

**Information on the policy of the Government of the Slovak Republic
regarding national minorities and ethnic groups**

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1. General information on persons belonging to national minorities in the Slovak Republic

With regard to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the Slovak Republic is bound by national and international standards and **the Slovak government has not adopted and will not adopt measures that would reduce the existing level of protection**. On the contrary, it is taking measures to increase it and make it more effective.

Results of the census of the population of the Slovak Republic of May 2001

In Slovakia there are approximately 800 000 persons belonging to **12 national minorities** (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Croatian, Czech, Moravian, Polish, Bulgarian, Russian and Jewish). The results of the census of population, houses and dwellings in 2001 indicate the following structure of the population in Slovakia:

Nationality	Number	%
Slovak	4 614 854	85.8
Hungarian	520 528	9.7
Roma	89 920	1.7
Czech	44 620	0.8
Ruthenian	24 201	0.4
Ukrainian	10 814	0.2
German	5 405	0.1
Moravian	2 348	0.1
Croatian	890	0.02
Polish	2 602	0.04
Bulgarian	1 179	0.02
Russian	1590	0.03
Jewish	218	0.01
other	5 350	0.1
unknown	56 526	1.1
Total:	5 379 455	100.00

This means that **14.2%** of the population belongs to a national minority. The census respected the right of each person to freely determine their own nationality, which is confirmed in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

The most numerous national minority in Slovakia is the **Hungarian national minority**, which represents 520 528 persons - 9.7%.

The second most numerous national minority in Slovakia is the **Roma national minority**, which represents 89 920 persons - 1.7%. Experts estimate that the real population of the Roma national minority is several times larger (according to the results of a sociological survey in 2004 there are around 320 000 Roma in Slovakia, demographic estimates speak of 400 000 to 500 000 Roma).

Undertakings of the government of the Slovak Republic in its manifesto

In August 2006 the parties of the government coalition undertook in their manifesto to “**develop the multiethnic and multicultural character of the society** of citizens of the Slovak Republic ... **to permanently fight against all forms of racial ethnic, religious and political hatred.**” They undertook “...**wage a permanent struggle against discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, extreme nationalism and chauvinism and to promote the truth about the Holocaust.**” With regard to national minorities “**in the spirit of the approved wording of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**”.

In order to solve the Roma question the government will “**support all development programmes whose aim is to improve the life of Roma and the integration of the Roma community into society** while making effective and targeted use of funding in the area of education, culture, health care and social care, infrastructure and housing.”

The government will improve **conditions in national minority schools, in particular in mother tongue teaching for all national minorities in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.** Teaching in the language of the national minority may not be to the detriment of the quality of teaching in the state Slovak language.

The Slovak government is preparing an **act on the financing of culture** whose aim will be to **regulate the financing of the development and dissemination of the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups.**

The government will use a grant system **to provide support for the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups and disadvantaged sections of the population.**

The Slovak government **will guarantee and promote respect for human rights and freedoms including minority rights** in accordance with international treaties.

The government will adopt a strict approach to extremism. It will not tolerate any illegal activity on the part of the members and supporters of extremist groups and movements and it will act decisively wherever there is a threat to law and order or the rights and freedoms of persons based on their nationality, race or other differences. It is preparing a draft act on the fight against extremism that will be compatible with the fight against this negative phenomenon in democratic European states. It will create stronger financial and personnel conditions in the security forces fighting this negative phenomenon.

International commitments of the Slovak Republic and constitutional guarantees

The Slovak Republic is a contracting party to all the key treaties on human rights adopted by the **United Nations and the Council of Europe** with relevance for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and their languages and it cooperates with the relevant control mechanisms at an international level.

In the second cycle of monitoring of the Framework Convention, the **Follow-up Seminar on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Slovak Republic** took place in Bratislava on 7 December 2007 under the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities, Dušan Čaplovič. The meeting was highly beneficial

both for the competent Slovak authorities and for the Council of Europe in providing information on the current situation of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia and future development in this area.

At present the third report on the implementation of the Framework Agreement was prepared.

In the second cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the government discussed and approved **the second Report on the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** in government resolution No. 371/2008 of 4 June 2008. The report focuses primarily on a presentation of the current situation and the development of legislation and social practice relating to the protection and support of regional or minority languages in Slovakia.

The rights of persons belonging to national minorities are guaranteed in the constitution. The basic national documents confirming basic human rights and freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities are Constitutional Act No. 23/1991 Coll. establishing the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms and the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (Act No. 460/1992 Coll. as amended).

Under article 34 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, persons belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic are guaranteed **all-round development, in particular the right to develop their own culture in association with other members of the minority or group, the right to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, to form national associations, to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions.** In addition to the right to learn the official language of the state, the citizens of national minorities or ethnic groups shall, subject to the conditions laid down by law, also be guaranteed:

- a) the right to education in their language,
- b) the right to use their language in official communications,
- c) the right to participate in decisions relating to national minorities and ethnic groups.

More than 30 generally binding legal provisions are build on the principles of the constitution to define the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The law of the Slovak Republic is based on the concept of the protection of **individual human rights** and basic freedoms as confirmed in the relevant international treaties. In this sense **it rejects the concept of “collective rights” of national minorities.**

Institutional provision for addressing the affairs of persons belonging to national minorities

In Slovakia **the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities, Dušan Čaplovič** has responsibility for issues relating to national minorities.

The specialized department of the Slovak Republic Government Office that deals with issues of human rights, national minorities and ethnic groups and also issues relating to cooperation with non-governmental non-profit organizations is the **Section of Human Rights and Minorities.**

The **Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma communities** advises the government on issues relating to the Roma and implements tasks that address issues affecting Roma communities and systematic measures to improve their status and integration in society through the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma communities.

The **Government Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups** acts as an advisory and coordinatory body for the government in the area of nationality policy. Each of the twelve officially recognized national minorities (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Croatian, Czech, Moravian, Polish, Bulgarian, Russian and Jewish) has equal representation in the council; each minority has one representative. The representatives of the minorities are nominated by national associations, federations and societies. The council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. The minister of culture acts as vice-chairman of the council. Representatives of central state administrative bodies and independent experts (including one from Hungary and one from the Czech Republic) are invited to the meetings of the council. Only the representatives of the national minorities vote in the council and it is prohibited for the council to take decisions on issues affecting a specific national minority or ethnic group in the absence of the representative of that group. Representatives of state authorities and experts in relevant areas who are invited to attend meetings do not have voting rights.

In parliament the **Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Human Rights, Minorities and the Status of Women** reviews proposed acts, international treaties and government programmes for compliance with human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities confirmed in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and following from the international commitments of the Slovak Republic.

Amongst other responsibilities, the **Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Social Affairs and Housing** proposes acts regulating the social sphere and monitors compliance with current legislation in the social sphere. In 2008 the committee established the **Standing Commission of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Committee on Social Affairs and Housing for the Integration of the Roma** to advise on issues and express an expert opinion on matters relating to the integration of the Roma into society within the legislative process of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

Within the Ministry of Culture the **minority and regional cultures section** provides for activities of the state administration in the area of the culture of national minorities and disadvantaged sections of the population.

Within the Ministry of Education there is the **Department for Schools Providing Teaching in the Language of National Minorities and the Education of Roma Communities**.

In 2001 the Office of the **ombudsman** was established by Constitutional Act No. 90/2001 Coll.. The ombudsman is a constitutional authority, whose status and activity are defined by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. The extent and the method by which the ombudsman, as an independent authority, participates in the protection of basic rights and freedoms is governed by Act No. 564/2001 Coll. on the ombudsman, as amended. The ombudsman defends the rights and freedoms of individuals and legal entities in proceedings before public administration authorities and other public institutions in the manner and scope specified by the law in cases where the actions, decisions or inactivity of public authorities is

in breach of the law. Since 1 April 2006 the ombudsman has had the power to submit a proposal to begin proceedings before the Constitutional Court if the continued application of legislation may threaten human rights and basic freedoms.

In 1993 Act No. 308/1993 Coll. established the **Slovak National Centre for Human Rights** whose powers were amended by Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and the amendment of certain acts (the anti-discrimination act), as amended, to make it a primary of function of the centre to assist victims of discrimination and expressions of intolerance. The centre is also authorized to represent parties in proceedings relating to breaches of the principles of equal treatment. The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights prepares and publishes an Annual Report on the Upholding of Human Rights in Slovakia in the previous calendar year.

Government strategies and conceptual material focusing on solutions for issues affecting persons belonging to national minorities

Since 2006 the government has adopted the following **acts and conceptual documents** on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities based on its manifesto:

- Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (the schools act) and on the amendment of certain acts;
- two amendments of Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and amending and supplementing certain other laws as amended (“the anti-discrimination act”);
- Conception on Education and Training for National Minorities;
- Conception on Education and Training for Roma Children and Pupils including the Development of Secondary and Higher Education.
- Medium-term Conception on the Development of the Roma National Minority in the Slovak Republic SOLIDARITY–INTEGRITY–INCLUSION 2008–2013.
- The National Action Plan for Children for the period 2008–2012.
- Report on the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015.

The government is preparing the following conceptual material:

- Conception on Assistance for Marginalized Roma Communities in Slovakia Using the Resources of the Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds in 2007–2013.

2. Education of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia

2.1. Right to education in the languages of national minorities

The right to education in the languages of national minorities is confirmed in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on training and education (the schools act) and the amendment of certain acts. Training and education for children and pupils is provided in elementary and secondary schools with teaching of the language of a national minority, with tuition in the language of a national minority and with tuition in Slovak language based the free decision of parents or legal guardians. Pre-school education and extracurricular education and training in education facilities also takes into consideration children’s mother tongue.

The schools act establishes **the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and especially segregation** as one of the principles of education and training. If an applicant, child, pupil or student believes that his or her rights or legally protected interests have been offended as a result of **a breach of the principle of equal treatment** the schools act allows them to obtain legal protection from the courts in accordance with specific legislation. The specific legislation is Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and the amendment of certain acts (hereinafter referred to as “the anti-discrimination act”), as amended.

Government Regulation No. 2/2004 Coll. **increased the pay tariff per pupil attending a school with tuition in a language other than Slovak by 8%**, i.e. the tariff for such a pupil is 1.08 times higher than the corresponding tariff for a pupil taught in Slovak. The reason for this increase is the demands on staff imposed by the curriculum of years 1 to 4 of elementary schools with tuition in the language of a national minority and the curriculum of years 5 to 9 of elementary schools with tuition in the language of a national minority.

Funding (per pupil) for the schools with tuition in the language of a national minority as a proportion of the total volume of funding for all school pupils

Calendar year	For all schools SKK / EUR	Schools with tuition in the language of a national minority SKK / EUR	Proportion in %
2006	27 275 636 000 SKK 903 166 754 EUR	1 463 360 000 SKK 48 455 629 EUR	5.37%
2007	29 756 038 000 SKK 985 299 271 EUR	1 730 642 000 SKK 57 306 027 EUR	6.35%

Schools with tuition in the language of a national minority always use translations of Slovak textbooks or adapted textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. The necessary textbooks and workbooks for schools with tuition in the language of a national minority and with the teaching of the language of a national minority are approved each year. The schools act allows the use of other textbooks and teaching materials that are not listed in the list published by the Ministry of Education.

The languages of national minorities are also taught in state higher education institutions. These institutions are part of the education and training system of the Slovak Republic and are financed from the state budget. In addition to state schools, the law allows the establishment of private or church schools that also receive funding from the state budget in accordance with relevant legislation.

The Ministry of Education finances the **Selye Janos University in Komárno** in accordance with the higher education act and the same approved methodology for the financing of higher education institutions as is applied to other higher education institutions. At present the following **educational programs** can be studied in the faculties of the university:

Faculty of Education:

- Pre-school and elementary education;

- Teaching for primary education in elementary schools;
- Teaching for academic subjects and art teaching

Faculty of Economics:

- Economics and business management.

Faculty of Reformed Theology;

- Reformed theology

During the setting up of the university and in its first years of activity the Ministry of Education provided the Selye Janos University in Komárno with funding for capital expenses. Financial support from the state budget comprises of 4 subsidies provided under contract set on the basis of student numbers, cost and staff requirements for the subjects and other performance factors such as grants obtained from domestic and foreign sources, the number of publications of employees of the higher education institution and their research work. The number of full time students of the Selye Janos University was 240 higher in the academic year 2006/2007 than in 2005/2006. Accordingly, the subsidy for operating costs was increased by 30% to 49 626 000 SKK / 1 643 245 EUR in 2007. An amount of 16 000 000 SKK / 529 801 EUR was provided at the start of the year for the reconstruction of administrative buildings of the university. In 2008 **4 700 000 EUR** was provided as a grant by Structural Funds Agency of the Ministry of Education for infrastructure building.

The Faculty of Education of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra – Faculty of Central European Studies is accredited for the study of the following **subjects**:

- **bachelor's degree programmes:**
- teaching of subjects;
- Hungarian language and literature;
- pre-school and elementary education with tuition in Hungarian;
- Hungarian studies;
- cultural and social anthropology;
- Hungarian language and culture;

- **master's degree programmes:**
- teaching of subjects;
- Hungarian language and literature;
- teaching in primary education with tuition in Hungarian;
- Hungarian studies;
- Culture of the Central European area.

- **Doctoral programmes:**
- Hungarian studies.

Graduates of teaching programmes can work in elementary and secondary schools with tuition in Hungarian and in other facilities and institutions for education and training, graduates in Hungarian Studies work mainly in the media, publishing, culture and public education institutions promoting the values of Hungarian culture.

The **Institute of Roma Studies** in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra was established in 1990 as the Department of Roma Culture. The educational function of the institute is to create opportunities to prepare a qualified Roma intelligence and also to provide study opportunities

for persons belonging to majority society to help optimize social and cultural conditions for Roma in Slovakia. The institute's research work is also of significance both at a national and international level. At present the institute prepares university students for work as specialists in the Roma community and accredited social workers.

The Institute of Ruthenian language and Culture in the **University of Prešov** has been established.

In the pedagogical and philosophical faculties of Slovak Republic Universities are guaranteed studies of German, Polish, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Czech, Bulgarian and Russian language – Comenius University in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, University of Prešov in Prešov, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice.

2.2. Use of the languages of national minorities

The **act on the use of national minority languages (Act No. 184/1999 Z. z.)** entered into force on September 1999. It lays down rules for **the use of minority languages in official communications** in municipalities where citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 20% of the population according to the results of the last census.

The regional or minority languages specified by the Slovak Republic in its instrument of ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages pursuant to article 3 (1) of the charter are: **Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian.** For the purposes of selected provisions, languages are divided into three groups: **1) Hungarian, 2) Ruthenian and Ukrainian, 3) other languages.**

In its instrument of ratification, Slovakia declared that pursuant to article 1 (b) “territory in which the regional or minority language is used” refers to a municipality specified in Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. of 25 August 1999 establishing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 20% of the population, including the application of article 10 thereof.” There is a total of 655 such municipalities.

Summary of municipalities specified in Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll. of 25 August 1999 establishing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority make up at least 20% of the population:

National minority	Number of municipalities specified in Government Regulation No. 221/1999 Coll.
Hungarian	511
Roma	57
Ukrainian	18
Ruthenian	68

German	1
Total:	655

In these municipalities persons belonging to the national minority have the right to communicate in writing with state or local authorities in the language of their national minority and answers will also be provided in the minority language. The same applies to decisions of public administration authorities issued in administrative proceedings. The minority language shall also be used in signs for public administration authorities placed on buildings, street names and other local geographical markings, the keeping of the municipal chronicle, the publication of important information including information on generally applicable legislation.

The right to use a minority language in proceedings before courts and law enforcement authorities or other authorities is confirmed in legislation on proceedings before these authorities.

To support the Roma language, the **Standardization of the Roma Language in Slovakia** was ceremonially proclaimed in the Historic Building of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 29 July 2008. The ceremony included the signing of the “Declaration of the Roma of the Slovak Republic on the Standardization of the Roma Language in the Slovak Republic” by representatives of the Roma national minority. The objective of the standardization of the Roma language was to officially proclaim the Roma language and place it on an equal footing with the other languages of national minorities living in Slovakia.

2.3 Information on the adopted amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic

On 30 June 2009 the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved a Government-proposed amendment to the Act on the State Language of the Slovak Republic, prepared by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The relevant **Act governs the use of the state language** in particular domains of communication with public authorities by guaranteeing its priority usage, alongside existing Slovak laws which also enable the use of other languages (national minority languages, as well as “foreign languages”).

The protection of the state language is legitimate from the perspective of international documents. The State may require that the state language is used in those sectors of economic activity that affect the rights of other persons or require the exchange of information and communication with public authorities.

The preferential use of the state language in public communication is justified by the specific status of the state language as a common means of communication; the state language plays a crucial social role in safeguarding the smooth flow of information within society and in ensuring the effective performance of public authorities. In addition, the state language deserves protection as a priceless aspect of cultural heritage.

The specific status of the state language is also recognised by international law documents which leave the issue of the preferential use of the state language in the jurisdiction of individual countries. International law does not govern this area at all, neither is it addressed by international law in connection with the use of minority languages.

The primary goal of the Language Act Amendment is not to regulate the use of minority languages but, quite the contrary, to ensure that information is also available in the state language throughout the entire of Slovakia so that the state language can fulfil its function of integration within society. As far as the territories with a nationally mixed population are concerned, the Act builds on the principle of bilingualism. The use of minority languages in Slovakia is governed and guaranteed by separate legislation, the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and Slovakia's commitments under international law; the Constitution, as well as international treaties governing this area have precedence over laws. The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 184/1999 on the Use of National Minority Languages still remains in force with respect **to the use of national minority languages.**

The Act on the State Language is **not discriminating against members of national minorities** since it fully observes **all applicable rights granted to them under other legal regulations.** The Act on the State Language does not govern the specific rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The Act on the State Language **does not prohibit the use of other languages** in public communication.

In several areas, the amended Act **has extended the possibilities for the use of minority languages**, for example:

- The amendment extends the use of minority languages in radio broadcasting – it enables regional or local broadcasting of programmes in minority languages for members of a national minority, including live broadcasts, without the requirement to also air the same programme in the state language (this was not permitted under the law so far, the programmes also had to be aired in the state language);
- As far as TV broadcasting is concerned, a programme in a language other than the state language (hence in a minority language) must either include captioning in the state language or the same programme must be broadcast in the state language immediately afterwards. In the case of an event broadcast live in a language other than the state language, simultaneous interpreting into the state language is required. Preserving bilingualism in TV broadcasting helps to fulfil one of the basic objectives under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; mutual understanding and convergence among language groups living on a given territory;
- Non-periodical publically available printed materials for cultural purposes, catalogues published by galleries, museums and libraries, programmes for cinemas, theatres, concerts and other cultural events may be published in a minority language (the minority language being in the primary position) but must also include the same content in the state language;
- Cultural and educational events of national minorities and ethnic groups are conducted in a minority language. These events are hosted in a minority language and, consecutively, in the state language. The amendment does not govern the use of a language at other public rallies or public events;
- Inscriptions on public memorials, monuments and commemorative plaques may be created and presented in a minority language, but the inscription, with an identical or

- The amended Act makes it possible to execute written legal instruments on employment or similar relations both in the state language and another language. The same applies to financial and technical documentation, statutes of associations, political parties and movements, and corporations;
- In municipalities where a minority language is used in official communication (municipalities where minority members represent at least 20% of its total population) the amended Act enables patients or clients of a minority origin to use their mother tongue in communication with health-care and social-care personnel. The obligation arising for Slovakia under the European Charter for Regional or Local Languages has therefore also been implemented.

The requirement to display signs, advertisements and announcements designed to inform the public (such as signs at airports, bus and railway stations) **in the state language** is also commonplace in other EU Member States¹. Texts in other languages may also be displayed along with those in the state language. The state language functions as a uniform means of communication for all citizens.

The **obligation of the preferential use of the state language** must be observed in **two cases only: in written texts for the public** that are part of notice boards, memorials, announcements, advertisements, etc. displayed in publicly accessible places; and **in official announcements aired by Public Address (PA systems)**. In any other case (including TV and radio broadcasting) a language other than the state language may be used in the primary position.

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic performs the overseeing of compliance with the law (with two new positions expected to be created at the Ministry for this purpose). The communication of health-care and social-care personnel with patients and clients is exempt from being overseen.

Penalties specified in the amendment are not intended to punish individuals for the wrong use of the state language. **Penalties** only apply to public administration bodies, legal persons and natural persons licensed to conduct business activities (**i.e. not the “ordinary citizens”**), in case they are in breach of the obligations imposed by the Act or fail to remedy an unlawful situation. A penalty is only imposed if the unlawful situation has not been remedied even after a written warning notice by the Ministry of Culture. The amounts of the proposed penalties will be differentiated with respect to the extent, consequences, duration

¹ E.g. Hungary (Act of 2001 on the publication of economic advertising, commercial inscriptions and individual announcements in the public interest in the Hungarian language): “Inscriptions displayed at public places, on public buildings, on a private property open to everyone, containing announcements...providing information to the citizens...needs to be displayed in the Hungarian language.”

France (Act of 1994): “All inscriptions or notices displayed or produced on a public road, at a place open for the public or in a means of public transport, and intended to provide information for the public must be expressed in the French language.”

Lithuania (Act of 1995): “All public signs and inscriptions in the Republic of Lithuania must be in the state language.”

and recurrence of unlawful conduct. **The penalties are not intended to regulate the language culture.**

Penalties were omitted from the Act on the State Language in 1999. The need to re-introduce penalties arose from the several year's experience of applying the previous legislation, which has confirmed the well-known fact that an incomplete legislation (a law without punitive provisions in this case) is ineffective and unable to fulfil its basic function; to guide societal practice in a given area. Re-instituting the punitive provisions aims to improve the enforceability of the applicable provisions, but one should bear in mind that their main purpose is to prevent violations of the law.

Punitive measures in the form of penalties also exist in laws concerning the state language and its valid usage in **other countries too** (for example France, Poland, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia).

3. Culture of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia

Minority culture is supported through grant programmes within the grant system of the Ministry of Culture. The aim of such programmes is the development, preservation and presentation of minority cultures.

The Ministry of Culture develops wide-ranging and effective cooperation with organizations representing 12 national minorities (Hungarian, Roma, Czech, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Croatian, Polish, Moravian, Bulgarian, German, Jewish, Russian), who live in the Slovak Republic. National minority culture in Slovakia is promote through **periodical and non-periodical publications** for the persons belonging to national minorities, state **theatres** whose repertoire comprises works in national minority languages, state **museums** focusing on minority issues, **civic associations** that promote all 12 minority culture, the activity of the professional folk art ensemble Young Hearts – Ifjú Szivek, the activity of regional **public education centres**, regional and district **libraries** and **broadcasting in national minority languages on public media – Slovak Television and Slovak Radio.**

The aim is the development, preservation and presentation of minority cultures. The following table summarizes financial allocations of the Ministry of Culture to promote minority culture in the years 2003–2008:

Nationality	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Bulgarian	1 133 100	852 000	421 000	576 000	780 000	850 000
Czech	3 078 000	3 794 800	3 361 000	4 555 000	4 450 000	4 922 000
Croatian	1 475 000	1 050 000	1 000 000	1 468 000	1 450 000	1 550 000
Hungarian	40 977 500	53 078 000	51 188 100	116 184 000	51 562 000	53 609 000
Moravian	432 000	0	0	0	390 000	600 000
German	2 591 800	2 201 500	2 250 000	3 120 000	3 007 000	3 500 000
Polish	912 000	995 000	1 000 000	1 250 000	1 550 000	1 650 000
Roma	7 387 800	8 232 000	7 870 000	16 385 000	11 482 000	14 770 000
Ruthenian	4 280 000	4 139 000	4 045 000	5 541 000	5 273 000	5 350 000
Russian	710 000	657 100	638 600	784 000	919 000	1 220 000
Ukrainian	2 970 000	2 738 000	2 736 000	3 564 000	3 430 000	3 990 000

Jewish	2 535 800	1 486 000	1 500 000	2 075 000	1 850 000	1 900 000
Other	11 517 000	776 600	3 990 300	4 430 000	1 607 000	5 989 000
Total in SKK	80 000 000	80 000 000	80 000 000	159 932 000	87 750 000	99 900 000
Total in EUR	2 649 007	2 649 007	2 649 007	5 295 762	2 905 629	3 320 000

A total of 99 900 000 SKK / 3,32 mil. EUR was allocated under the Ministry of Culture grant programme “National minority culture 2008”.

3.1. Periodical and non-periodical publications

Periodical and non-periodical publications for national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia are supported through **state subsidies**. The grant programme of the Ministry of Culture provided support for national minority periodicals in 2007 as follows:

- Hungarian minority: 25 periodicals;
- Roma minority: 2 periodicals;
- Czech minority: 1 periodical;
- Bulgarian minority: 1 periodical;
- Ruthenian minority: 4 periodicals;
- Ukrainian minority: 3 periodicals;
- German minority: 1 periodical;
- Russian minority: 1 periodical;
- Polish minority: 1 periodical.

In particular:

Hungarian national minority:

Alma Mater (bimonthly); Atelier (quarterly); Cserkész (monthly – 10x); Dunatáj (weekly); Fórum (quarterly); Gömörország (quarterly); Irodalmi Szemle (monthly 12x); Jó Gazda (monthly); Kalligram (bimonthly); Kassai Figyelő (monthly 12x); Katedra (monthly 10x); Kulisszák (bimonthly); Kürtös (monthly); Literárny Dunatáj (monthly); Múltunk Emlékei (monthly 12x); Pont (half-yearly 2x); Régió (monthly); Szabad Újság (weekly); Szörös Kő (bimonthly); Tábortüz (monthly 10x); Tücsök (monthly 10x); Tüzoltó (monthly 12x); Új Nő (monthly); Új Szó (daily); Vasárnap (weekly).

Roma national minority:

Romano Nevo Lil (bimonthly);
Most – Híd – Phurt (bimonthly).

Czech national minority:

Česká beseda (monthly).

Bulgarian national minority:

Sanarodnik – Krajan (irregular publication).

Ruthenian national minority

InfoRusín (monthly);
Narodny Novinky (weekly);
Pozdravliňa Rusyniv (quarterly);
Rusín (bimonthly).

Ukrainian national minority:

Nove žyt'ť'a (fortnightly);

Dukľ'a (bimonthly);

Veselka (monthly).

German national minority:

Karpatenblatt (monthly).

Russian national minority:

V meste (bimonthly).

Polish national minority:

Monitor Polonijny (monthly).

The Ministry of Culture supports national minority **publishers** (publishing houses, companies, research centres, press agency), of which 11 represent the Hungarian minority and 1 represents the Roma minority (Roma press agency).

Hungarian minority publishers (publishing houses; companies; research centres; press agencies):

- The Forum Minority Research Institute in Šamorín;
- Csemadok;
- The Hungarian Writers' Association;
- Selye College;
- Hungarian students' association JUGYIK Nitra;
- Association of Hungarian Artists in Slovakia;
- Hungarian Young People's Association;
- Madach publishing house;
- Kalligram publishing house;
- Kempelen Farkas Association;
- NAP publishing house.

3.2. Museums, galleries and theatres

In Slovakia there are a number of **national minority museums and galleries**. The following national minority museums are incorporated in the Slovak National Museum (under the trusteeship of the Ministry of Culture, with financing from the state budget):

- The Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in the Brämer Manor-house in Bratislava, the Kalman Mikszath memorial site in Sklabina, the Imre Madach manor house in Dolna Strehova;
- The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin;
- The Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidnik, the Dezider Milly Gallery – open air museum;
- The Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov – new museum established in 2007;
- The Museum of the Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava (Sunyal Manor-house), Exhibition on the History and Culture of Hauerland in Nitrianske Pravno;
- The Museum of Jewish Culture in the Zsigray Manor-house in Bratislava, Exhibition of Jewish culture in the Small Synagogue in Žilina, exhibition of Jewish items from the collection of Ing. Eugen Bárkány in the synagogue in

- The Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Devínska Nová Ves near Bratislava;
- The Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia in Martin;

There are also national minority museums under the trusteeship of higher territorial units, who also financed them:

- Museum of the Danube in Komárno – Department for Research into the Culture of the Hungarian National Minority in Slovakia – Higher Regional Unit of Nitra;
- Department of Roma Culture in the Gemer-Malohont Museum in Rimavská Sobota – Higher Regional Unit of Banská Bystrica;
- Department of Roma Culture of the Vihorlat Museum in Humenné – Higher Regional Unit of Prešov;
- Museum of Žitný Ostrov - Csallokoz (ZOM) Dunajská Streda – Higher Regional Unit of Trnava.

There are four **minority nationality theatres** in the Slovak Republic under the trusteeship of the higher territorial units (VÚC):

- Hungarian (Thalia Theatre in Košice; Jókai Theatre in Komárno);
- Ruthenian (Alexander Duchnovič Theatre in Prešov);
- Roma (Romathan Theatre in Košice).

The Ministry of Culture provides significant support for such subjects through its grant system – National Minority Culture.

3.3. Civic associations and public education centers'

In Slovakia there is one national professional music ensemble representing the Hungarian national minority that is under the trusteeship of the Ministry of Culture and financed from the state budget – the **Hungarian art ensemble Young Hearts – Ifjú Szivek**, founded in 1955. The ensemble operates as a touring company and gives 75–80 performances each year. Support for the activity of the group from the Ministry of Culture: **in 2007 – SKK 6 748 000 / 223 444 EUR, in 2008 – SKK 7 000 000 / 231 788 EUR.**

3.4. Radio and television broadcasting on public media

Radio and television broadcasts in national minority languages are made for national minorities living in Slovakia. The access of persons belonging to national minorities to **the media** is legislatively guaranteed and can be enforced in practice.

Slovak Radio and Slovak Television broadcast programmes with a balanced mix of content and regional coverage in the languages national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia. The production and broadcasting of programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovak Television and Slovak Radio is managed by autonomous organizational units.

Slovak Radio broadcasts programmes for national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia on the **Radio Patria** channel. Since it was launched in 2000 Radio Patria has provided broadcasts for Hungarian listeners and in other minority languages – Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, German and Roma. A total of 3859 hours of broadcasting for national minorities was broadcast by Slovak Radio in 2006. **In October 2007 the**

government decided to allocate extraordinary funding of 45 400 000 SKK / approx. 1 503 000 EUR to the Ministry of Culture to provide for the broadcasting of programmes in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia.

Actual Broadcasting by Slovak Radio – Radio Patria:

- the Hungarian broadcasting (12 hours of broadcasting daily from 06.00 to 18.00 on very short waves since February 2009);
- national–ethnic broadcasting (broadcasts for the Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Roma, Czech, German and Polish minorities on very short waves since February 2009).

Broadcasting of Slovak Television:

- Hungarian magazine; News – Hírek; Terítéken – On the plate (broadcasting for the Hungarian minority);
- Roma magazine (broadcasting for the Roma minority);
- National magazine (for the Croatian, Jewish, German, Czech, Ruthenian, Polish, Ukrainian and Bulgarian minorities).

Number of hours broadcast for each national minority in 2008							
National minority	January (hours)	February (hours)	March (hours)	April (hours)	May (hours)	Total (hours)	share (%)
Hungarian	13.35	13.10	12.35	11.67	9.00	59.47	50.9%
Roma	5.62	5.18	4.32	4.82	3.88	23.82	20.4%
Ukrainian	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.87	2.23	3.97	3.4%
Ruthenian	0.00	1.28	0.00	0.00	0.85	2.13	1.8%
Czech	0.87	1.30	0.00	0.87	0.00	3.04	2.6%
German	0.00	1.30	0.87	0.00	0.83	3.00	2.6%
Polish	0.85	0.00	0.00	0.85	0.00	1.70	1.5%
Jewish	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.85	0.00	0.85	0.7%
Bulgarian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
Croatian	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.7%
immigrant groups	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
ethnic groups	3.67	3.70	5.48	4.15	0.42	17.42	14.9%
others	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.5%
Total	25.23	25.86	24.47	24.08	17.21	116.85	100.0%

Volume and proportion of programmes for national minorities – comparison of 2006 and 2007

Broadcasting for national minorities increased its share of overall broadcasting by 1.1%, with the largest increase in hours going to broadcasting for the Hungarian minority.

Broadcasting for each national minority	2006		2007		increase / decrease	
	(hours)	(%)	(hours)	(%)	(hours)	(%)
a) Hungarian	139.8	64.0	163.3	61.8	23.5	-2.3
b) Roma	32.8	15.1	48.6	18.4	15.7	3.3
c) Ukrainian	8.3	3.8	6.5	2.5	-1.8	-1.4

d) Ruthenian	7.7	3.5	6.5	2.5	-1.2	- 1.1
e) Czech	6.5	3.0	7.7	3.0	1.2	- 0.1
f) German	5.2	2.4	6.5	2.47	1.3	0.1
g) Polish	2.6	1.2	3.9	1.5	1.3	0.3
h) Jewish	5.3	2.44	4.0	1.5	-1.4	- 1.0
i) Bulgarian	2.6	1.2	1.7	0.6	-0.9	- 0.6
j) Croatian	0	0	1.3	0.5	1.3	0.5
k) other	4.3	2.0	6.4	2.4	2.05	0.4
l) mix	3.1	1.4	8.1	3.1	5.1	1.7
Broadcasting for national minorities TOTAL	218.3	100 %	264.4	100%	46.1	99
Total broadcasting platform	7 619		7465		-154	100

In Slovakia it is also possible to receive television and radio signals from many television and radio stations (public and private) from neighbouring states.

Since **13th of January 2009** Slovak Television has started to broadcast its newest program **Minority news**, which is being prepared by Minority broadcasting Department in Košice in cooperation with minorities. The length of the broadcasting is 7 minutes every Tuesday on the second channel of the Slovak Television. The moderators representing different national minorities are alternating every week. Up to now the news have been prepared in the following order – in Ruthenian language, in Czech language, in Ukrainian language and in Roma language. Each Minority News consisted of information given in at least 5 languages according to the model – moderator presents the news in his/her language and the spot is in the language of minority whom the information concerns. The weekly periodicity guarantees that there are used preferably information from past 7 days. Spots are from the events that editorial staff was invited on and they also inform and invite people to the attend the events which will follow. All Minority News are subtitled in Slovak language.

4. Prevention of discrimination

- 4.1. Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and amending and supplementing certain other laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as “the Anti-discrimination act”)

Since 2004 the Anti-discrimination Act is in force, representing the general legal regulation of the principle of equal treatment and existing along with general provisions on equality covered by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (the Constitution No. 460/1992 Coll.). By the original act from 2004 three directives of Council of EU on the principle of equal treatment were incorporated into the legal order of the Slovak Republic (Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin / so-called Racial Directive, Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation / so-called Framework Directive and Council Directive 96/97/EC amending Directive 86/378/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes).

During 2007 the government of the Slovak Republic reacted to two letters of formal notices from the European Commission regarding the non-compliance of transposed legislation to Community law by the amendment of the Anti-discrimination act (the act No. 326/2007 Coll.). The legislative work on the amendment was initiated at the same time with the view to transpose the Council Directive 2004/113/EC on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

In accordance with the provision of § 2 section 1 of the Anti-discrimination Act *„Adherence to the principle of equal treatment shall lay in the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, religion or belief, race, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, colour, language, political affiliation or other conviction, national or social origin, property, lineage or any other status.”* The act provides for the non-exhaustive list of reasons for which the discrimination is prohibited and goes beyond the legal framework as given by the relevant directives.

In 2008 adopted amendment of the Anti-discrimination Act (act No. 85/2008 Coll.) allows for the validity of the prohibition of discrimination for reasons set forth under § 2 section 1 in all areas covered by relevant act (employment and other similar legal relations, education, social security, healthcare and provision of goods and services). Thus, under the valid law the reasons for which the discrimination is prohibited stand equally in all areas covered by the act (§5 section 1 and §6 section 1 of the Anti-discrimination Act).

Under the second amendment of the act the positive action or temporary compensatory measures is introduced. The provision of §8a provides:

“The adoption of temporary compensatory measures by state administrative bodies /11d/ targeted to eliminate forms of social and economic disadvantages and disadvantages arising due to age or disability, with the aim to ensure equality of opportunities in practice, is not considered discrimination. Such temporary compensatory measures, in particular, are measures

- a) consisting of the promotion of the interests of members of disadvantaged groups in employment, education, culture, healthcare and services; and*
- b) ensuring the equality in access to employment and education especially through targeted preparation programs for members of disadvantaged groups or through dissemination of information on these programs or on possibilities to apply for jobs or places in the system of education.”*

The amendment also grants to the state administrative bodies the competencies to adopt such measures and set forth the subject matter of measures as follows:

“elimination of forms of social and economic disadvantages and disadvantages arising due to age or disability with the aim to ensure equality of opportunities in practice.”

The act also provides for examples of compensatory measures as follows:

- “a) consisting of the promotion of the interests of members of disadvantaged groups in employment, education, culture, healthcare and services; and*
- b) ensuring the equality in access to employment and education especially through targeted preparation programs for members of disadvantaged groups or through dissemination of information on these programs or on possibilities to apply for jobs or places in the system of education”.*

The competencies of Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (Equality Body) are extended to cover “*performance of independent inquiries related to discrimination*”.

In accordance with the provision of §11 section 2 “*the defendant has the obligation to prove that there was no violation of the principle of equal treatment if the facts submitted to a court by the plaintiff give rise to a reasonable assumption that such violation has indeed occurred.*” The provision thus allows the application of the reverse burden of proof.

Recently, the legal protection of potential victims of the violation of the principle of equal treatment has been extended by the amendment of Code of Civil Procedure to allow other persons having interest in the outcome of proceeding to be interveners. *Ratio legis* of such regulation is to enable certain persons, particularly members of non-governmental organizations in area of equal treatment, to be interveners providing help to the potential victims in mere proceedings before the court. § 93 section 2 set forth: “*Apart from petitioner or respondent, legal entity whose activities are aimed at the protection against discrimination may be presented in proceeding before the court as intervener.*”

The latest amendment of the Anti-discrimination Act (Act No. 384/2008 Coll.) has also expanded the protection of potential victims of discrimination. In §9a it lays down that: “*Legal entity under the provision of § 10 shall be entitled to seek the protection of right to equal treatment if the violation of the principle of equal treatment could aggrieve the rights, interests protected by law or freedoms of greater or indefinite group of persons or if such violation could constitute serious threat to public interest. Legal entity shall be entitled to seek that the person violating the principle of equal treatment be made to refrain from such conduct and, where possible, remedy the illegal situation.*”

The considerable change regarding the court fees in proceedings in matters related to the violation of principle of equal treatment was pursued by the Act No. 465/2008 Coll. amending the Act No. 71/1992 Coll. on court fees and fees for the extracts of criminal records as amended further. The amendment lowers the court fees with regard to the petition initiating the proceeding in matters related to the violation of principle of equal treatment.

4.2. Action plan for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance

With the aim of eliminating all expressions of discrimination in society and preventing them, since 2000 the government of the Slovak Republic has adopted an “**Action plan for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance**”. The action plan focuses on the prevention and reduction of negative phenomena in society such as racism, xenophobia and many other expressions of intolerance and discrimination. It also has long term objectives of fighting these negative phenomena in society in order to increase the level of tolerance among all inhabitants of Slovakia including foreigners. An important part of the action plan are activities carried out by non-governmental organizations or other subjects working in this area.

General Objective of the AP

To prevent all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and to assert the principle of equal treatment in all relevant national policies.

Specific Objectives of the AP

1. To implement the obligations arising from international conventions and treaties in the area of human rights and non-discrimination; to monitor the realisation of concluding observations and adopted measures;
2. To secure the effective protection against discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance including alternative forms of protection mechanisms;
3. To form the instruments for collection and analysis of sensitive personal data on age, gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation or other characteristics with all due respect paid to the protection of personal data as stipulated in the relevant legislation;
4. To secure the effective integration of persons of particular nationality or belonging to the particular ethnic group, or persons coming out from socially disadvantaged environment and aliens into the society;
5. To secure the educational activities in the area of human rights and multicultural upbringing of children and youth;
6. To secure the systematic training of members of professional groups dealing in their work with the issue of prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance;
7. To support the activities with the aim to commemorate the Holocaust;
8. To support social-scientific, cultural and sport activities addressing the issue of respect of human rights and prevention of all forms discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance;
9. To raise the public awareness and the informedness on issues of non-discrimination and the principle of equal treatment with the aim to fight against prejudice and stereotypes and to promote multicultural society;
10. To form conditions for successful integration of asylum seekers and migrants into society with all due respect paid to the realisation of the right to be free from discrimination and the principle of equal treatment.

Horizontal Objectives

Horizontal Objectives of the program represent the process of elaborating and integration of wider framework of the AP into particular specific objectives. The stated horizontal objectives are applied cross-sectional on general objective and specific objectives and they are taking into consideration during their realisation, implementation and evaluation.

For the period of 2009-2011 following horizontal objectives are defined:

1. Duly exercise the non-discrimination legal framework, including the employment of temporary special measures during the process of integration according to the Anti-discrimination Act;
2. To apply gender mainstreaming in all relevant policies and measures adopted to eliminate discrimination and forms of unequal treatment, including the use of gender sensitive language;
3. To apply the aspect of multi-cultural approach, including the informedness and the promotion of advantages of multi-cultural society;

4. To develop the co-operation of state, public and self-governing bodies with representatives of national minorities;
5. To intensify the co-operation between state, public and self-governing bodies and representatives of civil society, including NGO's participating in all areas of social life, with the aim to build partnerships for the elimination of discrimination and non-tolerant attitudes.
6. To apply non-discrimination mainstreaming based on all grounds for which the discrimination is prohibited (also with regard to multiple discrimination) and to form adequate frameworks and instruments for monitoring and evaluation of the AP.

4.3. Project activities:

- Activities in the European Year of Equal Opportunities

The participation of the Slovak Republic in the programme **European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007** (European Year 2007) was approved by Government Resolution No. 467/2006 of 24 May 2006. A total of 302 856 EUR was allocated to fund activities for the European Year 2007 in Slovakia.

As part of the activities for the European Year 2007 an extensive information and media campaign against discrimination was conducted at a national level under the title **"Discrimination is illegal"** and **8 projects** were implemented by non-governmental organizations with the objective of initiating a broad social discussion on issues relating to discrimination; providing better information for citizens on anti-discrimination legislation and also presenting an image of diversity, which is beneficial to the life of society in every way.

- Activities in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

The international cooperation section of the SR Ministry of Culture was the national coordination body with responsibility for implementation of the programme in Slovakia. The programme was implemented through open and restricted calls. 7 civil society projects were selected from respondents to the **open call** for projects. Two of these involve the participation of the Slovak Republic:

Priorities of the Slovak Republic in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008:

- to make information available to citizens on the principles of intercultural dialogue with an emphasis on the principles of tolerance, pluralism, equal opportunities, mutual knowledge, empathy and cooperation, which are the foundations of intercultural dialogue;
- to promote the principle of interculturalism and intercultural skills in educational programmes in schools;
- to implement the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, which is the body with responsibility for the management and coordination of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, and ensure continuity of cooperation in the coming year;
- to activate and foster civil society activity promoting intercultural dialogue;
- to select well-known personalities and appoint them ambassadors of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue;

- to use the media to achieve the objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and promote its principles;
 - to map and evaluate “good practice” and good experience that support intercultural dialogue.
- Activities within the PROGRESS programme

Slovak Republic is also taking part in **PROGRESS**, the Community programme for employment and social solidarity, and based on a call for projects intended for non-profit organizations with long-term experience in the area of anti-discrimination activity, the EC approved a project recommended by the SR Government Office of the civic association Občan a Demokracia “The road to equality – Increasing awareness and multi-level strengthening of civil society and public figures in the area of anti-discrimination” with a total value of approximately 414 147 EUR. The project was focused on all grounds for discrimination under article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community and comprises a wide range of education, information and research activities and a widely published **media campaign “The road to equality”** (through adverts, billboards, TV and radio adverts).

- Combating Anti-Semitism and Commemorating the Holocaust in the Slovak Republic

Legal Background:

Criminal Code:

Pursuant to the Criminal Code, every person who publicly demonstrates his/her sympathy for movements which through violence, the threat of violence or the threat of other aggravated harm aim to suppress the elementary rights and freedoms of persons, as well as every person who publicly denies, questions, approves of or tries to justify the Holocaust, may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of up to 3 years.

Activities Related to Combating Anti-Semitism and Commemorating the Holocaust:

Memorial Day of the Holocaust and Victims of Racial Violence:

In 2001, the National Council of the Slovak Republic overwhelmingly approved the establishment of September 9th as the Memorial Day of Victims of the Holocaust and Racial Violence.

SOBIBOR Project:

The Government Office of the SR is the coordinator of the Slovak participation in the international project on the renovation of the memorial site in the former Nazi extermination camp in Sobibor. The creation of a dignified site and a modern museum and educational capacities will constitute the outcome of the project implemented in cooperation with Poland, Holland and Israel.

The Holocaust Museum:

The Government Office of the SR cooperates in the project of creating the first specialized Holocaust museum and education center in the SR on the premises of the former work and transit camp in Sered'.

“The Holocaust Phenomenon” Conference:

The national conference under the auspices of Dušan Čaplovič, the Deputy Prime Minister of the SR and with the participation of prominent Slovak historians took place in March 2008 in Trenčín. The conference was co-financed from the reserve means of Robert Fico, the Prime Minister of the SR. Conference outcomes were published by the publishing house of the Government Office of the SR.

The Meeting of the Ravensbruck International Committee:

The world-wide meeting of women who survived the Ravensbruck concentration camp took place in Bratislava in May 2008 under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič. The event was co-financed from the reserve means of Prime Minister Fico and was highly appreciated by its participants.

The Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Manifestations of Intolerance:

Within the framework of the Action Plan, the Milan Šimečka Foundation Project for the Production and Distribution of Modern Education Materials for Secondary Schools about the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism in the SR was supported in 2008.

The Days of Jewish Culture in Giraltovce:

In September 2008, the Days of Jewish Culture in Giraltovce took place under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič. Activities included an exhibition of photographs entitled, "Israel through Our Eyes" and a ceremony at the Jewish cemetery with the participation of Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič.

Unveiling of the Holocaust Victims Monument in Medzilaborce:

The unveiling took place under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič and the descendants of the Holocaust victims from the United States, Israel and Belgium.

The Noble Souls Park in Zvolen

On September 9, 2008, on the occasion of the Day of the Victims of the Holocaust and Racial Violence, Prime Minister Fico unveiled the foundation stone of the future monument dedicated to Slovak citizens who saved Jews from deportation to concentration camps.

Conference Papers: The Holocaust as a Historical and Moral Issue in the Past and Present:

The papers from the conference which took place in 2007 will be published by the publishing house of the Government Office of the SR.

VAGÓN (CAR) Project:

The touring exhibition of the Slovak National Uprising Museum introduced an authentic train car designated for the transport of Jews to the concentration camps during World War II. The car could be seen in several Slovak towns. After its great success the exhibition was transferred to the Czech Republic.

The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research:

Slovakia has been an active member of ITF since 2005.

Publicizing of Liquidated and Aryanized Jewish Property:

Since December 2005, the National Memory Institute has been gradually publicizing the register of liquidated and aryanized (the property of Jews transferred to non-Jewish owners) Jewish property on its website.

The Renewal of Jewish Cultural Heritage

The reconstruction of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in the towns of Senica and Topoľčany is planned for 2009.

Compensations to Holocaust victims in the SR:

Several legislative and subsidy instruments have been adopted in the SR for the compensation of Holocaust victims. To date the overall sum of compensation (not including the returned movable and immovable property) is approximately EUR 40 million.