



## THE SLOVAK LAW ON THE STATE LANGUAGE

The current edition of the Newsletter is entirely devoted to the recently adopted amendments to the Slovak Language Law, which entered into force on September 1, 2009. We include the Coalition's statement on the language law and a summary of selected legal opinions on key aspects of the law. The analyses are the following:

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### COALITION PARTICIPATES AT MASS PROTEST DEMONSTRATION IN DUNASZERDAHELY

On September 1, 2009, two board members of the Hungarian American Coalition (Coalition), Mrs. Edith K. Lauer and Zsolt Szekeres, attended the demonstration at the DAC stadium in Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Streda), Slovakia.

An estimated 12,000 people – mostly Hungarians from Slovakia, but also from Hungary, Romania, Austria, Canada and the United States – participated in the peaceful demonstration organized by the Hungarian Coalition Party (MKP) and several civic organizations, to protest the recently passed Slovak Language Law which came into force that very day. The organizers invited Coalition Chair Emeritus, Edith Lauer, to speak about Coalition efforts to inform U.S.

decision-makers about the restrictive and discriminative aspects of the Language Law. The full text of Mrs. Lauer's speech can be read on page 3.



*Percentage of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia*

*The Hungarian American Coalition, together with the National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, issued a statement denouncing the recently passed anti-minority language law in Slovakia. Below is the full text of the Coalition statement.*

## **STATEMENT OF THE COALITION ON THE ANTI-MINORITY LANGUAGE LAW IN SLOVAKIA**

The State Language Law amended by the Slovak Parliament on June 30, 2009, is of grave concern to the Hungarian-American community. This extraordinarily restrictive Law devalues and discriminates against Hungarian and other minority language speakers. It establishes the supremacy of Slovak as the “state language;” it makes Slovakia the only EU member country that has imposed sanctions on some of its citizens for speaking their native language. Its restrictions and sanctions against native-language use (with the exception of the Czech language) affect areas of public and private life and target Slovakia’s minority population, which makes up 15 percent of the country’s total population — in particular, the 526,000-strong historic Hungarian community.

In passing this law, Slovakia violates international obligations, including the requirement – as set forth in the Bilateral Agreement between Hungary and Slovakia, signed by both nations as a requirement for their acceptance into NATO – to comply with requests for bilateral negotiations. In creating and passing the law, Slovakia has failed to consult with representatives of the Hungarian minority.

In its present form, the Law violates free speech norms, the right to privacy, and basic standards of equality and tolerance. It violates Slovakia’s international obligations as a signer of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It ignores the May 2009 State Report, in which the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance urged Slovak authorities to take a more robust stance against negative political discourse against ethnic minorities in general, and the Hungarian minority in particular.

Closer examination of the Law reveals the Fico-Meciar-Slota-led coalition government’s intent to discriminate against Slovakia’s minority citizens, curtail their freedom of speech, entrench their inferior status by fostering fear, and increase government control over peoples’ everyday lives. Some provisions of the law include:

- In hospitals, health-care and social services, the staff may not speak to patients in Hungarian except in towns with at least 20% Hungarian inhabitants;
- All public announcements, advertisements and signs must be in Slovak and may be followed by a minority-language translation, regardless of the ratio of Slovak-language speakers among the listeners;
- All public cultural and educational events for minority-language audiences must include a Slovak-language introduction, even if all participants are minority-language speakers;
- The use of geographical names in minority languages is severely limited;
- Minority-language schools are required to run their administration and internal documentation in both languages, with a priority given to Slovak;
- Inscriptions on all monuments and tombstones must first appear in Slovak, followed by the minority language, using the same or smaller letter size, and texts on monuments must be approved in advance by the Ministry of Culture;
- Official enforcement of the Law will be carried out by a de facto “language police” to be established within the Ministry of Culture, where violations of the State Language Law will be determined and fines of 100-5,000 Euros will be assessed for inappropriate use of minority languages and incorrect use of the Slovak language.

For centuries, a variety of historic ethnic and linguistic communities have lived on the territory of present-day Slovakia. In the 2001 census, ethnic Hungarians constituted 9.7% of the population, the largest national minority in Slovakia. In a democratic nation, their freedom from discrimination should be guaranteed, the preservation of their national identity protected. However, the Slovak State Language Law introduces punitive measures that constitute official discrimination against minority communities, and thereby potentially encourages anti-minority speech and actions by the majority Slovak community. As incidents of ethnically motivated anti-Hungarian violence in the recent past remain unresolved, members of the historic Hungarian community feel increasingly alienated and threatened by the actions of the Slovak government.

As longstanding, strong supporters of the U.S. foreign policy goal to promote stability and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, we call upon American policy makers to urge Slovakian leaders to repeal the discriminatory provisions of the State Language Law and to recreate the law in a form that guarantees genuine equality for minority languages and the state language alike, in conformity with Slovakia’s international obligations.

Translation of the speech of **Edith K. Lauer**, Chair Emerita of the Hungarian American Coalition.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Dear Hungarian Friends:

It is a great joy and honor for me to represent the Hungarian American Coalition and to be present on this inspiring mass demonstration. We, members of the Hungarian nation from all across the Carpathian Basin, Europe and the United States, have gathered here at Dunaszerdahely to call the world's attention to the fact that the language use of the 526,000-strong historic Hungarian community is in danger in Slovakia.

Even from far away, we Hungarian Americans follow the difficulties and challenges of the historic Hungarian community in Slovakia with sincere interest and great concern. For us, who live in a diverse and multicultural society, it is inexplicable, that in 2009, when most countries are struggling to alleviate the effects of the global economic crisis, why the Slovak government thinks its most important task is to create a restrictive and discriminative language law?

Unfortunately there is only one answer, one explanation for this action. The Slovak Language Law serves a political agenda: to expand the use of the majority Slovak language, to sanction the use of Hungarian and thereby discourage Hungarians from maintaining their culture and identity, and eventually, to assimilate the historic Hungarian community.

By passing the Slovak Language Law, Slovakia violates the standards of free speech, the basic standards of equality and tolerance, and a number of the country's international obligations undertaken as a member of the European Union.

As Hungarian Americans, it is both our duty and responsibility to inform US decision-makers—the State Department, the National Security Council, and members of Congress—about the discriminative and punitive aspects of the Slovak Language Law and its possible consequences.

Therefore, the Hungarian American Coalition, together with the National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, recently issued a statement in Washington denouncing the recently passed anti-minority Language Law in Slovakia. In our statement, we call upon American policy makers, especially those dealing with the countries of the Central and Eastern European region, to urge Slovak leaders to repeal the discriminatory provisions of the State Language Law and to recreate it in a form that guarantees genuine equality for minority languages and the state language alike, in conformity with Slovakia's international obligations.

Dunaszerdahely, September 1, 2009

## Remarks on the Opinion of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (excerpts)

In June 2009, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, received delegations from Slovakia and Hungary to discuss the amendments to the Slovak Law on the State Language. After the discussions, Mr. Vollebaek shared his opinion and recommendations on the proposed amendments with the two delegations.

In the following paragraphs we summarize only our remarks in response to the Commissioner's Opinion and Recommendations. The actual report can be obtained at: <http://www.hacusa.org/language/slovaklanguage.html>

Upon analysis, the OSCE High Commissioner's opinion on the Slovak Law on the State Language emerges as a detailed, careful report fundamentally sustaining the Hungarian position, but contains a few inaccuracies and errors that need to be corrected.

- In the second paragraph of chapter 1 of the Opinion, the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities adopted in 1999 reads as follows: "the law grants all minority languages *equal status* with the Slovak language in all towns and villages where the minority represents at least 20 percent of the overall population". This statement about equal status is a serious error and is completely unfounded.

In reality, the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities is restrictive in public offices even where the minority population exceeds 20 percent of the total population, and within these offices the restriction further applies to the handling of predetermined documents. Minority language is allowed only in client communications and only to provide information. There are no sanctions if these – restricted – rights of minority citizens are unobserved. The use of minority language among minority employees is not allowed by the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, even if the minority population exceeds 20 percent of the total population. The status of the minority language is much weaker than that of the state language even in settlements where the minorities exceed 20 percent. Since the adoption of the amendments to the Law on the State Language the status of the minority language has become weaker, but it was fundamentally weak even before.

Even after the adoption of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, in 1999 there was no proper balance between the protection of the state language and the protection of minority languages: the state language was unequivocally under greater protection than the minority languages. This is not a case where a well balanced situation was improved by the amendments of June 30, 2009; rather, what happened was that the passage of those amendments made an already inequitable situation worse.

- The Opinion states, that “it is generally acknowledged **that recent years have marked a significant improvement in striking the required balance,**” (meaning the balance in Slovakia regarding the protection of minority rights and the protection of the state language). Three years elapsed between the current government coming to power in June, 2006 and the publication of the first version of the High Commissioner’s Opinion in July, 2009. Obviously, the phrase “recent years” (also) includes this recent period.

In fact, during the mentioned three-year period there was no action in the legal framework designed to strengthen the use of minority languages. At the same time, a law on cartography was amended in 2008, forbidding the use of minority languages and designations in maps published in Slovakia. Since many local designations on Slovak maps (for example the names of municipal lands at the edge of a town [often ancient place-names alluding to their historical or economic function]) were in the language of the local population, these names had to be replaced by the obligatory use of artificially created Slovak names. Also in 2008, the Ministry of Education mandated that textbooks in the language of the minorities use Slovak geographical names. Later – because of international pressure – this was changed to requiring the minority language name followed in parentheses by the Slovak designation. Nevertheless, the final outcome was more restrictive than the original conditions. Human rights practices suffered a serious setback with the case of a Hungarian student, Hedvig Malina, who in the summer of 2006 sought assistance from the police because she was assaulted for using her native language. Instead of protecting her, the Slovak authorities prosecuted her.

Based on the facts, it cannot be claimed that in the last three years the balance between the state language and the protection of the minority languages has improved. Exactly the opposite is true.

- Chapter 1 of the Opinion characterizes the drafters of the Slovak law as “**open and cooperative**” for alleged consultations with concerned parties and foreign partners.

In reality, the Slovak lawmakers took in consideration only the Czech objections. They neglected to take into account the reservations expressed by the Hungarian minority and by Hungary. The Slovak side, although it initially promised to hold formal consultations requested by Hungary – in keeping with the Basic Treaty between the two countries – later reneged on that pledge. From the Hungarians’ perspective, the Slovak lawmakers’ attitude was anything but “open and cooperative.” Indeed, the Hungarian side considers a lawmaking process which takes certain partners’ opinions into account while ignoring Hungarian opinions to be discriminatory.

- Chapter 2 of the Opinion states that the requirement that the **minority population’s proportion meets or exceeds 20 percent** in order to allow official minority language use is in line with international standards.

According to the international documents cited by the Opinion, this limit has gained acceptance because the mandatory protections of minority languages with a lower threshold would place a disproportionate burden on the state. In Slovakia, however, the law does not require, but rather allows the use of minority languages. There are no financial resources for bilingual communication and omissions are not sanctioned. The issue here is not that it is mandatory to use minority languages over 20 percent, but, rather, that below 20 percent it is forbidden. The amended State Language Law reinforces and sanctions this prohibition, which is not warranted by the international documentation cited in the Opinion.

Article 10.2 of The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities cites “in substantial numbers” along with “in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally” when referring to the areas populated by national minorities. In the case of Slovakia, this is important because the administrative districts – ignoring the opposition by the Hungarian minority – were gerrymandered to minimize those with a 20 percent minority population. The use of language of county authorities, for instance, is dependent on the proportion of the population of the town which serves as the county seat [regardless of the ethnic proportions which prevail in the county as a whole]. In 1999, a redistricting scheme was carried out to make sure that there is no single county seat where the Hungarian population exceeds 20 percent.

- Also in Chapter 2 of the Opinion it states that the use of **geographic names** as provided in Slovak State Language Law §3/a does not cause concern for minority rights.

This conclusion does not take into account the restriction that the amended law creates in the maps. It also fails to take into account that Slovak laws do not allow the display of bilingual designation of localities, even if the minority population exceeds 20 percent of the total population, if the locality’s Slovak-language designation is based on a Slovak historical personality. (Many settlements with Hungarian majorities were deprived of Hungarian designation; for example Stúrovo, that is Párkány in Hungarian, Hurbanovo, which is Ógyalla or Kolárovo, which is Gúta).

- Continuing with the Chapter 2 assertions, it states wrongly that in the area of the **police** and the **military services** no change took place.

In reality, up until now “only” the handling of paperwork and the documentation was obligatory in the Slovak language. The amendment to the law requires that all official contact be in Slovak, which means that in these organizations all in-service information has to be communicated in Slovak. In addition, all of this – contrary to prior regulations and practice – the rule is subject to supervision and sanctions as provided by the amendments to the law.

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The following three legal analyses on selected key aspects of the Slovak Language law make reference to specific paragraphs of the law. The full text of the Slovak language law can be found at: <http://www.hacusa.org/languagelaw/slovaklanguagelaw.html>

### THE OBLIGATIONS OF NATURAL PERSONS, AND THE SCOPE FOR THEIR SUPERVISION AND SANCTIONING

[...] the Slovak official position argues that the law does not sanction the free use of language by individuals. We should evaluate this position by considering the following:

**Based on the law, the free use of the native language may be sanctioned in five ways:** two of which are monetary penalties (one fine is to be paid by the workplace and the second one by the natural person), two other sanctions take the form of harassment on the part of authorities, and one is the denial of access to public services in one's native language.

- The obligations of the law do apply to natural persons. (§1 /5/)
- According to the provisions of section §3 /2/, state organizations and legal persons, transport and communications companies, **employees** of the postal service, **members** of the armed services (i.e. police) and firefighters – who are natural persons – must use the state language in their official contacts. Section §9a specifies that the Ministry of Culture is mandated to issue a warning to these institutions in case of violation, and to enforce sanctions should any lapse occur. This means that **the law imposes sanctions upon the free use of language on the part of natural persons** (as, for instance, the exchange of information between a Hungarian bus driver and a Hungarian-speaking passenger), but the **sanctions are the financial responsibility of the workplace**. It is obvious that the employer will make the employee absorb any ensuing damages to the workplace, either in the form of **financial responsibility** or by otherwise curbing the employee's **livelihood** (i.e. job loss or job transfer, which in the high unemployment area of South Slovakia is a particularly severe sanction), which means that the provisions of the law unequivocally affect (also) natural individuals. (In practice, it is obvious that after the warning from the Ministry, the employer will in turn penalize the use of the native language by the employee to avoid further penalties).
- It is a *de facto* fine imposed on natural persons speaking their native language that the **additional costs associated with bilingual interactions** – even retroactively! (§11 and 11a) – are borne by those who use the language, among them natural persons. (Even

though the law does not cover the non-retroactive expenses of bilingual interactions, it is obvious, particularly in view of sections §11 and 11a, that in all cases the expenses will be borne by those who use a language other than Slovak). This is *the de facto sanctioning of the use of native language*, including by natural persons. Moreover, it is a sanction that is imposed for an “infringement” taking place prior to the law's enactment, which is entirely contrary to the rule of law.

- Section §2 /1/ provides that **municipalities are “obligated to take an active role” in enforcing the provisions of the law**. (True, in this capacity, they are not under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture). This constitutes a **license to harass** natural persons under the guise of the language law, which particularly affects citizens – as natural persons – who live in an absolute minority situation, and once again amounts to a sanction against the free use of the native language by natural persons.
- The **Ministry of Culture may conduct checks upon** natural persons (§9 /1/, /2/). Although it cannot require (§9 /3/) their cooperation, it can “request” (§9 /2/) such cooperation. (In the case of entrepreneurs, the Ministry may “require” it: see §9 /3/). This gives the Ministry of Culture the possibility for the **official harassment of** natural persons.
- The already mentioned provision §3 /2/ also penalizes natural persons for freely using their native language, by **denying public services if they use their native language**. (For example, according to the letter of the law, if someone asks for a given service in Hungarian in a post office, even from a Hungarian-speaking employee, service cannot be provided, because the communication did not take place in the Slovak language).

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### POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS THE CZECH LANGUAGE

The other openly **discriminatory** principle of the State Language Law – besides the primacy of the Slovak language – is the **distinctive treatment of the Czech language**. This preferential treatment, according to the text of the law, is warranted because the Czech language is basically understandable **by speakers of the state language**. The minority language law in §6 provides that the use of the Czech language is equivalent to communication in the state language, except in cases in which this would conflict with the Slovak Republic's international obligations. However, this provision of the minority language law is no longer in effect as of September 1, 2009, because it is superseded by the modifications to the State Language Law, which allow even greater latitude for the use of the Czech language.

The law's §3 (5) makes **the Czech language essentially equal in standing with the Slovak language**, and obliges

the institutions defined in §3 (1) to **accept official documents in the Czech language**. Section §5 (1) g)-i) and §5 (6) also exempt the Czech language from certain obligations. Section §3 (5) makes a distinction between citizens whose native language is understandable from the point of view of the majority language, and those citizens whose native language is not, and invests these two groups of citizens with different rights.

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## RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENS

A discriminatory situation can be most clearly identified if we take the different categories of legal regulations and weigh them against each other: on one side, we place the rights guaranteed by and the obligations assumed by the government; on the other side, the rights and obligations that the minority communities have.

Citizens who are members of a national minority are allowed to **use their native language in official communications only if the law explicitly allows it**: the modified State Language Law has mandated the use of the Slovak language in practically every sphere of official communications. In settlements whose ethnic minority population exceeds 20% of the total, citizens are allowed to use their native language, but the employees of state, municipal, health care and social institutions are not obliged to know the minority language /Minority language law §7 (1) and State Language Law §8 (4)/. The minority language law contains regulation §7 (2) according to which the head of the public administrative body in question is obligated to make such minority language use possible, but the law does not enforce this – and thereby does not guarantee that this regulation is carried out. Similarly, these legal obligations are not enforced with regard to health care and social service institutions; in fact, §8(4) explicitly declares the lack of any enforcement.

Citizens who are members of national minorities may not use their native language to speak with employees of the postal service, railways, police, emergency medical services, civil defense, or any employee of a local government or public administrative entity, regardless of what their native language is, which languages they know, or in which settlement the interaction takes place.

On the other side of the scale, **the state does essentially nothing to guarantee that even the exceedingly narrowly defined right to use a minority language is put into practice**. In one instance, the law prescribes minority language use (Minority language law §7(2)), but this is not backed up by any controlling mechanism or sanction to ensure that this obligation is carried out in full. The state provides no funding support for the operation of [government] entities in minority languages, or any financial incentive for officials who are able to conduct business in a minority language as well as the state language; the state does not ensure the conditions and resources needed for the use of minority languages, it does not allow official documents to be issued in any minority language, and it does

not recognize as official any documents that are created during an official transaction conducted in a minority language; instead, such documents must be translated into the state language. The state does not recognize geographical place names as official if they are rendered in a minority language, and such place names are prohibited from being published on maps. The state prohibits local governments from conducting communications and proceedings in any language other than the state language; it requires that municipal records be kept in the state language, with a sole exception that allows for local government sessions to be conducted in a minority language.

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## SLOVAKIA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which has been in force since 1998, provides for a monitoring mechanism to evaluate how the Charter is applied in a State Party with a view to, where necessary, making recommendations for improvements in its legislation, policy and practice. An independent Committee of Experts reports to the Committee of Ministers on its assessment of compliance by a State Party with its undertakings. The role of the Committee of independent experts is to evaluate the existing legal acts, regulations and actual practice applied to the State's regional or minority languages. The Committee gathers information both from the State's relevant authorities and independent sources to obtain a just and fair overview of the real language situation.

The monitoring takes place in 3-yearly cycles, in the following stages:

1. Submission of a periodical report by the State Party
2. Monitoring exercise carried out by the Committee of Experts
3. Committee of Ministers' recommendations to the States Parties

The latest monitoring of Slovakia's language situation was carried out in 2007, when the Committee of Experts issued an evaluation report. The report can be downloaded here:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/Default\\_en.asp#Slovakia](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/Default_en.asp#Slovakia)

Dr. Péter Kovács, Professor of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, delivered a lecture at the School of Jurisprudence of the University of Pécs, in October, 2008, analyzing this evaluation report. In the following page, you can read a shortened version of his speech.

Newsletter Editor: János Szekeres, Graphic Designer: Ajna Pfenninberger.  
We are grateful to all those who contributed articles or information to this Newsletter. "Nothing printed here is to be construed as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any legislation before the Congress of the United States."

**LANGUAGE USE AMONG THE HUNGARIAN  
MINORITY OF SLOVAKIA IN LIGHT OF THE  
MONITORING REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN  
CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY  
LANGUAGES**

**Lecture by Dr. Péter Kovács**

Up to the present, Slovakia has undergone only the first monitoring cycle. In her case, the Report of the Committee of Experts was prepared in 2007. Let us examine what were the determinations made in that report regarding the use of language among the Hungarian minority.

The most salient aspect of the Report of the Committee of Experts (Committee) on the first report of the Slovak Government is that it repeatedly criticizes the so-called 20% threshold for the use of minority language, and the dangers posed by the effects of the State Language Law.

The Committee emphasized that the 20% rule cannot and should not be a rigid, cast-in-stone regulation, and, above all, it cannot be an obstacle to the implementation of the obligations assumed in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, (Charter) where the presence of a significant Hungarian community, by virtue of its existence and its requirements, justify securing the protection of the minority language.

The Committee's report concerning the implementation of the requirements of the Charter criticizes practically all points of implementation of the Slovak governments' report. With regard to other points, the report states that there is not enough information to decide if the obligations have been met or not. Regarding the 20% threshold – from the Hungarian perspective – the report focused on the obstacles faced by the Hungarian minority in public administration matters.

The Committee found only partial fulfillment of the use of language obligations in secondary and vocational schools, requesting additional information in areas such as adult education, and with respect to Hungarian history and culture. The report also found shortcomings in the whole spectrum of Hungarian language teacher training.

The Committee objected that in the area of administration of justice, where interpretation into Hungarian is only made available if the individual does not speak Slovak adequately, and regrettably the same situation applies to the acceptability of Hungarian language documents and to court hearings as well. Similarly, civil juridical procedures were criticized on grounds that the option of using the Hungarian language is linked to the poor knowledge of the Slovak language, and contrary to assumed obligations, translation costs are added to the expense of the judicial procedure, and the

translation of official documents to Hungarian constitutes an added private expense (not funded by the state). Based on the above, the obligations related to the use of language in the administration of justice should be regarded as either non-existent or, at most, only partially met, with the exception that Hungarian-language documents in civil procedures are accepted as valid.

The Committee found that civil servants are not encouraged at all in the use of the Hungarian language. Even if there is evidence of actual use of Hungarian between contacts of citizens and civil servants, this cannot be generally regarded as typical even in settlements with a proportion exceeding 20%. The submission of Hungarian-language documents is allowed only in settlements of over 20%, which happens rather infrequently. At the same time, according to the Slovak legal framework, this is not allowed at the regional level. It is contrary to the obligations of the Charter, that at most, only in settlements with over 20% proportion are municipal resolutions published in Hungarian and only in a summarized format. It is also unacceptable that in the meetings of municipal bodies, representatives may use the Hungarian language only if all those present approve it.

The Committee noted that, although the government has informed them that public services are available in Hungarian for settlements with a population exceeding 20% minority residents, this has been formally excluded by the provisions of the Slovak State Language Law. The fact that the government has received no complaints regarding this does not constitute compliance with the obligation. There is also no information on government actions in the interest of hiring Hungarian-speaking civil servants, language training in Hungarian to civil servants who are not Hungarian speakers in the 20% settlements (even for those below the threshold, if warranted by the number of residents).

The Slovak Language Law is without a doubt in direct violation of the assumed obligation to exclude any deterrent in the use of minority languages in the national legal system, official documents, labor contracts and technical material, and also in hospitals and in residences for seniors. Information is also lacking – not coincidentally – on how to counter society's practices that deter the use of minority languages.

We should mention that besides the above evaluation, Slovakia has presented in 2008 a second government report that is not public yet. Unfortunately it cannot be said that the use of Hungarian has widened in Slovakia, or that Slovak lawmaking has moved towards greater openness. On the contrary, it is evident that reverse tendencies dominate the policies of the current coalition government in Bratislava.

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