amount of funding applied for and approved under the 2016 CNM programme



Selected statistical indicators generated from the 2016 CNM programme's electronic grant system²⁷

In 2016, the CNM electronic system continued to be improved in order to streamline the communication with applicants and speed up the grant payment process. In an effort to provide the public with as accurate information as possible, the system was regularly updated with the aim of, among other things, providing the maximum amount of information to assist in evaluating the use of CNM funding.

Based on the data provided by the grant programme's electronic system, selected programme indicators can be identified, such as the number of eligible applicants by legal personality, the number of applicants by self-governing regions and by the sub-programmes of the CNM grant program under which projects were included by applicants.

The scope of applicants eligible for the CNM programme is defined in § 3(1) of the Grants Act. In terms of legal personality, the projects seeking grants under the 2016 CNM programme that were recommended by the panels for approval were submitted by the following applicants²⁸:

- 861 (69.94 %) civic associations;
- 168 (13.65 %) municipalities;
- 84 (6.82 %) publicly-funded or partly publicly-funded organisations administered by a municipality or a higher territorial unit;
- 33 (2.68 %) non-profit organisation providing services of general economic interest;
- 30 (2.43 %) foundations;
- 20 (1.63 %) non-investment funds with registered office in Slovakia;
- 14 (1.14 %) interest associations of legal persons, which are legal persons;
- 7 (0.57 %) legal persons deriving their legal personality from a church or religious society;
- 7 (0.57 %) legal persons established by a special act (public universities);
- 7 (0.57 %) registered churches or religious societies.

No higher territorial units or international organisations registered in Slovakia applied for grants under the 2016 CNM programme.

In 2016, grants were sought by various entities from all eight self-governing regions²⁹:

- 374 projects (21.46 %) were submitted in the Nitra self-governing region;
- 365 projects (20.94 %) were submitted in the Trnava self-governing region;
- 279 projects (16.00 %) were submitted in the Košice self-governing region;
- 275 projects (15.78 %) were submitted in the Bratislava self-governing region;
- 224 projects (12.85 %) were submitted in the Prešov self-governing region;
- 192 projects (11.02 %) were submitted in the Banská Bystrica self-governing region;
- 22 projects (1.26 %) were submitted in the Žilina self-governing region;

²⁷ An electronic grant system is used for the CNM programme, which, among other things, provides for the possibility of simple statistical reports.

²⁸ See Annex 3: Selected figures on the 2016 CNM programme.

²⁹ See Annex 3: Selected figures on the 2016 CNM programme.

- 12 projects (0.69 %) were submitted in the Trenčín self-governing region.

The 2016 CNM programme was divided into 3 sub-programmes and 15 priorities³⁰:

- 1 135 projects (92.20 %) received support under sub-programme 1 – Promotion of the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities;
- 18 projects (1.46 %) received support under sub-programme 2 – Promotion of education and training on the rights of national minorities;
- 78 projects (6.33 %) received support under sub-programme 3 – Promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority society and national minorities and ethnic groups.



Source: Office of the Government archives

³⁰ See Annex 3: Selected figures on the 2016 CNM programme.

Part IV - Education and training for persons belonging to national minorities

4.1 Legislative and conceptual frameworks

The right to education and training of persons belonging to national minorities living in Slovakia is guaranteed by the Constitution and defined in other legislation. It derives from international documents of the Council of Europe ratified by Slovakia, namely the Framework Convention and the Language Charter, and from national legislation, in particular Article 34(2)(a) of the Constitution, Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Schools Act’), and § 6 and § 9 of MESRS SR Decree No 320/2008 Coll. on primary schools, as amended.

Under Article 34(2)(a) of the Constitution, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are guaranteed, in addition to the right to master the State language, the right to education in their own language under the conditions laid down by law. These conditions are laid down by the Schools Act. Along with the right to master the State language, the Schools Act provides children and pupils belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups with the right to education and training in their own tongue.

Other laws concerning this subject matter include, in particular, Act No 596/2003 Coll. on State administration in the school system and school self-government and on amendments to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter the ‘State School System Administration and School Self-government Act’), Act No 597/2003 Coll. on the financing of primary schools, secondary schools and school facilities, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Schools Financing Act’) and Act No 317/2009 Coll. on teachers and specialised staff and on amendments to certain acts, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Teachers and Specialised Staff Act’).

The Government’s Manifesto was one of the most important conceptual documents in several domains, including education and training for national minorities, for which it set several important priorities:

1. support to the exclusion of all schools with composite classes from the application of mandatory quotas in the areas inhabited by mixed language groups;
2. increased support to and ensuring the development of education and training of children and students belonging to national minorities in their native language;
3. support to a change in the methodology of teaching the Slovak language at minority schools in order to improve the command of the Slovak language among their students;
4. support to vocational education and training at schools having a minority language as a teaching language, including vocational education and training under the dual education system;
5. boosted material and technical conditions at schools and support to the preparation of textbooks and other teaching materials and continuous training of teachers and specialised staff at schools having a minority language as a teaching language;
6. preparation of a strategy for the development of teaching of the Ruthenian language and culture in kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools;
7. support, at primary schools and secondary schools, for classes about the life and history of national minorities living in Slovakia in the context of prevention and fight against extremism, nationalism and other extreme behaviours;

8. support to specific tasks pursued by tertiary schools with respect to the development of national minorities, their culture, language, historical research, ethnology, etc., and reflecting of these specific tasks when assessing activities of tertiary schools;
9. support for the education of primary school students in their mother tongue, including through extending the possibilities to provide subsidies for travel costs in cases where a municipality has no primary school with a relevant teaching language;
10. paying particular attention to the pre-primary education of children in kindergartens from three years of age in areas with high unemployment rates and in vulnerable and marginalised communities;
11. focus on developing inclusive education across all schools as an effective means to eliminate social exclusion, including through creating the necessary material and technical conditions to ensure the needs of children and students with special educational and training needs are met;
12. support for the optimisation of employee structure in order to enable increasing the number of experts at schools, in particular assistant teachers, social pedagogues, school psychologists and special pedagogues.

In connection with the implementation of the above priorities from the Government's Manifesto, the Schools Act was amended in 2016 so that from 1 September 2016, within the meaning of § 29(18) of the Schools Act, primary school classes using a minority language as the language of instruction are exempted from the minimum threshold for the number of pupils in a class (for further details, see part 1.1).

In this context, the legislative process to formulate the draft act amending the Schools Financing Act should also be mentioned. § 4aa(5) of this draft act reads as follows: 'The legal representative of a pupil belonging to a national minority shall be entitled to reimbursement of the costs of travel to the nearest school using the relevant minority language as the language of instruction if there is no primary school or primary school with a kindergarten using the relevant national minority as the language of instruction in the municipality or school district where the pupil belonging to a national minority permanently resides. The travel costs shall be reimbursed by the school using the national minority as the language of instruction at an amount equal to the cheapest student fare in regular bus transport.'

Information about the implementation of other priorities from the Government's Manifesto is provided in the sub-chapters below.

4.2 Institutional framework

Persons belonging to national minorities are provided education and training in schools and school facilities that use their minority language as the language of instruction and education. Education acquired in schools using a minority language as the language of instruction or schools providing instruction in a minority language is equivalent to that acquired in schools using Slovak as the language of instruction. The process of education and training in schools using a minority language as the language of instruction or providing instruction in a minority language is carried out in accordance with the national educational programmes for the various levels of education. The process of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities is institutionally supervised by the State School Inspection, which,

according to § 13(1) of the State School System Administration and School Self-government Act performs the function of State oversight of the standard of pedagogical management, standard of education and training and material and technical conditions, including practical training in schools and school facilities and practical training centres, and the standard of activities in special educational facilities and school facilities for educational counselling and prevention. It also handles complaints and petitions in this field.

In order to stabilise and further develop the minority education system, on 15 June 2016, the MESRS SR formed a new organisational unit at its regional education section – the **national minority education and training department** focusing primarily on issues of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities.

Key roles and competences regarding the process of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities are also performed by the National Institute for Education (hereinafter the ‘NIE’), the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (hereinafter the ‘MPC’), the State Vocational Education Institute (hereinafter the ‘SVEI’), the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education (hereinafter the ‘NICME’), the State School Inspection (hereinafter the ‘SSI’) and IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute (hereinafter ‘IUVENTA’).

Effective from 16 May 2016, the **NIE** has a new organisational structure. Three new departments were created at the Minority Education Content Creation and Development Section:

- the department for educational content for the Hungarian minority;
- the department for educational content for the Roma minority;
- the department for educational content for the Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities.

The **MPC** field office in Komárno performs tasks related to the promotion of professional development and continuous training for teachers and specialised staff of schools and school facilities using Hungarian as the language of instruction and has national competence in this domain. The MPC created a new post at the Komárno field office from 1 September 2016 and it currently has a staff of seven with three permanent members of staff and four project staff (until 31 August 2020). The staff of the MPC field office in Košice includes a continuous education teacher with the combination of Hungarian and arts.

Other authorities engaged in education and training for persons belonging to national minorities include the **Council of the Minister for Minority Schools** (hereinafter the ‘Council of the Minister’) established as an advisory body to the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports in this domain and for the implementation of the Language Charter within the meaning of Article 7(4), according to which ‘in determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages’, and Article 8, which focuses on education.

The members of the Council of the Minister include representatives of the Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Roma and German minorities. In accordance with the Council’s procedural and decision-making principles, other persons, in particular authors of documents submitted at its sessions and the staff of the Ministry and organisations directly subordinated to the Ministry, as well as other experts dealing with the issue of national minorities and Roma communities, may be invited to its sessions. In specific cases, foreign experts may also be

invited to the sessions of the Council of the Minister. The scope of competence of the Council of the Minister includes the preparation of proposals aimed at ensuring and implementing the rights of national minorities to education in their mother tongue or instruction of their mother tongue in accordance with Article 8 of the Language Charter and improving the standard of instruction of the Slovak language and the preparation of written opinions on legislation of general application relating to education and training for national minorities. The second session of the Council of the Minister was held on 12 January 2016 and discussed the information on the current state of minority education was after the legislative and content changes since the first session of the Council of the Minister, information on the Council's activities in the context of problems of national minorities (Hungarian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Roma and German) in regional education and information on the preparation and implementation of the MESRS SR project *Educational process of teaching the Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction*.

The Council also acts as an advisory body on the implementation of the Language Charter within the meaning of Article 7(4) of the Language Charter and on issues relating to national minorities and ethnic groups and persons belonging to them (for further details on the Council's activities in 2016, see point 2.2.2).

4.3 Education in minority languages

Education and training for persons belonging to national minorities are provided in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and school facilities using Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, German and Romani as the language of instruction or teaching these languages. According to § 12(3) of the Schools Act, in addition to the right to master the State language, children and students belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups have the right to education and training in their mother tongue under conditions laid down by law. The curriculum of primary and secondary schools using a language of instruction other than the State language includes the Slovak language and literature as a mandatory subject within a scope necessary to learn the language.

Within the meaning of § 12(5) of the Schools Act, children and students of persons belonging to national minorities are guaranteed education and training in:

- a) schools and classes where education and training are provided in the language of the respective national minority;
- b) schools and classes where one of the teaching subjects is the language of the national minority and the language of instruction for other subjects is the State language; certain other subjects may also be taught in the minority language in these schools and classes, in particular arts, music, physical education;
- c) school facilities where education is provided in the minority language.

The procedure for including a school or school facility in the network of schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'network') is the same regardless of the language of instruction. The recommended forms, along with a list of mandatory attachments for each type of school and administrator, are available on the MESRS SR website³¹. Within the meaning of § 14(6)(b) of the State School System Administration and School Self-

³¹ <http://www.minedu.sk/siet-skol-a-skolskych-zariadeni/>.

government Act, the MESRS SR decides on the inclusion of schools and school facilities in the network based on applications from administrators that may be:

1. municipalities;
2. self-governing regions;
3. district offices in regional capitals;
4. State-recognised churches or religious societies;
5. other legal or natural persons.

According to the provisions of § 16(1) of the State School System Administration and School Self-government Act, the application for inclusion of a school or school facility in the network is submitted by the administrator to the Ministry by 31 March of the calendar year preceding the year in which the school or school facility is to be established. According to § 17(1) of the State School System Administration and School Self-government Act, applications for removal of schools or school facilities from the network are submitted by the administrator, the district office in the regional capital or the Chief School Inspector. The MESRS SR, which is the competent administrative authority, may only act within the limits of the applicable legislation.

As of 15 September 2016, the network of schools and school facilities comprised the following schools teaching minority languages or using a minority language as the language of instruction³²:

A. Kindergartens

As of 15 September 2016, a total of 2 959 kindergartens were included in the network of schools and school facilities in Slovakia (public, private and church), of which 352 (11.9 %) were using a language of instruction other than Slovak, namely Hungarian, Ukrainian and others.

Table 11: Number of kindergartens in the Slovak Republic by language of instruction

language of instruction	number of kindergartens
Slovak-Hungarian	71
Hungarian	269
Ukrainian	4
German	1
Ruthenian	2
Bulgarian	1
English	1
French	1
Slovak and English, bilingual	1
Slovak and French, bilingual	1

³² The list of schools and school facilities using a minority language as the language of instruction/education is available at: http://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka- kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia.html?page_id=9580.

total	352
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Two documents concerning the issue of pre-primary education were prepared in 2016 and made available on the MESRS SR website:³³ *the Analysis of children's educational results in kindergartens* and the *Situation analysis – capacity of kindergartens*.

B. Primary schools

As of 15 September 2016, there were a total of 2 101 primary schools included in the network of schools and school facilities (2 113 in the 2015/2016 school year), of which 1 927 were public, 117 were church and 57 were private schools, with a total of 23 369 classes. Of the above 2 101 primary schools, a total of **262 (12.5 %) primary schools using Hungarian, Ukrainian or other languages** were included in the network of schools and school facilities as of 15 September 2016.

Table 12: Number of primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction as of 15 September 2016

language of instruction	number of primary schools
Slovak-Hungarian	28
Slovak-Ukrainian	1
Hungarian	227
Ukrainian	1
German	2
Bulgarian	1
English	2
total	262

In primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 1 742 classes in public schools attended by a total of 27 653 pupils, of which 899 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 13 777 pupils and 843 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 13 876 pupils;
- a total of 95 classes in church schools attended by 1 405 pupils, of which 44 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 619 pupils and 51 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 786 pupils;
- a total of 2 classes in private schools attended by 19 pupils, of which 1 was a 0 to 4th grade class with 10 pupils and 1 was a 5th to 9th grade class with 9 pupils;

In primary schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 11 classes in public schools attended by 168 pupils, of which 6 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 85 pupils and 5 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 83 pupils;

In primary schools using German as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 3 classes in public schools attended by 33 pupils, all of which were 0 to 4th grade classes, i.e. there were no classes in the 5th to 9th grades;
- a total of 8 classes in private schools attended by 131 pupils, all of which were 0 to 4th grade classes, i.e. there were no classes in the 5th to 9th grades;

³³ <https://www.minedu.sk/analyza-zaskolenosti-deti-v-materskych-skolach/> .

In primary schools using Bulgarian as the language of instruction, there were:

- 8 classes in private schools attended by 76 pupils, of which 4 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 42 pupils and 4 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 34 pupils³⁴.

C. Secondary schools

As of 15 September 2016, there were a total of 443 secondary schools included in the network of schools and school facilities (of which 340 were public, 85 were private and 18 were church schools). Of the above number of secondary vocational schools, **40 were secondary vocational schools using a language of instruction other than Slovak** and 12 were bilingual secondary vocational schools. At the same time, there were 242 gymnasias (of which 64 were bilingual). Of the above number of gymnasias, **30 were gymnasias using a language of instruction other than Slovak**.

Table 13: Number of secondary vocational schools by language of instruction as of 15 September 2016

language of instruction	number of secondary vocational schools
Slovak-Hungarian	29
Hungarian	11
total	40

Table 14: Number of bilingual secondary vocational schools by language of instruction as of 15 September 2016

language of instruction	number of secondary vocational schools
English	10
German	2
total	12

Table 15: Number of gymnasias by language of instruction as of 15 September 2016

language of instruction	number of gymnasias
Slovak-Hungarian	7
Hungarian	18
Ukrainian	1
German	1
Bulgarian	1
English	2
total	30

³⁴ See: Slovak Science and Technology Information Centre – Statistical Yearbooks available at http://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia.html?page_id=9580.

Table 16: Number of bilingual gymnasia by language of instruction as of 15 September 2016

language of instruction	number of bilingual gymnasia
English	43
French	5
German	5
Russian	3
Spanish	7
Italian	1
total	64

As the information above suggests, for the time being, there is no secondary school in Slovakia using Romani as the language of instruction. In this regard, it should be noted that instruction of Romani as a compulsory elective course is provided at the Zefyrín J. Malla Private Gymnasium in Kremnica, which implemented a project called *Romani language – a bridge between us* in 2016 as part of the programme *Local and regional initiatives to reduce ethnic inequalities and promote social inclusion* co-financed from the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the State budget of the Slovak Republic.

Last year, the MESRS SR published a call for grant applications for development projects *Regional and multicultural education for pupils belonging to national minorities 2016*, under which activities contributing to multicultural dialogue and support to regional education were the priority area of support. Under this call for application, 35 projects from six self-governing regions (Banská Bystrica – 4, Trnava – 6, Košice – 8, Nitra – 15, Prešov – 1, Bratislava – 1) were submitted to the MESRS SR.

The MESRS SR earmarked €20 000 for these development projects with a maximum grant amount of €2 000 per project. The total amount of funding applied for from the MESRS SR was €58 151 and the required 5 % co-financing by administrators, including other sources, amounted to €5 802.09. Based on evaluation of the projects by members of the panel, 12 projects totalling €19 690 were recommended for approval.

D. Vocational training

In accordance with the Government's Manifesto, the MESRS SR implements support activities related to vocational education and training in schools using minority languages as the language of instruction, including vocational education and training within the dual education system. State educational programmes for vocational education and training for individual groups of fields of study and individual levels of education respect the specific aspects of instruction at secondary vocational schools using a minority language as the language of instruction. All framework curricula for vocational education and training contain (in the context of general education subjects) a defined number of minority language and literature classes, while instruction of specialised subjects is provided in the minority language; the content and scope of vocational education and training is identical to that in the Slovak

language. In the 2015/2016 school year, vocational education and training in Hungarian was provided under the following groups of fields of study and vocational training:

- 23, 24 Mechanical engineering and other metalworking production I, II (828 students);
- 26 Electrical engineering (746 students);
- 29 Food industry (373 students);
- 31 Textiles and clothing (42 students);
- 33 Wood processing (93 students);
- 34 Printing and media (76 students);
- 36 Construction, geodesy and cartography (380 students);
- 37 Transport, posts and telecommunications (51 students);
- 39 Specialised technical fields (293 students);
- 42, 45 Agriculture, forest management and rural development I, II (329 students);
- 53 Medical fields of training at secondary medical schools (231 students);
- 62 Economic sciences (24 students);
- 63, 64 Economics and organisation, trade and services I, II (3 481 students);
- 76 Teaching (141 students);
- 82, 85 Arts and craft production I, II (107 students).

In the dual education system, students are preparing for a profession or a set of professions or for the pursuit of professional activities according to the specific needs and requirements of an employer. Students attend practical training directly at the employer's training site in accordance with model teaching plans and model curricula. A condition for participation in the dual education system is the interest of employers in the relevant region who enter into dual education agreements with secondary vocational schools.

National testing of 5th grade primary school pupils – Testing 5-2016³⁵

On 23 November 2016, national testing of 5th grade primary school pupils (Testing 5-2016) was organised at 1 485 schools. Of these, 1 344 were primary schools using Slovak, 125 were schools using Hungarian, 15 were schools using Slovak and Hungarian and 1 was a school using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. The tests were taken by 45 299 fifth grade pupils, of whom 42 384 were pupils from schools using Slovak, 2 902 from schools using Hungarian and 13 were from schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. For the first time, pupils with special educational needs, specifically pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and pupils with health disabilities, except pupils with mental disabilities, took part in the testing. A total of 1 768 pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were tested, i.e. 3.9 % of the total number of the fifth-grade pupils. The number of pupils with health disabilities totalled 3 095, i.e. 6.8 % of the total number of the 5th grade primary school pupils tested.

As in the school year before, the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education made it possible for the certification schools to undertake the testing in electronic form. E-testing 5-2016 was attended by 1 602 pupils at 83 primary schools. One of the

³⁵ See: http://www.nucem.sk/documents//46/testovanie_5_2016/tlacova_sprava/TS_T5_2016_FINAL.pdf.

advantages of the state-of the-art electronic form of testing was the immediate feedback received by pupils after undertaking the test in the form of preliminary results. The pupils were tested in mathematics, Slovak language and literature and Hungarian language and literature.

The **Hungarian language and literature test** was taken by a total of 2 902 pupils, of whom 2 806 took the test in paper form and 96 in electronic form. Pupils' average score in the Hungarian language and literature test was 55.5 %. Girls scored 57.8 % and boys scored 53.2 % on average, the average results of girls and boys being comparable. The average score was 55.2 % for pupils tested in paper form and 63.3 % for pupils tested in electronic form, which, considering the number of pupils, are comparable results.

From the regional standpoint, the results of pupils in Hungarian language and literature were as follows: Pupils from the Trnava self-governing region were the most successful and pupils from the Banská Bystrica self-governing region were the least successful. The average scores were 66.7 % for pupils from the Trnava self-governing region (807 pupils), 66.6 % for pupils from the Bratislava self-governing region (48 pupils), 58.5 % for pupils from the Nitra self-governing region (986 pupils), 49.1 % for pupils from the Košice self-governing region (423 pupils) and 39.9% for pupils from the Banská Bystrica self-governing region (638 pupils).

In terms of the type of school administrator, the results of pupils in Hungarian language and literature were as follows: the average score attained by pupils from public schools (2 726 pupils) was 55.0 %, pupils from private schools (9 pupils) averaged at 54.1 % and pupils from church schools (167 pupils) at 63.4 %. Given the number of pupils in the individual types of schools in terms of administrators, the results achieved are comparable.

The results of pupils in Hungarian language and literature compared to the national average by individual districts are as follows: results significantly better than the national average were achieved by pupils in the districts of Košice I and Dunajská Streda. Results significantly worse than the national average were achieved by pupils in the districts of Rimavská Sobota, Lučenec, Revúca and Košice-okolie. The Hungarian language and literature test was taken by 93 pupils from primary schools. The average score of primary school pupils in the Hungarian language and literature test was 49.6 %.

MATURITA 2016 – results of the external part of the maturita exams³⁶

In the 2015/2016 school year, the external part (State-designed written tests) and written internal part of the maturita exams (Slovak secondary school exit exams) were taken by a total of **44 991 students**, either on the regular or the alternative date. The regular date of the maturita exams for 44 906 secondary school students was between 15 and 18 March 2016 and 120 students took the exams on the alternative date between 12 and 14 April 2016. The exams were also taken by 1 527 students with health disabilities (3.4 % of all students taking the maturita exams).

³⁶See:

http://www.nucem.sk/documents//25/maturita_2016/vysledky_spravy/Tlac_sprava_Maturita_2016_NUCEM_fin_al.pdf.

In this school year, the external part and written internal part of the maturita exams were undertaken by **726 secondary schools**, of which 654 were schools using Slovak, 43 were schools using Slovak and Hungarian, 28 were schools using Hungarian and one was a school using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. Electronic maturita exams were taken at schools, which expressed interest in this form of testing. E-Maturity 2016 tests were taken by 2 317 pupils from 115 schools. These pupils completed the tests using computers and received preliminary results as soon as the tests were completed.

Students took the external part of the language tests on both the regular and alternative dates, namely the Slovak language and literature test (41 772 students) and, at schools using a minority language as the language of instruction, Hungarian language and literature (1 818 students), Slovak language and Slovak literature (1 820 students) and Ukrainian language and literature tests (21 students).

Results of the external part of the maturita exams in the 2015/2016 school year – regular date

Hungarian language and literature: The average test score was 55.5 %, with students taking the test in written form averaging at 55.5 % and students taking the electronic form of the test at 55.6 %. Students from gymnasia achieved a higher score (66.4 %) than students from secondary vocational schools and conservatories (47.1 %). A score of 33 % or less was reached by 136 students (7.5 %) on the regular date of the exams. In terms of the school administrator, the results achieved by church schools (3.9% of the examined students), private schools (18.6 %) and public schools (77.5%) were comparable. The differences in the results between the self-governing regions where students undertook the Hungarian language and literature test were mildly in favour of the Bratislava self-governing region when compared to the Nitra self-governing region and in favour of the Trnava self-governing region when compared to the Nitra self-governing region. Differences of moderate relevance were recorded in favour of the Bratislava region when compared to the Banská Bystrica self-governing region and to the Košice self-governing region.

Slovak language and Slovak literature (schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction): The average test score was 48.6 %, with students taking the test in written form averaging at 48.6 % and students taking the electronic form of the test at 46.5 %. Students from gymnasia achieved a higher score (58.1 %) than students from secondary vocational schools and conservatories (41.2 %). A score of 33 % or less was reached by 341 students (18.7 %) on the regular date of the exams. In terms of the school administrator, church schools (3.9 % of the examined students) had mildly better results compared with private schools (18.6 % of the examined students). The results of public schools (77.5 % of the examined students) were comparable. Students in the Bratislava self-governing region reached the best results and the differences between the results of students in the Bratislava and Nitra self-governing regions and between the Bratislava and Košice self-governing regions were of mild significance. The difference between the results of students in the Bratislava self-governing region and the Banská Bystrica self-governing region was were of moderate significance. Other results were comparable.

Ukrainian language and literature: The average test score was 71.7 %. The test was taken by 21 students at one gymnasium using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. All students achieved a score higher than 33 %.

Situation and standard of pedagogical management and the processes and conditions for education and training

Kindergartens – 125 comprehensive inspections were carried out in kindergartens in the 2015/2016 school year, which is 4.26 % of the total of 2 959 kindergartens in Slovakia. One of the inspections in the Prešov self-governing region was initiated by a third party. Of the inspected kindergartens, 115 were public, 3 were church and 7 were private kindergartens. The inspected kindergartens included 109 kindergartens using Slovak, 11 using Hungarian and 5 kindergartens using Slovak and Hungarian as the language of education. 41 kindergartens were located in cities and 84 were in rural areas.

Primary schools – comprehensive inspections aimed at identifying the situation and standard of pedagogical management and processes and the conditions for education and training were conducted at 143 primary schools, which is 6.76 % of the total of 2 113 primary schools in Slovakia. Of the inspected schools, 129 were public, 10 were church and 4 were private schools. Slovak was used as the language of instruction at 120 of these schools, 20 were Hungarian schools and 3 used Slovak and Hungarian as the language of instruction.

Secondary schools – school inspectors inspected the situation and standard of pedagogical management and education and training process and the conditions for education and training at 21 secondary vocational schools (4.6 % of the total number of secondary vocational schools in Slovakia), of which 16 were public, 4 were private, 1 was a church school; 3 of the schools used Slovak and Hungarian as the language of instruction.

Gymnasia – in the 2015/2016 school year, the SSI conducted comprehensive inspections of the situation and standard of pedagogical management and education and training process and the conditions for education and training at 23 gymnasia, which is 9.35 % of the total number of gymnasia in Slovakia. Among the inspected schools, 1 gymnasium was private and 7 were church gymnasia; 1 of the gymnasia used Hungarian as the language of instruction.

D. Higher education

Higher education is governed by Act No 131/2002 Coll. on higher education and on amendments to certain acts, as amended. We distinguish between public, state, private and foreign higher education institutions. In the academic year of 2016/2017, as of 31 October 2016, higher education was provided at 35 higher education institutions, of which 20 were public, 3 were state and 12 were private higher education institutions.

Higher education is also provided in several minority languages, in particular by the higher education institutions below.³⁷

- J. Selye University in Komárno;
- Comenius University in Bratislava;
- University of Prešov in Prešov;

³⁷See: http://www.cvtisr.sk/buxus/generate_page.php?page_id=9573.

- Sts Cyril and Methodius University in Trnava;
- Catholic University in Ružomberok;
- Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra;
- Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica.

4.4 Opportunities for teachers and specialised staff for further training on minority education

Further training for teachers and specialised school staff is governed by Act No 317/2009 Coll. on teachers and specialised staff. As in the preceding period, in 2016 the professional development of teachers and specialised staff within the career system was implemented by means of continuous training, creative activities related to the pursuit of educational or professional activities and self-learning. Opportunities for continuous training for teachers and specialised staff in national minority languages were also available and there were programmes focusing on the methodology of instruction of minority languages and other issues related to education and training for children and students belonging to national minorities. According to the data available on the MESRS SR's website, 1 255 continuous training programmes had been accredited as of 7 November 2016³⁸.

Below is a list of the existing accredited programmes for schools using a language of instruction other than Slovak:

- Application of new scientific results in the teaching of the Hungarian language and literature at secondary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Application of new scientific results in the teaching of the Hungarian language and literature at primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Implementation of the expanding curriculum for art classes in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Working with Slovak language textbooks in lower secondary education in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and schools using Slovak as the language of instruction;
- Improving communication competencies in the teaching of the Slovak language for teachers at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Development of reading literacy in primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Developing of communication competencies of pupils in Slovak language classes at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Creation and application of didactic games and learning aids at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Development of pupils' reading literacy in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Practising communication skills in Slovak language classes at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;

³⁸See: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/10605.pdf>.

- Development of communication skills in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Methods and forms of utilising historical realia in the teaching of Ruthenian language and literature;
- Ruthenian language and teaching of Ruthenian in primary and secondary schools;
- Ruthenian realia and the possibilities for including them in primary school curricula;
- Development of communication competencies using texts of different styles in Ukrainian language classes.

Accredited educational programmes (hereinafter ‘AEP’) on the topics below were successfully completed by 63 teachers in 2016. These were AEPs for teachers from schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction:

- Improving communication competencies in the teaching of the Slovak language for teachers at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction;
- Development of communication skills in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction.

In the context of ensuring sustainability of national projects, the MPC provided training under the national project *Training for teachers towards inclusion of marginalised Roma communities* (MRC1). The training programme *Cooperation in the educational process between families from marginalised Roma communities and the school*, which was created and accredited under this national project, was attended by 22 participants and successfully completed by 19 teachers in 2016.

The **Roma Training Centre** (hereinafter the ‘ROCEPO’) is an integral part of the MPC’s Prešov regional office, which has a national reach. Its key activities include the implementation of continuous training for teachers and specialised staff from schools and school facilities with a high representation of children and pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and from marginalised Roma communities and the provision of expert and methodological assistance to these schools and school facilities with regard to education and training. Within the framework of continuous training, 152 participants attended and 149 successfully completed AEPs on the following topics in 2016:

- Romani language in education;
- Multicultural education against prejudice and racism;
- Enhancing the creativity of the teacher’s personality;
- Global education and its application in the educational process.

The MPC, in cooperation with the civic association eSlovensko, organised the seminar *Without prejudice* for teachers at the second stage of primary schools, secondary school teachers and educators, which focused on the following priority topics – elimination of prejudices and prevention of discrimination, extremism and radicalisation. The seminar included a screening of the film *Rytmus sídliskový sen* [Rytmus – a dream from a housing estate], a discussion on how the film could be used in the educational process and presentation of the results of a study identifying pupils’ attitudes towards national minorities.

The Móra Jókai's Summer University, organised by the MPC in cooperation with the Union of Hungarian Teachers as part of training, cultural and social activities, contributed to the development of teachers' communication competencies and application of creativity in the educational process. The week-long event was attended by 400 teachers from schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction. In addition, the MPC, in cooperation with the NIE and the Norwegian European Wergeland Centre institute, organised the *Slovak and Czech Regional Academy 2016* between 2 and 6 November 2016 aimed at promoting a democratic and inclusive school climate in order to strengthen the competencies of education and training professionals with regard to implementing and supporting education towards democratic citizenship and human rights.

As part of the national project Promotion of Pre-primary Education for Children from Marginalised Roma Communities I, preparations proceeded to create 250 teacher assistant posts and 150 specialised staff posts. In 2017, a total of 1 491 jobs in all self-governing regions, except the Bratislava self-governing region, will receive support through national projects, the beneficiary of which will be the OGPRC. The objective of the national project Promotion of Pre-primary Education for Children from Marginalised Roma Communities I is to achieve a higher educational level of children from marginalised Roma communities by increasing the number of children from these communities attending kindergartens. This national project should contribute to improving their preparedness for successfully completing higher levels of education, which will, in the long run, improve the labour market prospects of persons belonging to marginalised Roma communities.

4.5 Specific aspects of education and training for children belonging to national minorities in schools and school facilities

There are specific aspects to the educational needs of children belonging to national minorities that require special approach to teaching certain subjects and measures to eliminate language barriers, provide quality textbooks, instructional texts and teaching aids used in schools.

On 25 August 2016, a new framework curriculum (hereinafter the 'FC') for primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction was approved by the MESRS SR as part of the *Innovated State Educational Programme* (hereinafter the 'ISEP') effective from 1 September 2016.

This FC extends the number of minority language and literature lessons in primary education from a total of 21 to a total of 24. From 1 September 2016, schools using a minority language as the language of instruction can choose between two applicable framework curricula in the 2016/2017 school year, which are then to be followed in the 1st and 2nd grade:

- a) the FC for primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction effective from 1 September 2015;
- b) the FC for primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction effective from 1 September 2016 (an addendum to the ISEP for primary schools).

However, under the two-tier model of education, schools are allowed to add additional teaching subjects beyond the compulsory FC as part of their school educational programme

(hereinafter the ‘SEP’), provided that these additional subjects are funded by the school from its own resources.

Based on the Government’s Manifesto, whose key objectives included the preparation of a **strategy for the development of teaching of the Ruthenian language**³⁹ and culture in kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools, this strategy was formulated by an expert working group and, after an internal consultation exercise, presented to the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports for signature. As regards the **mission of higher education and its specific roles in respect of the development of national minorities**, their culture and language, history research, ethnology, etc. and consideration of these specific roles by the MESRS SR when evaluating the activities of higher education institutions in 2016, no proposals for modifying the system of fields of study within the meaning of the *2015 Report on the State of National Education* were received. With a view to the current objective to reduce the system of fields of study, the issue of Romani should be addressed as part of one of the following existing fields of study (as a study programme): non-Slavic languages and literature, foreign languages and cultures, general linguistics, linguistics of specific language groups.

Systematic preparation of future teachers can be ensured in the context of the existing fields of study – pre-school and elementary pedagogics and teaching of academic subjects. Study programmes focusing on the preparation of teachers for individual minorities can also be accredited within these fields of study. However, the higher education institution needs to be adequately staffed to provide good quality education, including language training. The MESRS SR does not finance studies at private higher education institutions. The granting of subsidies to private higher education institutions is subject to submission of an application by the institution and approval by the Government. In 2016, the MESRS SR did not receive any applications from private higher education institutions for subsidies for delivering accredited study programmes aimed at preparing teachers teaching in Romani. The accredited study programmes are also taken into account when funding is provided to public higher education institutions. The MESRS SR currently registers study programmes in Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Hungarian and German, but no study programme at a higher education institution in Slovakia provided in Romani.

With regard to support for teaching on the life and history of national minorities living in Slovakia in primary schools and secondary schools in the context of preventing and combating extremism, nationalism and extreme behaviours, in 2016, the NIE prepared a study material as an addendum to the history textbook for the 2nd stage of primary schools under the title *National minorities – Let’s get to know each other*. The material offers an overview of the history, culture and life of national minorities living in Slovakia.

In 2016, the MESRS SR published a call for grant applications to increase the inclusiveness of education under the title *More successful in the primary school*. The priority of the project is to reduce and prevent early school-leaving and promote equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education, including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training. A specific objective is to increase the inclusiveness and equal access to good quality education and improve the

³⁹ <https://www.minedu.sk/vychova-a-vzdelavanie-narodnostnych-mensin/>.

results and competencies of children and students. Primary schools can use the grants provided under the project to create job positions for teacher assistants, pedagogical assistants or an inclusive team (special pedagogue, school psychologist and social pedagogue). These specialists can be of assistance in activities contributing to offsetting the pupils' disadvantages and ensuring equal opportunities in the educational process or improving the school success of primary school pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.

Since 2012, the MESRS SR has been publishing calls for applications under the development projects *Support for the creation of a positive social climate and motivation in multicultural primary school classes* and *Support for education and training for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in primary schools*. The priority area of the support are activities contributing to offsetting pupils' social disadvantages and ensuring equal practical opportunities by encouraging the interest of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in education. Other areas of support include:

- application of new forms and methods of education, in particular in respect of promoting reading literacy in the teaching process;
- innovation of educational methods with emphasis on the use of ICT in the teaching process and innovation of didactic means for digital teaching;
- activities promoting an inter-cultural environment;
- activities developing collaboration with parents.

Within the framework of the call for applications for funding under the development projects *Support for education and training for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in primary schools 2016*, 47 projects were submitted to the MESRS SR (Banská Bystrica region – 2, Trnava region – 3, Košice region – 7, Nitra region – 21, Prešov region – 9, Bratislava region – 1, Žilina region – 1 and Trenčín region – 3). The MESRS SR earmarked €38 986 for this development project and the maximum grant amount per project was €2 587. The total amount of funding applied for from the MESRS SR was €109 003.90 and the required 5 % co-financing by administrators, including other sources, amounted to €10 817.20. Based on evaluation of the projects by members of the panel, 15 projects totalling €33 484 were recommended for approval.

As a follow-up to the call for applications from 5 October 2016, the MPC launched the national project *School open to all* aiming to provide equal access to good quality education and improve the results and competencies of children and students by promoting inclusive education and boosting the professional competencies of teachers and specialised school staff. The project is scheduled to continue until 2020.

4.6 Support for improving the standard of Slovak language teaching for persons belonging to national minorities

In the context of promoting an improvement in the standard of teaching the Slovak language, the MESRS SR is implementing the project *Educational process of teaching the Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction* running from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020. In addition to the MPC, the NIE, SSI and NICME are also taking part in the project, together with selected primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction. The objective of the project is to increase the

standard of the educational process of teaching the Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction. The baseline teaching strategy should be communicative lessons and communicative approach to creating the teaching concept and strategy. The aim of the project is to create and implement a system of support and development of professional competencies of teachers from primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction focused on enhancing the standard of teaching the Slovak language and Slovak literature, to monitor teaching of the Slovak language and Slovak literature aimed at developing the communication competencies of pupils from primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and to create support materials for the educational programme developing pupils' communication, reading and writing skills and improving their relationship to the subject, language and culture.

The NIE is also organising several competitions for pupils and students from primary and secondary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, such as *Poznaj slovenskú reč* [Know the Slovak tongue]. The purpose of these competitions is to develop the pupils' communication skills and habits so that they acquire high language competence and reading literacy and develop a positive attitude towards the Slovak language⁴⁰.

4.7 Equipment of schools and school facilities using a minority language as the language of instruction or teaching a minority language

In 2016, schools continued to be administered by administering institutions, which also provided for the material and technical framework for conducting the process of education and training, together with the didactic equipment used in this process. A description of the material and technical requirements forms part of the educational programme of each school, while the SSI, as the government authority for the school system, oversees the standard of **material and technical conditions**. For the needs of schools, the SSI published the evaluation criteria applicable for the 2016/2017 school year, as approved by the Chief School Inspector⁴¹.

As regards the provision of quality textbooks, the Textbook Policy Department of the MESRS SR is aware of the problem of a shortage of textbooks for national minorities; unfortunately, this problem is, among other things, a result of the complicated procurement processes. For this reason, the Public Procurement Department has approached the Public Procurement Office with an initiative to amend the Public Procurement Act. The ambition of the Public Procurement Department and the entire MESRS SR is to include an exception in the amendment with regard to the development, publication and purchase of textbooks, workbooks and worksheets used in compulsory schooling. This is already possible for low-value and below-threshold contracts, i.e. €135 000.00 excluding VAT and €209 000.00 excluding VAT, respectively. This exception would help effectively address the problems mentioned above and it would be possible to commission the development of new textbooks meeting all the required standards within a short period of time.

⁴⁰ See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/poznaj-slovensku-rec>;
<http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/pekna-madarska-rec>;
<http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/preco-mam-rad-slovincinu-preco-mam-rad-slovensko>.

⁴¹ See: <http://www.ssiba.sk/Default.aspx?text=g&id=36&lang=sk>.

4.8 Informal education

IUVENTA, a partly publicly-funded organisation of the MESRS SR, operates in the domain of informal education and work with youth and administers the MESRS SR grant system for youth, the *Youth programmes 2014-2020*. Under the programme *Youth policy priorities*, two organisations working with Roma youth received support totalling €50 000. The first of these projects was aimed at developing the competencies of potential young Roma leaders who should be able to advocate effectively the interests of Roma and otherwise disadvantaged youth at the local, regional and national levels and, at the same time, should be able to use their talent and art as a tool in advocacy and activation activities when working with youth. The objective of the second project was to uncover the creative potential of children and teenagers from the Roma community through regular rehearsals, public performances, visits to cultural events and formulation of their own opinions and positions, thereby developing their skills important for successful integration into society.

Under the *Youth organisations support* programme, financial support was provided for a project on informal education and work with children and youth of Hungarian nationality focusing on increasing young people's competencies and preserving Hungarian identity, culture and folk traditions.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Slovakia promoted the youth agenda in connection with the priority theme concerning the importance of uncovering and developing the talent and potential of young people by introducing attractive approaches in youth work. Slovakia prepared a legislative document on this topic – the Conclusions of the Council of the European Union (hereinafter the 'EU Council') entitled *New approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people*. During the negotiation period in the EU Council Working Party on Youth, its chair also requested positions and consultations from other EU Council formations, including the Working Party on Social Questions, which was preparing the *EU Council Conclusions on accelerating the process of Roma integration* at that time. Personal consultations also took place and the recommendations were taken into account in the preparation of the *EU Council Conclusions on accelerating the process of Roma integration* at the EU Council Working Party on Youth. This document underlines new, modern methods of working with youth, including the on-line environment, with the aim of responding to new trends in the lives of young people and engaging as many young people as possible in activities. This will make it possible to uncover the hidden potential of young people and, through informal education, open up new opportunities for them. The document specifically addresses the need to pay special attention to those young people who are in difficult life situations or are marginalised in the society.

IUVENTA collaborated with the OGPRC to prepare and execute the youth conference entitled *Improving the position of Roma youth as a driving force of change*. The conference was organised by the European Commission together with the MLSAF SR, the MESRS SR and the OGPRC as part of Slovakia's presidency of the Council of the EU. The conference contributed to a better understanding of the current situation of Roma youth in Europe, to the visibility of the activities of this group of young people and political efforts relating to this issue. This resulted in proposals to address the problems of Roma youth at the European,

national, regional and, especially, local levels, and revise the direction of the Roma youth action plan for the future.

Under a contract with the MESRS SR, IUVENTA organises subject olympiads and multi-round competitions. It administers and distributes the assignments and correct solutions to organisers of all local rounds in Slovakia through district offices in regional capitals and designated leisure centres. Translations are provided, in particular, for assignments intended for primary school categories. In 2016, assignments and solutions for the following competitions were translated into Hungarian: the Mathematical Olympiad, Physics Olympiad, Chemistry Olympiad, Biology Olympiad, Geography Olympiad, Pythagoriad, Human Rights Olympiad, History Olympiad and the Technical Olympiad.

In 2016, participants were sent by the National Agency for the Erasmus+ EU programme for youth and sports to a cross-country training course organised by the Hungarian national agency under the name *Feel the rhythm! V4+ Roma*. The purpose of the training course was to show interesting and exciting examples of youth work in practice with specific focus on the Roma community and the Erasmus+ programme itself. The training course was designed to offer an opportunity for Roma youth organisations to get to know each other and participate in the exchange of examples of good practice, present opportunities for participating in international projects and, hence, look for future partners for the implementation of their own projects. In addition, this training course was an excellent opportunity for deepening cooperation between V4 countries, which share almost identical history and social status. The course participants are required to have some experience in organising projects at least on local level, be active members of Roma organisations (including at the international level, if they had the opportunity), be able to attend the whole training course and be at least 18 years old. In 2016, the National Agency for the Erasmus+ EU programme for youth and sports provided support for a total of 15 projects focusing on the topic of national minorities or Roma. The results of the projects are available in the Erasmus+ project results database.

Part V – The use of national minority languages

5.1 Legislative and conceptual frameworks

Article 34(1) and (2) of the Constitution guarantees citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic the right to disseminate and receive information in their mother tongue and the right to use their language in official contact under conditions set out by law. The legislative framework for the use of national minority languages provided by the Constitution is complemented by a range of acts of general application, in particular Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended (hereinafter ‘Act No 184/1999 Coll.’) and Act No 270/1995 Coll. Other laws governing the use of national minority languages concern a variety of subject areas, such as the administrative procedure, civil court procedure, criminal procedure, elections, schools, the use of names and surnames, the maintenance of registries, television and radio broadcasting, etc.

The most important international treaties concerning the protection of linguistic rights of national minorities that are binding on the Slovak Republic include the Framework Convention (Notice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic No 160/1998 Coll.) and the Language Charter (Notice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic No 588/2001 Coll.).

The use of national minority languages by citizens of the Slovak republic is governed, above all, by Act No 184/1999 Coll., which concerns the use of minority languages in official contact relating especially to signs in minority languages, local referenda on the modification of names of municipalities in minority languages, provision of information in minority languages, the powers of the Office of the Government with regard to the use of minority languages and administrative infractions related to the use of national minority languages. Under certain provisions, Act No 184/1999 Coll. refers to other existing legislation. The Act recognises nine minority languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Romani, Ruthenian and Ukrainian. The legislation implementing Act No 184/1999 Coll. includes Government Regulation No 535/2011 implementing certain provisions of Act No 184/1999 Coll., which lays down the details relating to the provision of information on the possibilities for using national minority languages in official contact and in connection with the form of bilingual official documents, and Government Regulation No 221/1999 issuing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority account for at least 20 % of the population, as amended.

The State language in the territory of the Slovak Republic is Slovak. The status of the language is defined in detail in Act No 270/1995 Coll. and several other acts. In accordance with this Act, the State language has priority over other languages used in the Slovak Republic.

In its Manifesto, the Slovak Government undertook, in relation to the use of minority languages, to ensure that the Railways Act is aligned with the Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities with regard to train station signs in ethnically-mixed areas and committed itself to creating conditions for aligning the practice with the applicable Act on the Use of Languages of National Minorities on the basis of an analysis conducted in ethnically-mixed areas. Several legislative and non-legislative measures need to be taken to make this commitment reality.

One of the first steps taken by the Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development in relation to the implementation of the Government's Manifesto was Instruction No 60/2016 of 20 December 2016, with effect from 1 January 2017, instructing the General Director of the Railways of the Slovak Republic to ensure, within the meaning of Act No 184/1999 Coll., that the names of train stations in the municipalities referred to in § 2(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. are displayed in minority languages by 31 December 2017. This concerns 55 railway stations. This measure will be followed by further legislative changes and measures aimed at aligning Act No 184/1999 Coll. with the Railways Act.

5.2 Expert and methodological assistance in the use of national minority languages

Within the meaning of § 7a(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the Office of the Government provides expert and methodological assistance to public authorities and organisational units of security forces and rescue services with regard to the implementation of this Act and handles administrative infractions related to the use of minority languages. The authority competent to exercise the above powers and obligations on behalf of the Office of the Government is the Head of the Civil Service Office at the Office of the Government who, in doing so, acts in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary according to the Organisational Rules of the Office of the Government⁴². To this end, an expert committee was set up at the Office of the Government in 2012 as a permanent advisory body to the Head of the Civil Service Office.

The purpose of the committee is to provide expert and methodological assistance to public authorities and organisational units of security forces and rescue services with regard to the implementation of Act No 184/1999 Coll. and prepare opinions on complaints about suspected cases of breaches of Act No 184/1999 Coll. Members of the committee include representatives of the Office of the Government, the MC SR, the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MTC SR'), the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MF SR'), the MLSAF SR, the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MEn SR'), the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MH SR'), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MARD SR'), the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'GCCA SR') and the ATVS.

In order to ensure that the expert committee is functional and able to work effectively towards its objectives, the Office of the Government invited the relevant central government authorities to update the list of members of the committee. In connection with the application of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the secretariat of the Head of the Civil Service Office received a total of 117 submissions from one legal entity in 2016. The submissions concerned suspected breaches of § 4(6) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., which was allegedly breached on electricity distribution installations in the municipalities listed in Government Regulation No 221/1999 Coll. issuing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority account for at least 20 % of the population. In these municipalities, information relating to threats to life, health, safety or property of citizens of the Slovak Republic should be displayed in publicly accessible places in the minority language, along with the State language. The Office of the Government, in cooperation with the Office of the

⁴² See: http://www.vlada.gov.sk/data/files/6822_organizacny-poriadok-uplne-znenie.pdf.

Plenipotentiary, has taken several steps on this matter. Based on communication between the Office of the Government and one of the concerned parties, a Hungarian sign has been added to the Slovak warning sign placed on the electricity distribution installation.



A sign warning of a threat to life, health and safety in a minority language placed in the territory of the municipality of Gabčíkovo (Source: SEPS, a.s.)

Within the meaning of § 7a(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the Office of the Government also provides, through the Office of the Plenipotentiary, expert and methodological assistance to public authorities with regard to the management of terminology in minority languages and creation of specialised glossaries. The preceding reports⁴³ provide information on the preparation and provision of access to several specialised glossaries, the purpose of which is to simplify and make the use of minority languages in official contact easier and more effective and are designed, in particular, for civil servants using minority languages in day-to-day communication, as well as for interpreters and translators working with technical texts from the public administration domain and citizens who need to use technical terminology in minority languages when attending to their matters. A terminology framework in the State language was created for the development of the glossaries, which was discussed with all the departments concerned and which represents a database of the most frequently used terms and phrases from selected domains of State administration and local self-government. To date, the following glossaries have been made available on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary: Slovak-Hungarian specialised glossary, Slovak-Roma specialised glossary, Slovak-Ruthenian specialised glossary and Slovak-Ukrainian specialised glossary. The glossaries were developed

⁴³ See the Report on the Use of National Minority Languages at: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/spravy-a-koncepcne-materialy>.

by recognised experts who work as lawyers and linguists and use the respective minority languages⁴⁴.

In relation to implementation of the tasks and priorities set for this subject area in the Government's Manifesto, which is particularly challenging due to their scope, complexity and cross-sectional nature, the Plenipotentiary undertook several activities to establish cooperation and interaction with several relevant ministries last year. In this context, he addressed the MTC SR, the MF SR, the MC SR, the MARD SR, the MJ SR, the MESRS SR, the MI SR, the MH SR and the MFEA SR in a letter requesting information about the tasks planned by these ministries for this election term that in any way relate to the status and rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia and the use of minority languages in practice.

In the second half of 2016, the Plenipotentiary also initiated a series of working visits to several municipalities, district offices and client centres in locations inhabited by persons belonging to multiple national minorities. This included visits to Medzilaborce, Nové Zámky, Štúrovo and Galanta, in particular. The objective of these visits was to monitor the practical application of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages. Based on the information obtained, the Plenipotentiary arrived at the conclusion that there were practically no problems with oral communication in the context of official contacts or the use of bilingual municipal signs or bilingual signs on buildings, etc. Shortcomings were identified primarily with regard to written official contact. During his visits, the Plenipotentiary stressed the need for a proactive approach to the use of minority languages at the level of public authorities and encouraged those involved to follow the statutory obligations in this area.



The Plenipotentiary's working visit to the Medzilaborce District Office (Source: the Plenipotentiary)

⁴⁴ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/odborne-terminologicke-slovniky-v-jazykoch-narodnostnych-mensin/>.



The Plenipotentiary's working visit to the Štúrovo client centre (Source: the Plenipotentiary)

At the turn of 2016–2017, the Plenipotentiary continued a series of working meetings with the relevant government authorities on issues related to improving the use of minority languages in practice. In this respect, he also requested them that they supply comprehensive background information on how minority languages are used in practice in the spheres of competence of each ministry.

In this context, the MLSAF SR and the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Headquarters (hereinafter the 'LSAFH') provided information for the needs of the report for the first time. In the background information supplied, the MLSAF SR notes that measures to promote the use of minority languages in official contact are being actively taken in Slovakia, especially in the implementation of measures for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship, enforcement of court decisions in facilities for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship, the provision of state social benefits and assistance in material need, as well as in the provision of social services. In all of the above fields, the principle of equal treatment is guaranteed by legislation and applied. The MLSAF SR regularly monitors the situation with regard to the use of minority languages in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 and Article 13 of the Language Charter and Act No 184/1999 Coll.

The relevant local public authorities and social service facilities ensure that selected staff who are in contact with the public and clients of social service facilities have command and use minority languages in relation to persons applying to them in these languages. One of the principles followed when placing children in a facility for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship is that they are placed in the facility closest to the place of their habitual residence. This encourages contact between the children and their families, who can use the regional or minority language when communicating with the child.

In 2015 and 2016, a preferential criterion – the command of other than the State language (Hungarian, Romani, Ruthenian, etc.) defined depending on the region – was used in

selection procedures to recruit new staff of departments for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship at labour, social affairs and family offices and at facilities for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship organised as part of national projects.

In social service facilities administered by the Prešov self-governing region, most clients use Slovak in ordinary communication. In non-formal communication, other languages of this linguistically-mixed region are used, e.g. Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romani and Ruthenian. According to officials of the Prešov self-governing region, Ruthenian is used in both oral communication and official contact.

There were 3 274 recipients of social services in the Nitra self-governing region in 2016 according to the region's data. In 2016, there were 2 023 employees working in jobs related to the provision of social services (as of 22 July 2016), 692 of whom had a command of the Hungarian language and 36 had a command of Romani.

5.3 Report on the use of national minority languages in the territory of the Slovak Republic for the 2015–2016 period

In accordance with § 7a(2) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended, the Office of the Government presents biannual reports on the use of national minority languages in the Slovak Republic. Prior to submission, the Council of the Government takes a position on the language report.

In 2016, the Office of the Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Plenipotentiary, prepared the *Report on the use of national minority languages in the territory of the Slovak Republic for the 2015–2016 period* (hereinafter the 'Language Report'). The Language Report sums up the national legislative framework for the use of national minority languages in Slovakia, maps out the process and results of implementation of the international legal framework for the protection of minority languages in Slovakia, recent developments with regard to the institutional framework for the use of national minority languages in Slovakia and compliance with the obligations and application of the rights arising from Act No 184/1999 Coll.

The preparation of the report involved an extensive questionnaire survey conducted by the Office of the Plenipotentiary. The purpose of the survey was to collect data relating to the relevant contexts of the use of national minority languages within the meaning of Act No 184/1999 Coll. in the 2015-2016 period (until 1 July 2016). Compared with the questionnaire survey conducted in 2014 while working on the 2013-2014 report, the scope of this survey was extended both in terms of both the types of respondents and the number of contexts and situations covered, in which minority languages are used under the conditions laid down by the Act. Compared with the surveys conducted when preparing the previous reports, in this survey, the questions in the different types of questionnaires for each type of respondents were more detailed and possible answers were extended to include further alternatives. At the same time, the questionnaire was formulated so as to ensure that the data obtained can be compared with the data collected through the surveys for the previous language reports. A total of 763 respondents were contacted (638 municipalities, 6 self-governing regions, 85 government authorities, 28 district directorates of the Police Force and 6 district directorates of

the Fire and Rescue Service). Questionnaires were returned by 714 respondents, which represents a 94 % return rate. The Language Report also includes the questionnaires on the use of minority languages and the results of an analysis of the data obtained from this questionnaire survey.

On 8 August 2016, the questionnaires were sent out to all municipalities included in the list provided in the Annex to Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 221/1999 Coll., issuing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority account for at least 20 % of the population, as amended. These comprised a total of 638 municipalities, of which 507 were municipalities with a Hungarian minority population, 56 with a Ruthenian, 50 with a Roma, 6 with a Ukrainian and 1 municipality with a German minority population, as well as 18 municipalities with populations belonging to two national minorities (11 with both Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities, 5 with both Hungarian and Roma minorities, 1 with both Ukrainian and Roma minorities and 1 with both a Ruthenian and a Roma minority population). Data collection took place between August and October 2016. In the interest of achieving the highest possible return rate, the municipalities were repeatedly requested to send back their completed questionnaires, thanks to which a 94 % return rate was achieved. The questionnaire focused on analysing data in seven thematic areas relating to the use of national minority languages under the competence of local self-government authorities as defined in Act No 184/1999 Coll. The municipalities were presented with a total of 74 questions on seven topics relating to the minority language, official contact, bilingual documents, sessions of local self-government bodies, provision of information to the public and the area of public contact. The fact that the scope of the current questionnaire has been extended is evident from a comparison with the questionnaire sent out to municipalities as part of the 2014 survey, which contained 16 questions.

This Language Report was the first to also analyse in detail the use of national minority languages by government authorities, thereby providing a deeper and more comprehensive picture of the use of national minority languages. The objective was to extend the questionnaire survey to include other groups of respondents who received questionnaires specifically designed to obtain data on particular spheres or segments of the use of national minority languages. The following government authorities were approached: 13 district offices, 18 tax offices, 12 customs offices, 23 labour, social affairs and family offices, 8 regional veterinary and food administrations, 6 regional public health authorities and 5 state archives. Of the total of 85 respondents, questionnaires from 82 respondents were received, which means that the questionnaire return rate was almost 97 %.

For the first time, the Language Report mapped out the use of national minority languages by legal persons established by local self-government authorities (municipalities and self-governing regions). With a view to the fact that no list of such legal persons existed, when preparing the questionnaire survey, the Office of the Plenipotentiary approached all relevant municipalities and six self-governing regions (the Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov regions) where these municipalities are located with a request for cooperation in the collection of data relating to these entities. In this area, data for 41 legal persons established by local self-government authorities were processed.

In addition, for the first time since the entry into force of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the Language Report paid attention to the use of national minority languages by Police Force and

Fire and Rescue Service officers. The Office of the Plenipotentiary identified 28 district directorates of the Police Force, in which a minority language is used in official contact along with the State language. Of the total of 28 district directorates of the Police Force, 18 sent their completed questionnaires back, which represents a 64 % return rate. District directorates of the Police Force were requested to respond to 34 questions structured according to the following themes: official contact, bilingual documents, provision of information to the public and final questions. All six district directorates of the Fire and Rescue Service sent their completed questionnaires back, which represents a 100 % return rate. District directorates of the Fire and Rescue Service were requested to respond to a total of 12 questions covering the following themes: official contact, provision of information to the public and final questions.

The purpose of such a broadly conceived Language Report was not only to present comprehensive data on the situation regarding the use of national minority languages in Slovakia, but also, based on an analysis of this data, to identify those areas where deficiencies exist in practical application.

5.3.1 Basic findings and conclusions of the language report and the resulting tasks

Three categories of linguistic rights arising from Act No 184/1999 Coll. were monitored by the Language Report for all entities approached:

- a) linguistic rights, compliance with which is compulsory and failure to comply with which constitutes an administrative infraction (under § 7b of Act No 184/1999 Coll.);
- b) linguistic rights, compliance with which is compulsory, but a failure to comply with which does not constitute an administrative infraction;
- c) linguistic rights, the application of which is optional under Act No 184/1999 Coll.

The Language Report specifies the individual types of deficiencies or situations where the possibilities for using minority languages in practice are not utilised (for details, please refer to Annexes 6 to 8 to the Language Report).

The results of the monitoring show that breaches of Act No 184/1999 Coll. may have occurred in 1 712 cases. Against this background, the Office of the Government has already started to take action in accordance with § 7(b) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. According to the results, in the category of linguistic rights, compliance with which is compulsory, but a failure to comply with which does not constitute an administrative infraction, linguistic rights are not being complied with in 590 cases. Linguistic rights, the application of which is optional under Act No 184/1999 Coll., are used as an option in 1 736 cases, partially used in 698 cases and not used in 2 440 cases.

The results of an analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey provided in the Language Report, including comparisons with the results of the surveys in the two previous language reports, revealed a number of shortcomings in this field. Even though positive changes in the use of national minority languages by public authorities in Slovakia have occurred in some respects, in some cases, the linguistic rights of national minorities were not respected and, in some respects, the rights were not exercised sufficiently. In this sense, based on the Slovak Government's Manifesto for 2016-2020 and the Action Plan approved by the Government, the Language Report provides a basis for targeted activities aimed at improving the practical conditions for the use of the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups.

The Government approved the Language Report through Resolution No 15/2017 of 11 January 2017 tasking the Head of the Government Office and the Plenipotentiary with the following:

- by 30 June 2017, prepare a methodological instruction in relation to Act No 184/1999 Coll.;
- by 30 June 2017, set up an inter-ministerial working group to prepare an analysis of legislation of general application related to linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia;
- by 31 December 2017, in cooperation with the ATVS, prepare an analysis to identify the needs for system-level training for the staff of local state administration authorities, local self-government authorities and staff of legal persons established by local self-government authorities on the rights and obligations arising from Act No 184/1999 Coll.

Conclusion

The present **2016 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities** focuses on mapping out the changes that occurred in this subject area in the period in question (where necessary, it also covers changes before and after this period) and provides the relevant data and information concerning the key aspects of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Hence, the continuity of providing a comprehensive picture of the status and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, incorporating recent developments in this subject area, is maintained. Each part of the report is based on the results of monitoring and analyses of respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities conducted by the Office of the Plenipotentiary and other relevant government authorities, local self-government authorities and other relevant parties. Due to the limited scope of this Report, it only contains data and information directly related to the topic of interest. Further relevant information, including from the extensive supporting documents provided by the relevant ministries, is provided in the annexes to this Report.

Last year was particularly important from the perspective of persons belonging to national minorities, especially in connection with the adoption of strategic and conceptual documents relating to the status and rights of national minorities in Slovakia. In this respect, the report maps out in detail two of these documents, namely the part of the Government's Manifesto focusing on objectives regarding Slovakia's minority policies and the Action Plan, which has become the first conceptual plan adopted by the Slovak Government with specific broad-spectrum and cross-sectional measures to allow the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to be exercised more thoroughly. Another no less important moment was the adoption of the Government resolution containing specific tasks arising from the Report on the Use of National Minority Languages in the Territory of the Slovak Republic for the 2015–2016 period, which analysed the situation and shortcomings in this subject area. Equally important were the results of the dialogue with international monitoring mechanisms and their current recommendations relevant to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities or protection of regional or minority languages.

With a view to implementing the objectives and tasks set out in the aforementioned programming and strategic documents and following on from the results of monitoring of the developments in each subject area covered by this report, it is possible to identify the main challenges for the forthcoming period in respect of the key aspects of allowing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to be exercised.

As regards participation, i.e. involvement of persons belonging to national minorities in addressing matters that concern them and the mechanisms of co-decision on public affairs, according to the operational objectives of the Action Plan, this concerns, in particular, the implementation of measures to promote and improve the mechanisms for the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in decision-making on matters that concern them, including strengthening the status, situation, competences and capacities of advisory and consultative bodies.

In education and training for persons belonging to national minorities, which is another key matter with regard to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities,

this involves the continued progressive implementation of the priorities defined in the Manifesto and the Action Plan.

In the equally important subject area of preservation, protection and promotion of the culture of national minorities, according to the objectives under the Manifesto, this concerns the continued implementation of changes in the financing of culture, namely the creation of a public fund to support the culture of national minorities and the implementation of further measures arising from the Action Plan.

In respect of the use of minority languages, in the spirit of the Government's commitments from its Manifesto, this concerns the creation of conditions for aligning the practices in ethnically-mixed areas with the applicable Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of languages of national minorities, as amended, including gradual steps in liaison with municipalities and other local self-government authorities towards gradually removing the remaining shortcomings in this subject area as identified in the Report.

List of annexes

1. Activities of self-governing regions to support national minorities
2. Structure of the CNM 2016 programme
3. Selected data on the 2016 CNM programme
4. List of periodicals published in minority languages registered by the MC SR

Annex 1: Activities of self-governing regions to support national minorities

Self-governing region	Policy focusing on persons belonging to national minorities	Funds allocated for national minorities (in EUR)	Activities
Banská Bystrica self-governing region	n/a	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural institutions administered by the Banská Bystrica self-governing region: <i>Edification centres</i>: Hont-Ipeľ Edification Centre (Veľký Krtíš), Gemer-Malohont Edification Centre (Rimavská Sobota), Pohronie Edification Centre (Žiar nad Hronom), Podpolianske Edification Centre (Zvolen), Novohrad Edification Centre (Lučenec).</p> <p><i>Libraries</i>: E. Štúr Regional Library (Zvolen), Novohrad Library (Lučenec), Hont-Novohrad Library (Veľký Krtíš), Matej Hrebenda Library (Rimavská Sobota).</p> <p><i>Regional museums and galleries</i>: Gemer-Malohont Museum (Rimavská Sobota), Central Slovak Museum in Banská Bystrica, Novohrad Museum and Gallery in Lučenec.</p> <p><i>Theatres</i>: Na Rázcestí Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica</p>
Bratislava self-governing region	none developed	n/a	<p>The Bratislava self-governing region provided support to the following projects related to the culture of national minorities in 2016:</p> <p>Jewish Culture and Art – 7th edition of the music festival, Gypsy jazz festival, fjúžn 11 – a festival of new minorities, Multikulti in the library – a series of inclusive events, Bratislavské rožky [Bratislava's rolls] – activities mapping out the multi-ethnic history of Bratislava, Central European Forum 2016, Pressburger Klezmer Band, Dezider Banga – Láska je srdcom vesmírneho zvona [Love is the heart of the cosmic bell], Bez kultúry nie sme [Without culture, we don't exist].</p> <p>Various activities in cultural facilities administered by the Bratislava self-governing region, Small Carpathian Edification Centre in Modra</p>
Košice self-governing region	The Culture and Tourism Department has prepared a development plan for the Romathan Theatre to provide a comprehensive solution with regard to the	In 2016 34 400 – 15 activities related to the culture of national minorities	<p>Various activities in cultural and edification facilities administered by the Košice self-governing region:</p> <p><i>Edification centres</i>: Gemer Edification Centre in Rožňava, Spiš Edification Centre in Spišská Nová Ves, Zemplín Edification Centre in Michalovce.</p> <p><i>Cultural centres</i>: Bodva Valley and Rudohorie Cultural Centre in Moldava nad Bodvou, Medzibodrožie Cultural Centre in Kráľovský Chlmec, Abova Cultural Centre in Bidovce.</p>

	conditions for the development and dissemination of authentic Roma art.		<i>A double purpose facility:</i> South Zemplín Museum and Cultural Centre in Trebišov.
Nitra self-governing region	n/a	35 335 Support was provided to 80 projects related to the culture of national minorities	Various activities in cultural and edification facilities administered by the Nitra self-governing region: <i>Libraries:</i> Anton Bernolák Library in Nové Zámky, Tekov Library in Levice, Karol Kmet' Regional Library in Nitra, József Szinnyei Library in Komárno. <i>Galleries:</i> Nitra gallery, Ernest Zmeták Gallery of Art in Nové Zámky. <i>Museums:</i> Ján Thain Museum in Nové Zámky, Podunajské Museum in Komárno, Tekov Museum, Jozef Nécsey Gallery. <i>Regional edification centres and an observatory:</i> Regional Edification Centre in Nitra, Tekov Observatory in Levice.
Prešov self-governing region	n/a	130 237	Various activities in cultural facilities administered by the Prešov self-governing region: <i>Edification centres:</i> Vihorlat Edification Centre, Podduklianske Edification Centre in Svidník, Ľubovňa Edification Centre in Stars Ľubovňa, Upper Zemplín Edification Centre in Vranov nad Topľou, Podtatranské Edification Centre in Poprad, Upper Šariš Edification Centre in Bardejov. <i>Libraries:</i> David Gutgesel District Library in Bardejov, Podtatranská Library in Poprad, Podduklianska Library in Svidník, Vihorlat Library in Humenné, Ľubovňa Library in Stará Ľubovňa, Upper Zemplín Library in Vranov nad Topľou, P. O. Hviezdoslav Library in Prešov. <i>Regional museums and galleries:</i> Vihorlat Museum in Humenné, National History Museum in Hanušovce, Ľubovňa Museum – Stará Ľubovňa castle, Museum in Kežmarok and Tatra gallery in Poprad.
Trenčín self-governing region	none developed	n/a	Various activities in cultural facilities administered by the Trenčín self-governing region. Regional Culture Centre in Prievidza organised several events relating to national minorities, e.g. 'Súzvuky' [Consonances] – performances by vocal groups of the local Carpathian German associations and 'Mosty' [Bridges] – reviving and maintaining traditional Roma culture.
Trnava self-governing region	n/a	3 300 Support was provided to 14 projects related to the culture of	Support for minority organisations as part of the Call for Applications under the programme 'Support for Culture and Art Activities in 2016'. Various activities of the 18 cultural facilities administered by the Trnava self-governing region.

		national minorities	
Žilina self-governing region	none developed	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural facilities administered by the Žilina self-governing region:</p> <p><i>Libraries:</i> Regional Library in Žilina, Kysuce Library in Čadca, Liptov Library of G.F. Belopotocký in Liptovský Mikuláš, Orava Library of Anton Habovštiak in Dolný Kubín, Turiec Library in Martin.</p> <p><i>Edification centres:</i> Regional Culture Centre in Žilina, Liptov Cultural Centre in Liptovský Mikuláš, Orava Cultural Centre in Dolný Kubín.</p> <p><i>Museums and galleries:</i> Liptov Gallery of Peter Michal Bohúň, Liptov Museum in Ružomberok, Turiec Gallery in Martin.</p>

Annex 2: Structure of the CNM 2016 programme

In accordance with the call for applications and its annexes, the 2016 CNM programme was divided into sub-programmes and priorities as follows:

1. Promotion of the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities

- 1.1. publishing activities, support for periodical and non-periodical publications, audio and multimedia carriers and electronic content,
- 1.2. activities of theatres and folk-art ensembles and activities of cultural and church institutions,
- 1.3. promotion of cultural activities and artistic creation,
- 1.4. research into the culture, life, history, language and identity of persons belonging to minorities,
- 1.5. educational projects,
- 1.6. interest and leisure activities,
- 1.7. foreign and international cultural activities.

2. Promotion of education and training on the rights of national minorities

- 2.1. support for education and training for children and youth on the rights of national minorities,
- 2.2. support for education and seminars on the rights of national minorities,
- 2.3. analytical, expert and publishing activities on the rights of national minorities.

3. Promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority society and national minorities and ethnic groups

- 3.1. promotion of mutual understanding and convergence between ethnic groups and between the majority society and minorities, as well as between the individual ethnic minorities,
- 3.2. projects focusing on the identification and recognition of common cultural, artistic and scientific values and traditions,
- 3.3. projects focusing on uncovering and exploring family, local and regional history, traditions, personalities and monuments in ethnically mixed environments,
- 3.4. promotion of the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance towards minority languages and cultures in the system of education and training and in the mass media,
- 3.5. promotion of exchange programmes, study visits, joint training events, and knowledge and art competitions for children and youth from different ethnic and language groups.

Annex 3: Selected data on the 2016 CNM programme

Chart 5: Supported and unsupported projects by the applicant's legal form

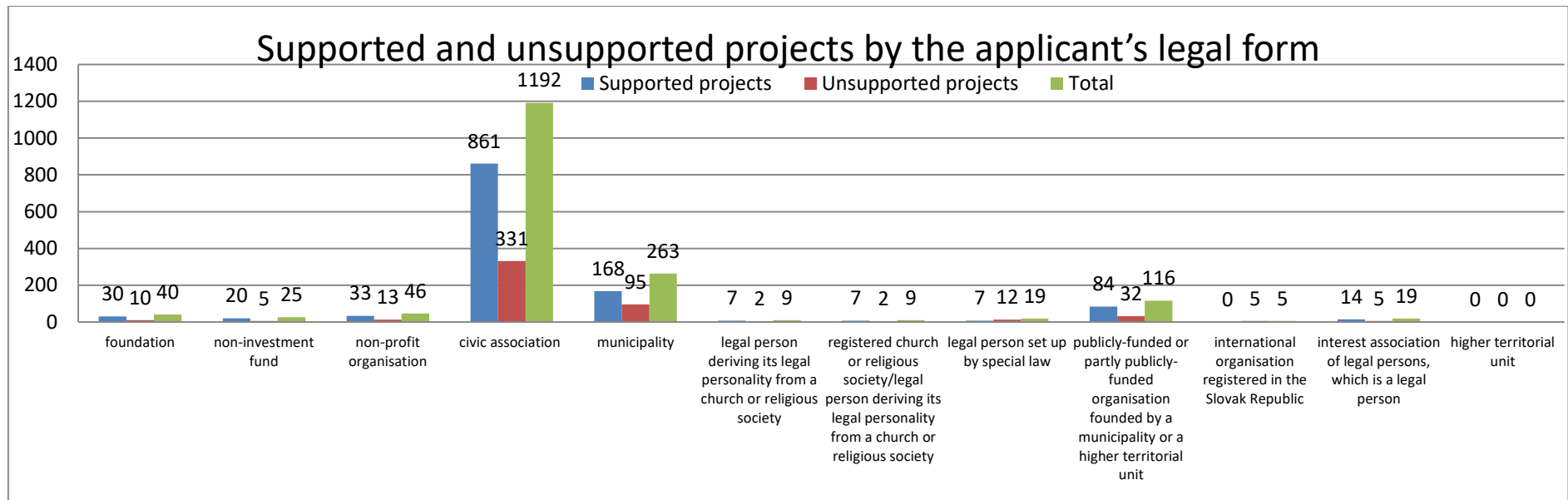


Chart 6: Approved grant amounts by the applicant's legal form

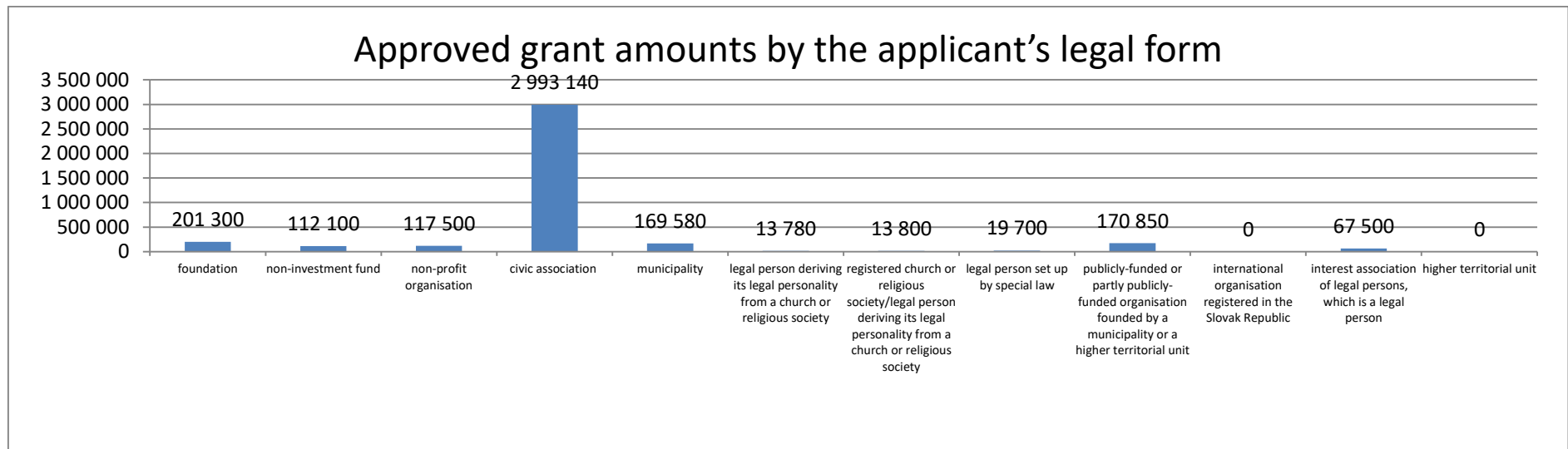


Chart 7: Number of supported and unsupported projects by the applicant's registered office

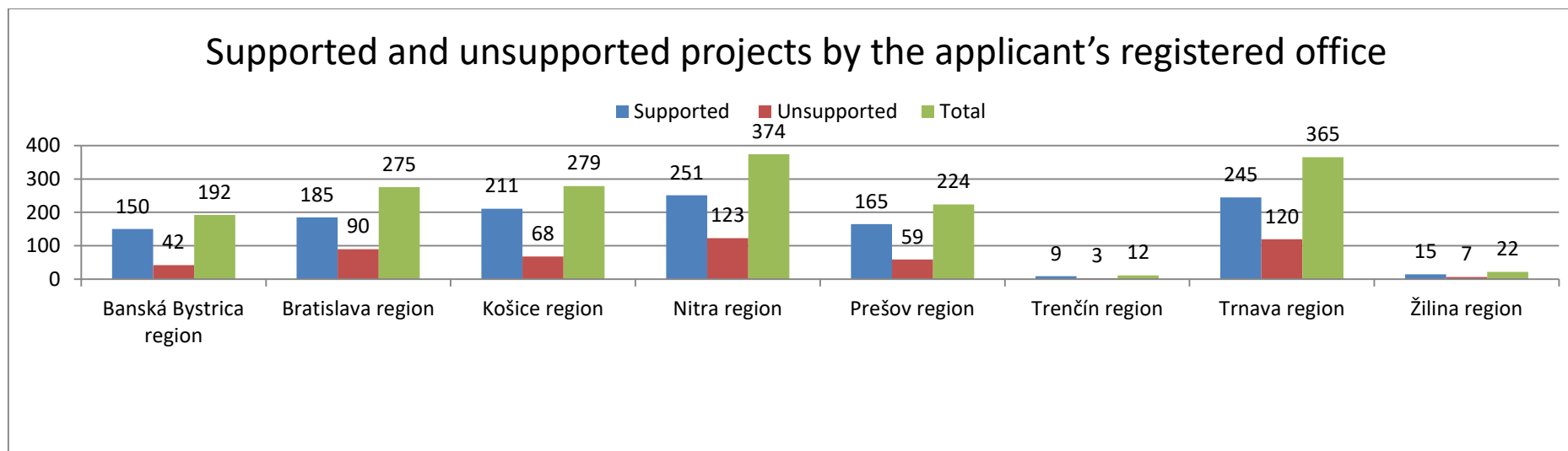


Chart 8: Applied for and approved grant amounts by the applicant's registered office

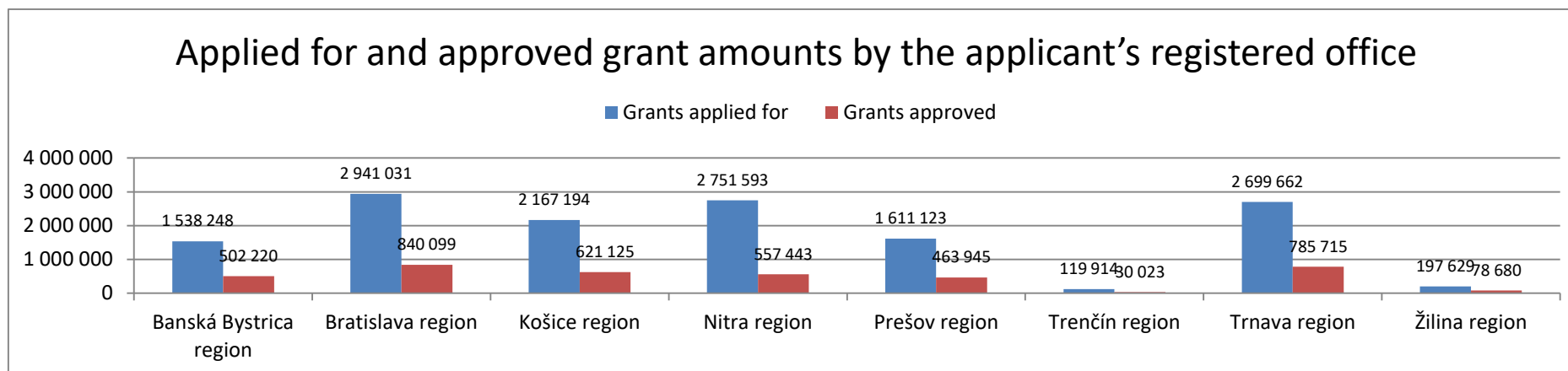


Chart 9: Number of supported projects by area

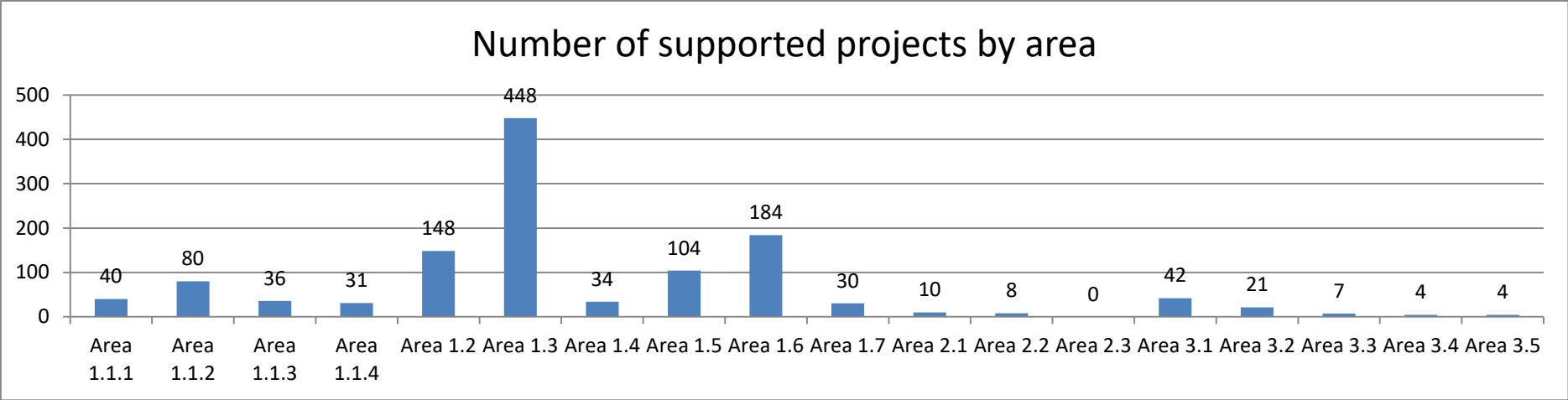


Chart 10: Approved grant amounts by area

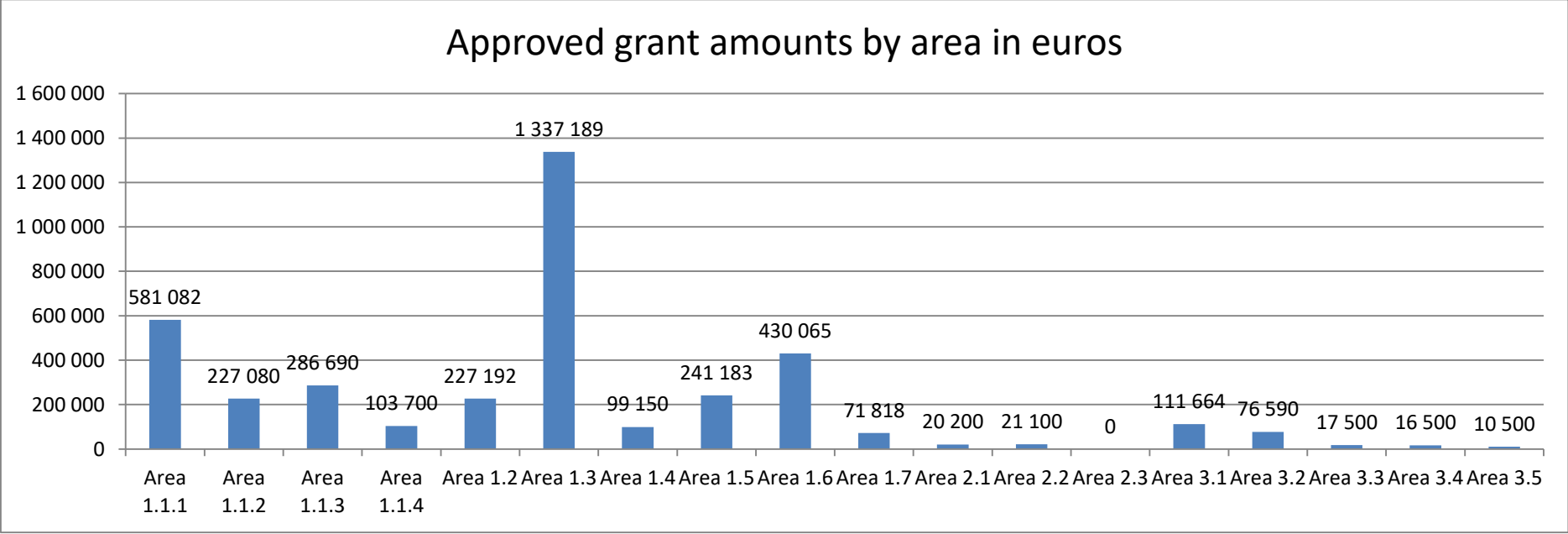


Chart 11: Number of supported projects related to periodical publications by minority

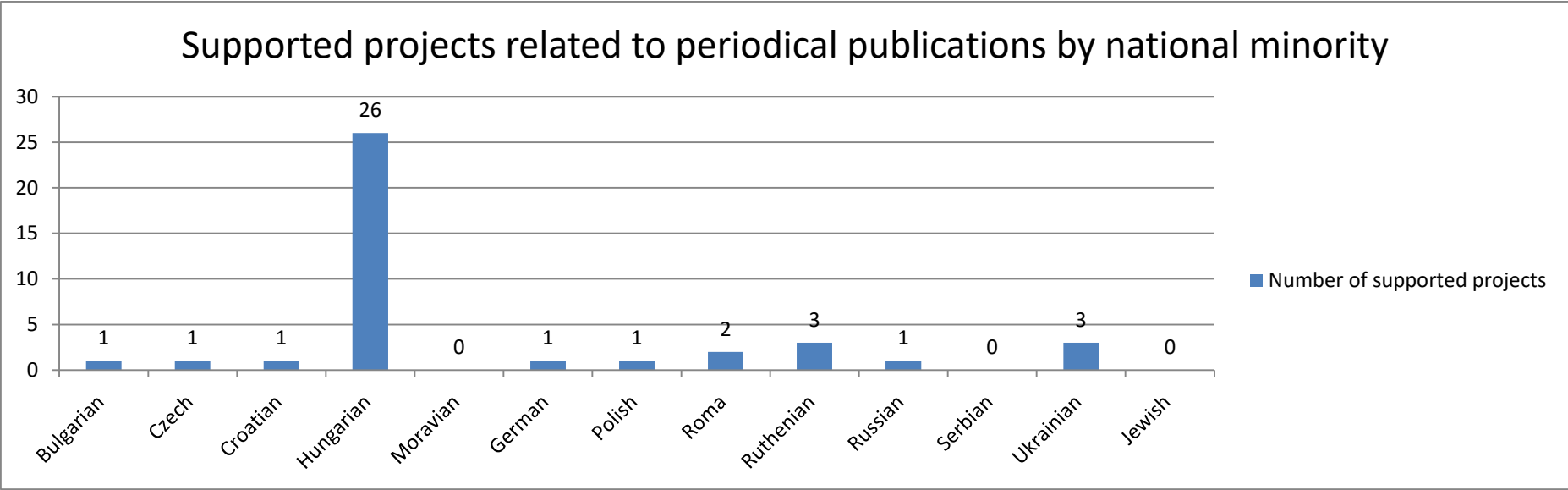


Chart 12: Number of supported projects related to non-periodical publications by minority

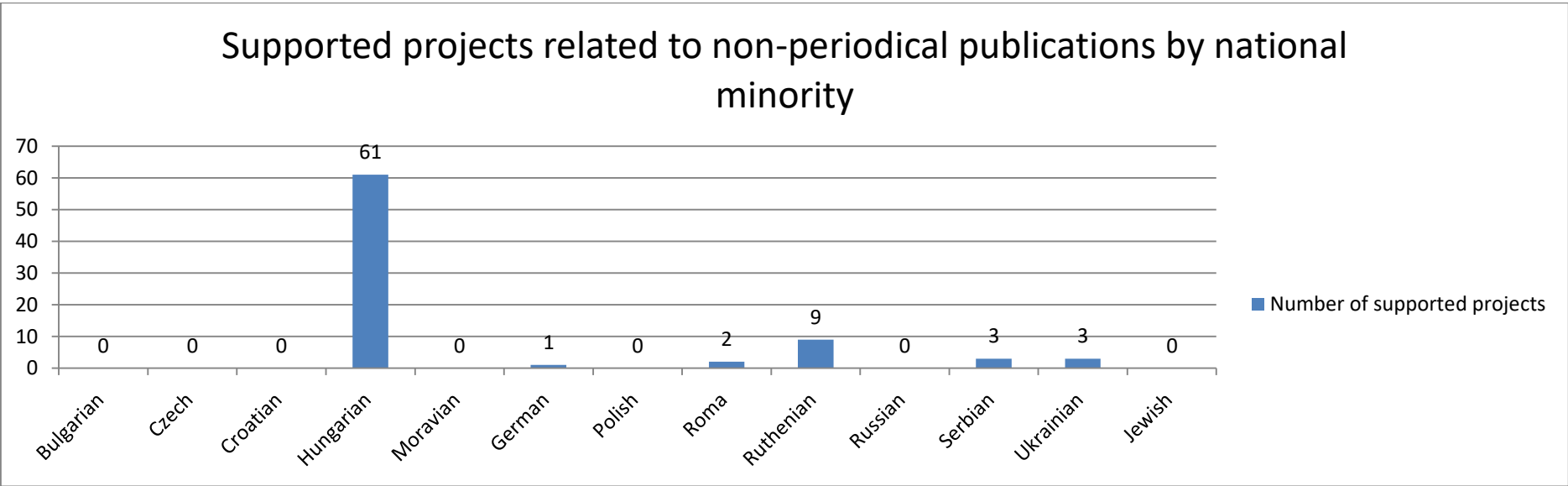


Chart 13: Number of supported projects related to electronic media by minority

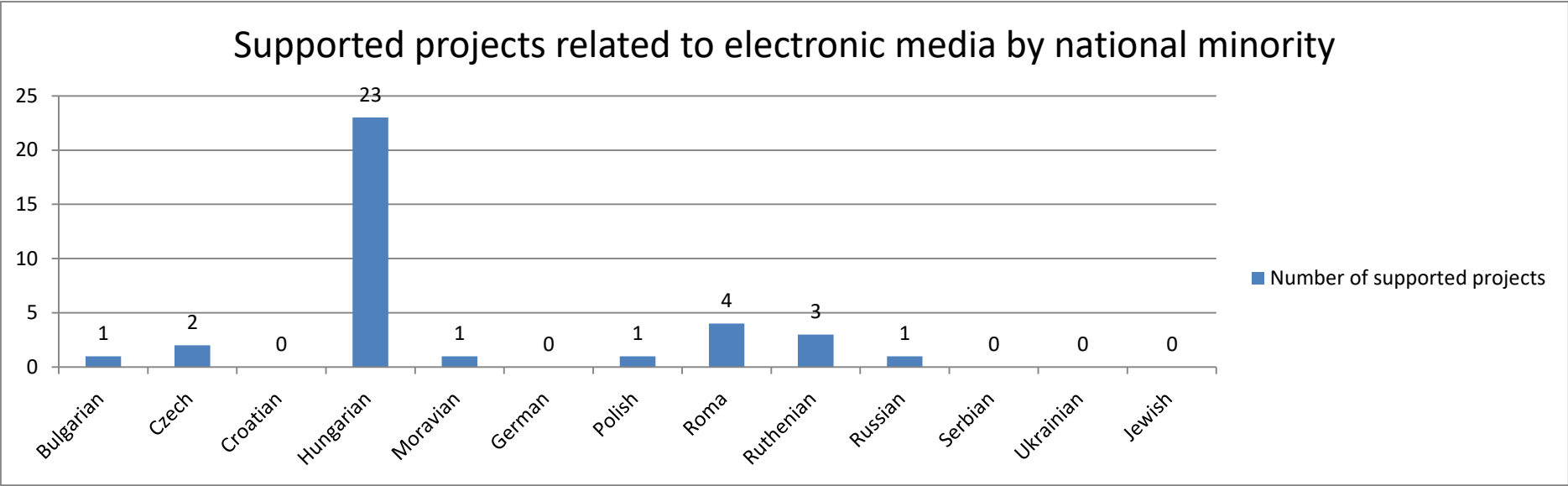
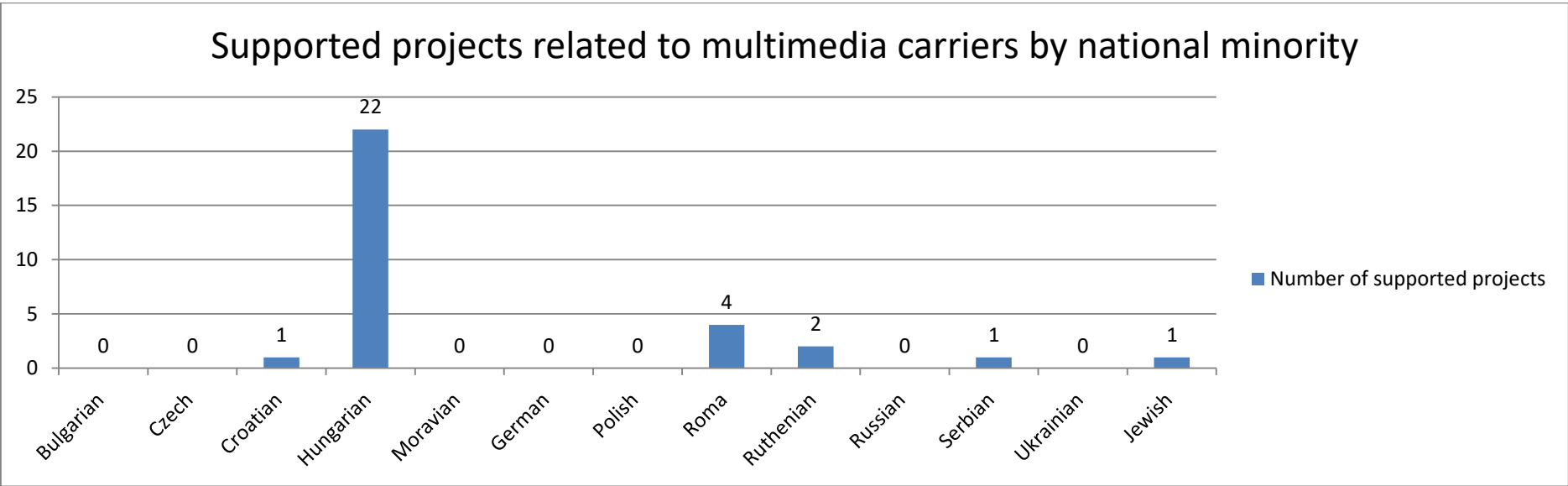


Chart 14: Number of supported projects related to multimedia carriers by minority



Annex 4: List of periodicals published in minority languages registered by the MC SR.Source: <http://old.culture.gov.sk/pertlac/modul/tlac> .

Number of periodicals	Minority language	Name of the periodical
45	Hungarian	Új Szó Tücsök Irodalmi Szemle Szabad Újság Remény Jó Gazda Kalligram Új Nő VASÁRNAP Katedra Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle - Fórum Spoločenskovedná revue Gömörország Kürtös Kassai Figyelő Alma Mater Géresi Tájékoztató ATELIER művészeti folyóirat Szőrös Kő - irodalom, művészet, kritika CSERKÉSZ Hírmondó PEDAGÓGUSFÓRUM PARTITÚRA Kálvinista szemle OPUS Gútai újság Honti Lapok RÉGIÓ Carissimi - Esély a fogyatékos és egészségkárosodott embereknek Terra Hírújság Kabóca DUNATÁJ Szó Tár MIZUJS? ÖNKORMÁNYZATI SZEMLE KLIKK Out FULLÁNK MAGYARHÁZ PARABOLA Madiansky hlásnik/Nagymadi Hírmondó Vadalma Nyékvárkony Lapja Szalkai Hírlap Csiliznyárad Szemle Gyarmati szemle POZSONYEPERJESI HÍRNÖK
8	Czech	Dortománie Knihovnička Záhrada Knihovnička Recepty AeroHobby Modelář Modelář Extra Hobby Historie The Weathering Magazine
6	German	Karpatenblatt

		Pressburger Zeitung Hurra! Slowakische Zeitschrift für Germanistik 300 Sudoku&Zahlenrätsel 100 Bilderrätsel
3	Russian	V MESTE Musician SLAVICA NITRIENSIA
3	Polish	Monitor Polonijny Kurier Pieńński Wieści prosto z gór/Zvesti priamo z hôr
3	Ruthenian	Narodny novinky Rusyn ARTOS
2	Ukrainian	New žytt'a Veselka
1	Croatian	HRVATSKA ROSA



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