

Analytical Report PHARE RAXEN\_CC  
Minority Education

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Institute for Ethnic Studies

Report on minority education in Slovenia

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## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report comprises a brief outline of the constitutional and legislative context of human rights protection and minority protection in Slovenia and focuses on the implementation of minority schooling for autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and Roma community. The report includes general information on ethnic structure in Slovenia, as provided by the published data and results of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia in the appendix.

The Republic of Slovenia is a party to all relevant international instruments on the protection of human rights and elimination of discrimination, including the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN International Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and current legal framework, only autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities enjoy the status of national minorities and Roma enjoy the status of ethnic community with special rights.

Although data on the ethnic structure in Slovenia reflect more heterogeneous ethnic structure, members of other ethnic groups than Italian and Hungarian national communities and Roma community, do not have the status of a national minority in the sense of collective holders of rights. They have, in compliance with the Constitution, guaranteed individual rights to preserve their national identity, to foster their own culture and use their own language and script. According to the Primary School Act and in compliance with bilateral international treaties, supplementary classes in the mother tongue and culture are organised for the children of Slovene citizens living in Slovenia, whose mother tongue is not Slovene.

The Republic of Slovenia formed a Declaration while signing the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, that in accordance with the Constitution and internal legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities are recognized as National Minorities. In accordance with the Constitution and internal legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, the provisions of the Framework Convention shall apply also to the members of the Roma community, who live in the Republic of Slovenia.

The special rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are guaranteed on the basis of the autochthonous settlement of both communities, irrespective of the number of members of both communities. According to the territorial principle, the special rights are exercised in ethnically mixed areas inhabited by the Italian and Hungarian national communities. For the Roma community, criteria of traditional settlement were recently applied within the procedure for adoption of the Act on Amending the Local Governance Act, where 20 municipalities where Roma community is traditionally settled, are listed.

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia *inter alia* guarantees to the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia the right to education and schooling in their own languages. This provision is elaborated in more detail in the sector legislation on education.

Therefore, this report focuses on the implementation of the minority education for the members of autochthonous national minorities and Roma in Slovenia and includes an overview of the governmental strategies as well as policy measures concerning planning and data about the practical implementation of education for the members of autochthonous national minorities and Roma in Slovenia.

Education for the members of Italian and Hungarian minorities and Roma is an integral part of the general educational system in Slovenia. Cultural, historical and identity features of national minorities in Slovenia are included in the curricula in the obligatory primary school on the entire territory of Slovenia within the framework of compulsory school subjects: elementary science, geography, and history. At the secondary school level it is included in the geography, history, and sociology classes. In the ethnically mixed area – in Prekmurje and Slovene Istria - due to different historical circumstances and socio demographic conditions, there are two models of bilingual education practiced. The bilingual education in the ethnically mixed area has been introduced in Slovenia in the early sixties of the last century and has been constantly developed and improved by research, theory and policy measures. Both models are presented in this report as examples of good practice.

Government strategies towards education for Roma in Slovenia were primarily oriented to the socialization and integration of Roma pupils. Recent developments in the last decade in Slovenia take into account cultural, linguistic, and historical and identity features of Roma also in the field of their education. Two projects about the innovative approach towards the overcoming of deficits in the field of Roma education in Slovenia are presented as examples of good practices.

## **3. INTRODUCTION**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTORY NOTES**

The report comprises a brief outline of the constitutional and legislative context of human rights and minority protection in Slovenia, as a legal framework for regulation of minority schooling. As the Framework Convention for protection of National Minorities reflects the common standard of the international protection in this field, main approach and practical data from these governmental reports are presented as a basic source for presentation of legislation and policies. Available results of the monitoring by international organisations and critical remarks and recommendations of international organisations are referred to in the Conclusions.

In the chapters Minority schooling in practice and Good practice, topics - Minority education for national minorities/ bilingual education and Education for Roma are dealt with as main topics. The fact that the education for national minorities has a longer tradition in theory and practice is presented in more detailed way, stressing the specific elements of bilingual education. In the chapter on good practices we present innovative elements in the approach of two projects in the field of education of Roma, which are oriented towards the improvement of educational structure and support maintaining of identity. Both projects were already presented in more detail either in an individual publication (the first example) or within the CEMES project network.

For the collection of data for the mapping exercise on minority schooling we used data collected within the preparation of the general mapping exercise, internet pages of the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport and other governmental institutions, data on recent developments in the NGO sector and respective expert literature.

For data collection, presentation and analyses in the chapters of narrative report we refer to findings based on research and scientific work, expert literature and on data presented in the governmental report on the implementation of the Framework Convention for protection of National Minorities. While dealing with individual items, we quote basic provisions of legal acts in the field of minority schooling and the results of expert work.

For the preparation of annex on demographic structure, results and data of Statistical office of Slovenia and field expert literature were used.

### **3.2. MAPPING EXERCISE ON MINORITY SCHOOLING**

#### **3.2.1. Organisations**

Following organisations were mapped:

- INV-IES, Pedagogical Institute and Centre for Adult Education from Maribor (already mapped in the first mapping exercise) and newly:
- Ministry of education, science and sport and,

- Office for education within the Ministry,
- National Education Institute,
- Centre for Adult Education from Trebnje.

Due to the need to present governmental strategies, we focused on the existing governmental structure, active within the Ministry for Education. The Council of experts for General Education has a decisive role in planning minority education policy in Slovenia. It consists of experts and representatives of minorities, working at other institutions than the Ministry.

### 3.2.2. Activities

Apart from the activities, namely research project and conferences which were already mapped in the general mapping exercise, there are only few »new« entries presenting activities in the mapping exercise for minority schooling: activities about the creation of equal opportunities for Roma in the field of education. They are also presented as examples of good practices which deserve and could be transferred to other countries.

### 3.2.3. Publications

As in Slovenia the topic Minority education for national minorities and Education for Roma is highly appreciated in the research and scientific work, there is an impressive bibliography. Seminar and degree papers as well as research work on the topic of multicultural education, language, culture and history of national minorities are done at all primary and secondary schools, at the universities and during postgraduate studies. According to the received guidelines, we included also works which are **not** related to the organisations described in template 1.

Concerning the place of publishing, we covered units which were published in Slovenia as a result of research and study work; works published in the neighbouring countries which cover position of minorities in Slovenia and in neighbouring countries; contributions from the international conferences published abroad which prove great interest at international level for the solutions from Slovenia.

As a main source for publications we used COBISS network and documentation and archive of the INV-IES.

## 4. LEGISLATION AND POLICIES IN THE AREA OF MINORITY SCHOOLING

### 4.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Slovenia is - like many other countries in the world - ethnically and culturally pluralistic society. The territory on which the state of Slovenia was created in the early nineties was never ethnically homogenous. The number of ethnic minorities, their size and their real economic and political power have, in the various historical periods, changed in accordance with changing political boundaries. The most recent change of state borders has left Slovenia a “colourful” collection of members of non-Slovene ethnic groups. These can be classified as: the “classical” (territorial) minorities- Italian and Hungarian minorities, Roma and other ethnic communities.

Demographic data reflect gradual decreasing of the share of declared Slovenes in the population of the Republic of Slovenia in the results of Population Censuses after the World War II. Process of ageing of the population in Slovenia as a whole, particularly affects the groups: Italians and Hungarians. Graphs on age structure of ethnic groups for persons from “other” states of ex Yugoslavia show a different picture. Age structure of Roma population shows an absolutely different picture and proves that Roma population is mostly young and vital (see data on ethnic structure in the comparative prospective and graphs on age structure in appendix).

The most numerous group among “other ethnic groups”, who are not recognized as national minorities, are immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics (namely Bosniacs, Croats, Muslims, Serbs) who settled in larger industrial centres predominantly following World War II during the existence of the common state. As they are not treated as national minorities within the existing legal framework, they do not have special collective rights in the field of minority education.

The concept of minority protection and respective policies in Slovenia is based on different grounds and is implemented at two levels:

- respect of individual human rights and antidiscrimination for each individual and
- the special collective protection for national minorities, which is guaranteed under the Constitution only for the Italian and Hungarian national minority and Roma community.

However, the human rights education and awareness raising is the common goal of educational policy in Slovenia. The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (Uradni list/Official Gazette RS, No. 12/96, 64/2001, 108/2002, 34/2003, 79/2003) in the introductory part *inter alia* determines as a goal of the education in Slovenia also to ensure the optimal development of each pupil, regardless of gender, social or cultural origin, belief and national or ethnic origin, and outlines importance of learning and awareness raising about mutual tolerance, respect for human rights for coexistence in democratic societies.



The Republic of Slovenia cooperates within the EU programs: Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth in achieving these goals.

The expected flow of information, people and goods within the United Europe requires a reflection regarding efficient communication among different language communities, across language and cultural boundaries. This aim should be achieved by means of expanded offer and intensive learning of foreign languages in the EU member states. The ability of communication in several languages should make it possible for the population of member states and member candidates to enjoy equal starting-point conditions at the challenges of growing international mobility in the United Europe, it should strengthen cooperation in the fields of education, culture and science, as well as in commerce and industry, and contribute to the overcoming of prejudice and elimination of discrimination. Multilingualism is in the process of becoming a sort of an identity card of European citizenship. The multilingualism of citizens - a good command of a national language being a main prerequisite here - should therefore contribute not only to better understanding and tolerance, but also to respect of language identity and cultural diversity of Europe<sup>1</sup>.

## **4.2. RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ANTI DISCRIMINATION FRAMEWORK**

Slovenia is party of all relevant international instruments in the field of human rights protection and anti-discrimination. The ban on discrimination is provided for in the Constitution of the Republic in Slovenia in Article 14.

In the cases of violation of human rights by public or state bodies, complaints could be forwarded to the Human Rights Ombudsman. The Penal Code of Republic of Slovenia stipulates the sanction of penalty payment or imprisonment to 1 year if the right to equal treatment is being breached.

Further harmonisation with the EU Directive 2000/43/EC was ensured via the *Law on equal treatment*, as an umbrella law in this field<sup>2</sup>. The Law on equal treatment was adopted on April 22, 2004 (O.G.No 50/2004). Its intention is to identify common standpoints and to ensure equal treatment for all persons, also in the field of education. It does not intervene in the legally determined competences which are derogated to the Human Rights Ombudsman or other institutions in this field. The Law on equal treatment introduces a new body - Council for Antidiscrimination - as an expert and consultant body.

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<sup>1</sup> NEČAK LŪK, Albina. European plurilingualism from a national language perspective. Razpr. gradivo - Inšt. nar. vpraš. (1990), 2001, št. 38/39, str. 6-25, tabele. [COBISS.SI-ID 8215373]

<sup>2</sup> KLOPČIČ, Vera. Ustavnopravne in zakonodajne določbe o preprečevanju diskriminacije v Republiki Sloveniji. Razpr. gradivo - Inšt. nar. vpraš. (1990), 2003, št. 42, str. 168-176. [COBISS.SI-ID 8951373]

### **4.3. EDUCATION IN MOTHER TONGUE FOR IMMIGRANTS**

The Republic of Slovenia has been supporting cultural activities of organisations and associations belonging to the members of nations, nationalities and ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia. On the basis of international treaties and bilateral agreements, additional classes of mother tongue and culture are organised for children of Croatian, Macedonian and Albanian nationalities attending primary school in Slovene if they wish so.

The field of education of the children of migrants comprises the inclusion of those children in the Slovene educational system and the right of the children of migrants to supplementary lessons in their mother tongue. Their rights in the field of education are regulated under provisions of the Primary School Act (Official Gazette RS No. 12/96, 33/97 and 59/01). In compliance with international treaties, classes in the mother tongue and culture are organised for the children of Slovene citizens living in Slovenia, whose mother tongue is not Slovene. Children who are foreign citizens or stateless persons living in the Republic of Slovenia are, pursuant to Article 10 of the Primary School Act, entitled to compulsory schooling under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.

The system of courses in the mother tongue for the children of migrants is based on the provisions of the Primary School Act and on the long experience of additional courses in the Slovene language in Western European countries. Children and their parents decide on such courses on a voluntary basis. The courses are held once a week from 3 to 5 hours. Native speakers teach such classes. The Office for International Cooperation within the Ministry of Education and Sports, together with the Institute of Education, offers organisational and expert assistance in training teachers for teaching the mother tongue as a second/or foreign language<sup>3</sup>.

### **4.4. EDUCATION OF ROMA**

The majority of Roma in Slovenia lives in isolated settlements located at the borders of village communities. Until now, their social position was marginalized in all fields of social and political life. Majority attitudes and estimations are still mostly based on general impressions and prejudice. The fact that there is no sufficient intercultural communication between Roma and non-Roma strongly affects also the field of education for Roma in Slovenia.

In the year 2003, The Ministry of Education started to finance the Project of Slovenian Roma Language Standardisation and Integration of Roma Culture into Education, which is conceived as part of an integral project the purpose of which is the integration of the Roma language and culture into the programmes conducted by state educational institutions. The first and logical step towards this aim is the creation of a glossary (or dictionary), of the Roma language in dialects spoken by the Roma groups in Slovenia, as

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<sup>3</sup> Report on the implementation of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities - Home page of the Ministry for Education, Science, and Sport [http://www.mzs.si/slo/ministrstvo/mednarodno\\_solstvo/priseljenci.asp](http://www.mzs.si/slo/ministrstvo/mednarodno_solstvo/priseljenci.asp)

well as the creation of accompanying textbooks. The project is designed as part of a broader plan the objective of which is to include the Roma language and culture into the Slovenian school system. By developing its fundamental products, the project team will use the acquired materials or offer them as instruments intended for the purposes of integrating the Roma culture into kindergarten and school programmes.

The project follows the principles of multi-cultural education and complies with the concepts of the improvement of the Roma situation as one of the priorities set by both the Council of Europe and the European Union. The research results will facilitate the creation of a bilingual, Roma-Slovenian, as well as Slovenian-Roma glossary. All concrete achievements of the research will be drawn up in the electronic format ensuring a simple transmission of the data into various communication media<sup>4</sup>.

#### **4.5. MINORITY SCHOOLING FOR THE ITALIAN AND HUNGARIAN NATIONAL MINORITY**

In ethnically mixed regions of Slovenia, special attention goes to education and the role of minority language therein. In such education, language represents a social rather than neutral category, reflecting political will and majority's attitude towards minority.

Language policy and educational practice in ethnically mixed regions in Slovenia is based on the positive concept of minority protection and is a result of goals, needs, character and policy of society. The theory of bilingual education in Slovenia has in the past been upgraded on the basis of teachers', researchers' and politicians' experience. The bilingual education taking place in ethnically mixed regions today, means education in mother tongue, second language acquisition (majority or minority language), as well as getting to know the culture and history of one's own nation and the nation one lives with. No doubt mutual familiarity contributes to elimination of negative stereotypes. With children of both nationalities developing optimum command of mother tongue and gaining adequate communication competence in the second language, conditions are provided for promotion of bilingualism not only at individual level but also in wider social scale. So devised educational model (so the one in Slovene/Hungarian as the one in Slovene/Italian ethnically mixed territory) eliminates division of functions between the two languages with regard to social status.

Education in ethnically mixed territories in Slovenia implements not only language but also social goals with its contents and work methods. It is conceived as the basis for the implementation of equal minority status, culture and language, as well as for equal integration of minority and majority members into the social life of the respective region. The intertwining of both goals, with the support of social setting and family, creates conditions of coexistence, acceptance and respect of diversity.

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<sup>4</sup> ANTAUER Živa, KREK Janez, PERŠAK Mateja: Project of Slovenian Roma Language Standardisation and Integration of Roma Culture into Education, v: KLOPCIC, Vera (ur.)POLZER, Miroslav (ur.) Evropa, Slovenija in Romi :zbornik referatov na mednarodni konferenci v Ljubljani, 15. februarja 2002. Ljubljana: Institut za narodnostna vprasanja, 2003, pp. 130-141

Successful achievement of education goals in ethnically mixed territories (social and linguistic) does not depend solely on educational policy and curricula; highly important are teachers and their ways of presenting certain contents, transferring knowledge and influencing the attitude towards individual topics<sup>5</sup>.

## 5. MINORITY SCHOOLING IN PRACTICE

Due to different historical circumstances, various socio-demographic conditions as well as some international arrangements there are two models of education in nationally mixed regions in Slovenia which embrace pupils of majority and minority nations. The present models of bilingual education in Slovenia are the result of the theory of bilingual education, policy and various historical circumstances and could be presented as an example of good practice as a whole. The main problem in the implementation in practice is the decrease of the number of pupils in bilingual schools, due to age structure of both national minorities in Slovenia (see graphs on age structure of respective groups in the annex).

The two models practiced in Slovenia:

- the model in which the educational process takes place in the mother tongue and the other language /second language is a compulsory subject. This model is practised in the Slovene-Italian region.
- the model in which both languages - the mother tongue and the second language - are languages of instruction and school subjects. This model is practised in the Slovene- Hungarian region.

Both models are maintenance / enrichment models, their social goal is cultural pluralism, while their linguistic goal is to provide equal possibilities for the use of both languages in all speaking situations, i.e. in all fields of life and work. With the development of communication competence of all pupils in two languages (irrespective of their ethnic adherence) both models provide so the use of mother tongue as the basic understanding (at least) of the second language.

The school syllabuses are adapted to the specific ethnic circumstances, parts from Hungarian-Italian history, geography and culture are being added to the syllabus of Slovene schools. Second language acquisition and knowledge of each other's history, culture, literature contributes to the development of mutual tolerance and respect. The role of education in ethnically mixed regions is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. The tasks, organization and participation of ethnic community in the planning and regulation of education in ethnically mixed areas are defined by laws regulating particular fields of education, as well as by special law (The Law on Special Rights of Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Community – Official Gazette, 11.5.2001, no. 35, p. 4044-4047). Special law deals with the implementation of rights of Italian and

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<sup>5</sup> NOVAK-LUKANOVIČ, Sonja. Jezikovne značilnosti mikrookolja učencev. Uporab. jezikosl., 1995, let. 3, št. 4, str. 132-141. [COBISS.SI-ID 4790861]

Hungarian ethnic community in the field of pre-school education, elementary education, lower and secondary vocational training, secondary technical or vocational training and secondary general education. The law defines the goals, program, kindergarten and school network, establishing and management of kindergartens and management of public kindergartens and schools, the status and tasks of employees, the documents issuing, consulting as well as financing of public kindergartens and schools with Italian teaching language plus bilingual public kindergartens and schools. The state (Ministry for Education, Science and Sport) provides funds for extra costs related to bilingual classes (extra teaching materials, teacher's training in parent states, cooperation of schools with schools and institutions in parent state), for teachers in charge of bilingual program, for original textbooks and for bilingual documentation.

Legislation of Slovenia guarantees to the members of national minorities the right to participate in designing the curricula of schools at all levels and in designing the programmes in kindergarten that operate in ethnically-mixed areas of Slovenia (Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for general Education, Commission for the education of national minorities). Special attention is also paid to cooperation with the state-mother nation of the minority in the field of in-service teacher training, organization of field trips and preparation of textbooks. Slovenia signed special agreements with the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Hungary.

## **5.1. IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PRACTICE: THE ITALIAN MINORITY**

The Italian minority lives in the area of three coastal communities (Koper/Capodistria, Piran/Pirano, Izola/Isola) in the Slovenian part of Istria.

In the Slovene-Italian ethnically mixed area in Slovene Istria, owing to different historic circumstances, children frequent preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools, colleges with the Slovene or Italian language of instruction and with the second language as the obligatory subject of the curricula. Therefore pupils are educated in their mother tongue, Slovene or Italian, but they obligatory learn also the second language (Slovene or Italian).

Although there are educational institutions in the ethnically mixed territory of Slovene Istria, which operate in one language only (mother tongue of children or pupils, Slovene or Italian), these are not classical monolingual schools, but schools which aim at development of the necessary faculties for life in bilingual and bicultural setting. This is reflected in the contents of some subjects, focused on intense learning of the history, traditions, culture and the language of the nation (Slovenians) or ethnic community (Italians) that has autochthonous populated this region for ages.

The coastal model of second language teaching in primary schools was established in 1959. During these years some new methods in teaching second language have been introduced.

Kindergartens with Italian language are within the framework of primary schools with Italian language. In the school year 2001/2002 the kindergarten with Italian language was

attended by 268 children. The network of elementary schools with Italian language covers the entire ethnically mixed territory (one autonomous, two parent schools and six succursal schools) and was attended by 434 children. Secondary schools with Italian teaching language had 278 pupils in the school year 2001/2002, which means that 980 children had education in Italian language.

In kindergartens with Slovene teaching language in ethnically mixed territory children are getting acquainted with elements of Italian language as second language twice a week. In elementary schools with Slovene teaching language, the classes of Italian as second language are given two hours per week, while in secondary schools hours of Italian as second language vary from school to school.

In the schools with the Italian language of instruction teaching staff and other school personnel are native Italian speakers, Italian is the language of oral and written communication in school and also with parents or with the broader society. Textbooks, manuals and other teaching materials are prepared either in Slovenia or imported from Italy in agreement with Slovene regulations on the adoption of instructional materials.

## **5.2. IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PRACTICE: THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY**

The Hungarian minority populates the ethnically mixed territory of Prekmurje, region beyond the river Mura, situated in the north-eastern part of Slovenia along the Hungarian border. The ethnically mixed territory administratively belongs to five communities (Hodoš/Hodos, Moravske toplice, Šalovci, Lendava/Lendva, Dobrovnik/Dobronak). In the ethnically mixed area of Prekmurje, the educational process is bilingual at all grades (from kindergartens, primary schools, different types of secondary school) and for all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic adherence or individual wishes.

In this area, the Slovene and Hungarian languages - the language of majority and that of minority - function as school subjects of curriculum and languages of instruction. During each lesson the concurrent method is applied, with language switching. Bilingual education is characterized by the contact of two groups. The contact is not coincidental, but permanent, at least in a certain period of an individual's life. The successfulness of bilingual communication during lessons in all curriculum subjects depends on various linguistic, pedagogic and psycholinguistic factors. A child's ability to participate actively in bilingual instruction is closely connected to his language proficiency in the mother tongue and to second language competence. Because of language switching during all subjects it is obvious that for active participation and understanding new contents a child must acquire a certain degree of language competence in the second language. During all lessons a child can answer or talk in his mother tongue, except during the lessons of the second language.

In the bilingual school the approach to the first and second language teaching, based on the mother tongue and the second language glottodidactic principles and the communicative approach of the second language teaching is practiced.

Apart from specific goals curriculum is adapted to bilingual schools. Within minority program curricula are prepared, catalogues of competences for Hungarian as mother tongue and second language, and for Slovenian as second language. Curricula for history, geography, music and visual arts are expanded with goals and contents from the Hungarian minority program.

According to the law, teachers and the other personnel of the bilingual school must be bilingual. All external signs on school, announcements and school documentation (gradebooks, time tables, school reports) are bilingual, as well as communication between the school and parents (parent teacher meetings, announcement to parents). Most textbooks are also bilingual.

For members of the Hungarian ethnic minority, continuation of education in their mother tongue is organized differently. The position of the minority language / the Hungarian language varies according to the position (community) of the school. The minority language at the secondary level can be the medium of instruction and compulsory subject in bilingual programme in Lendava, or can be an optional subject within any other secondary school (Slovene language of instruction) in the ethnically mixed region of Prekmurje. Outside this area it is possible for pupils to attend only optional lessons of Hungarian language.

### **5.3. ROMA EDUCATION IN PRACTICE**

Legal regulations for special conditions of Roma children education were included into schooling legislation in 1996: into the Law on organization and financing of education (Official Gazette RS, No.12/96), the Law on Kindergartens (Official Gazette RS, No.12/96) and the Law on elementary school (Official Gazette RS, No.12/96). In conformity with the Roma Aid Program and the above mentioned schooling legislation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport allows schools extra pedagogical hours for group classes outside regular classes. As the insufficient knowledge Slovene language was considered one of the reasons for the worse school success of Roma pupils, additional help is organized by persons who are capable to communicate with Roma children (in Roma and in Slovene language). Roma children participate in afternoon classes in conformity with the norms and standards for elementary schools and kindergartens.

Adapted workbooks for Slovene language and mathematics were prepared for those Roma pupils that need this kind of assistance which were approved by the Council of Experts for General Education.

With the introduction of nine-year elementary school, new curricula were adopted that include minimum standards for class graduation. That is why in the year 2000 the Council of Experts for General Education adopted Instructions for the practice of the program of nine-year elementary schools for Roma pupils. The National Education Institute monitors the reform and promotes new working methods, adapted to the nine-year schooling of Roma children.

In December 2002 the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport established special Working group for the preparation of the strategy of Roma's education. The group

includes experts of pre-school to adult education, as well as members of Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, The Roma Association and representatives of the National Education Institute.

The main challenge is how to help Roma and improve their integration, taking into account differences which are based upon different ways of life, tradition and culture of Roma, and how to avoid forced assimilation during the education in the sense of acceptance of foreign values, patterns of behaviour and life style.

Since the year 1996, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport has been monthly providing schools with some small amounts of money for Roma pupils, aimed for the purchase of study materials, certain costs related to activities and excursions.<sup>6</sup> Textbooks for Roma pupils are provided by schools with the help of special textbooks funds. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provides additional funds for subsidizing school meals for Roma pupils. The above measures contributed to improved cooperation of Roma children in classes and to higher level of their attendance.<sup>7</sup>

However, a lot could and should be done in this field. »Burdened with their past, poverty, social deprivation, living on the margin of society, young Roma experience failure rather than success during their school years. School traumas deprive them of courage and will to do their work, which in other conditions they might be able to cope with. They find themselves caught between Scylla and Charybdis much more than their unsuccessful non-Roma school-fellows«<sup>8</sup>.

## 6. GOOD PRACTICE

In Slovenia there live about 7.000 to 10.000 Roma.<sup>9</sup> Most of Roma are traditionally settled in the region Prekmurje in the area of the Murska Sobota municipality (Pušča settlement) and in the surroundings of Novo mesto in the Dolenjska region. The largest number of Roma who immigrated from other places of the former Yugoslavia predominantly live in industrial centres as Maribor and Velenje. As in other European countries, Roma population is the youngest group within the whole population of Slovenia (see graphs on age structure of Roma in the annex).

Until recently the bad socio-economic situation of Roma in Slovenia was treated as a main problem within the educational system for Roma in Slovenia. In fact, majority of Roma families lives in poverty, e.g. in some cases, without suitable living conditions,

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<sup>6</sup> Since the January 2003 it is 1.200 SIT (approx. 6 Euros) monthly.

<sup>7</sup> In the school year 2002/03 elementary schools were attended by 1.223 Roma children, the 10 kindergartens by 157 children, elementary school programs in 8 public institutions by 295 adults, while over 100 Roma pupils continued education after having finished elementary school.

<sup>8</sup> TANCER Mladen: Komparativni prikaz učne uspešnosti omskih in neromskih osnovnošolcev v Prekmurju, v: Klopčič Vera(ur,) , Polzer Miroslav ( ur.): Izboljšanje položaja Romov v Srednji in Vzhodni Evropi, p 161.

<sup>9</sup> According to the official data in the 2002 Population Census, the number is 3246. Non-official number is estimated to about 10 000 persons.



their huts are dark, damp, non-hygienic, without running water, toilets and bathrooms. Lots of measures at governmental and local level were taken to overcome this gap. Unfortunately there was only limited success until now.

Main problem in the field of Roma education is the lack of teaching staff, i.e. Roma members with good command of both Slovene and Roma language. Roma students were given scholarships within public call for scholarships for pedagogical professions. This field has not yet proven to be successful although the problem is continually pointed out at public meetings, round tables, media and interviews with Roma, experts and pedagogical workers. Until now only one Roma applied for the scholarship, but failed to graduate.

Projects presented in this report as examples of good practices concerning the education of Roma in Slovenia were selected according to the criteria of the best applicative solutions, which could be transferred to other settings in Slovenia and in other European countries. Findings of these projects proved that Roma who have higher education are more competitive on labour market and are more willing to motivate their own children for further education and school attendance. These projects/ examples of good practices were well attended and considered by Roma and non-Roma as a successful attempt for the improvement of the position of Roma. In this presentation we briefly pointed out innovative elements in their implementation intended to overcome deficits in education of Roma.

The first one was intended to improve level of socialization and integration of Roma children in schools, increase of their school success, and at the same time intensify work with parents and whole Roma families, in order to support their self awareness, identity and culture. It was financed within European Commission Democracy programme, as it disseminates some ideas based on the EU common principles about respect for cultural diversity and empowering marginalized groups (example 1).

The second one deals with the activity aimed at organization of special education programmes within the adult education programmes (this group includes also Roma pupils who failed in elementary school), for Roma who need courses of elementary education and adequate vocational training (example 2).

## **6.1. EXAMPLE 1: “EDUCATION OF ROMANI PARENTS”**

Seminars on education of Roma parents for bilingual and dual identity upbringing of children

The project took place in the area of Maribor and in the region of Prekmurje, two regions with a high proportion of Roma population. The objectives of the project were: to encourage young Romani parents to bring up their children bilingually and with dual identity, the Slovene and the Roma; to educate 100 Romany parents by means of seven two days seminars. The seminars were well attended and a network started to develop between Roma groups from Maribor and the Prekmurje region.

Participants of these seminars were Roma pupils and their parents, teachers, headmasters, psychologists, pedagogues and social workers who work with Roma children. Improved

attention should be given to bilingual education, as the interviews with participants showed the bad command in Slovenian language to be the greatest obstacle for Roma children. That is why more attention should be given to language command already in the child's early period of development. Roma parents were encouraged to stimulate their children with schoolwork and to be willing for necessary cooperation between school and home and at the same time to increase their ethnic and cultural self awareness.

Innovative approach is in the support for Roma parents who should stimulate their children's further education and use of both languages - Roma and Slovene language - and to create intercultural dialogue<sup>10</sup>.

## **6.2. EXAMPLE 2: CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE TREBNJE MUNICIPALITY/ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR ILLITERATE AND UNDER-EDUCATED ROMA**

The good practice deals with some specific features in the education of Roma in the municipality of Trebnje, in the central part of Slovenia. It strives to achieve a higher educational level for Roma, a more effective integration and cooperation of Roma and non-Roma. In the municipality Trebnje educational programmes are adapted for Roma, who are illiterate or did not finish elementary school, aiming at their further training and development of skills for better employment opportunities.

Target group are illiterate and under-educated Roma in municipality of Trebnje, regardless to their age. Programme is financed by: Local Government, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Public institutions (Centre for education and culture). Local authorities provide room, heating and other material costs and textbooks for teachers. Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provides funding for mentors and teachers.

The idea to include Roma in educational programmes within the adult education programmes is based on national legislation and financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Entirely new is the local approach that programmes for Roma must be flexible and individual, conducted in small groups and even individually for each candidate<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Zbornik seminarjev o izobraževanju romskih staršev za dvojezično in dvoidentitetno vzgojo otrok, Andragoški zavod Maribor, Ljudska univerza, Maribor 1998, 33 pp

<sup>11</sup> Case study No. & Title: 243. Educational programme for illiterate and under-educated Roma in the municipality of Trebnje, Slovenia, - [www.cemes.org/current/LGI/243-eng.htm](http://www.cemes.org/current/LGI/243-eng.htm)

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1. FINDINGS**

The models of bilingual education for national minorities in Slovenia present an example of good practice and innovative approach also in the European context because in the educational process minority and majority pupils are included.

It should also be emphasized that empirical results of research studies in ethnically mixed regions in Slovenia prove that the greater part of the population, irrespective of its ethnic appurtenance, accepts the principles and the organization of bilingual education and estimates it as successful (giving sufficient knowledge for further schooling, and integration in every day life). The advantage of the bilingual education that is practiced in Slovene ethnically mixed areas is, according to the research data, that young people are brought up in the spirit of coexistence between different nations. The results likewise show that present models, applied in ethnically mixed regions of Slovenia, contribute to the formation of individual ethnic identity giving ethnic relations in these area the character of respect and acceptance of diversity. Publications mapped in the specific mapping on minority schooling include presentation of integral picture of the specificity of education of members of Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities, including texts dealing with theoretical aspects, texts presenting results of research studies of different topics of bilingual education, as well as texts concerning specific aspects of education in multicultural setting in different time periods, along with inhabitants' viewpoints on bilingual education.

As in other European countries, in Slovenia too, the pedagogical interest in study and guidance of Roma pupils' schooling is greatly intensified in recent years. It proves that improvement of the status of Roma population and confidence building among them and majority population is closely connected to awareness about the human rights protection, anti discrimination, interethnic relations, multicultural education and tolerance in democratic societies.

### **7.2. CRITICAL REMARKS**

Protection of minority rights in Slovenia is ensured at two levels – protection of individual rights and ensured special minority protection only for the Italian and Hungarian minority and Roma community.

This distinction in the conceptual framework of the minority protection has been criticized by international monitoring bodies, particularly by CERD / Committee for the Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (August 2000). In the Concluding observations and recommendations which CERD adopted after the presentation of the Initial Report of the Republic of Slovenia on the Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, CERD asked for the further clarification about “the guaranteed level of protection of individual ethnic groups and

non-discrimination against members of different ethnic communities in the areas of political participation, media access, education and culture”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Concerns and recommendations, concluding observations of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Slovenia. 10/08/2000.A/55/18.paras. 237-251. (Concluding observations/Comments), p. 3.

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## 9. APPENDIX:

**Table 1: The population according to ethnic affiliation / number**  
**The population according to ethnic affiliation**  
**at censuses 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, and 2002**

	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Republic of Slovenia	1466425	1591523	1679051	1838381	1913355	1964036
Nationality						
Declared Slovenes	1466214	1587585	1664093	1800680	1845022	1766982
Italians	854	3072	2987	2138	2959	2258
Hungarians	11019	10498	8943	8777	8000	6243
Roma	1663	158	951	1393	2259	3246
Albannians	169	282	1266	1933	3534	6186
Austrians	289	254	266	146	126	181
Bolgarians	49	180	138	103	168	138
Bosniacs	...	...	...	...	...	21542
Czechs	807	584	442	423	315	273
Montenegrins	1356	1384	1950	3175	4339	2667
Greeks	24	50	24	15	21	54
Croats	17978	31429	41556	53882	52876	35642
Jews	15	21	72	9	37	28
Macedonians	640	1009	1572	3227	4371	3972
Muslims	1617	465	3197	13339	26577	10467
Germans	1617	732	400	309	298	499
Polish	275	222	191	200	196	140
Romanians	41	48	41	93	115	122
Russians	593	295	297	189	167	451
Russinians	46	384	66	54	57	40
Slovaks	60	71	75	139	139	216
Serbs	11225	13609	20209	41695	47401	38964
Turks	68	135	52	86	142	259
Ukrajinians	...	...	138	190	210	470
Vlachs	9	6	4	16	37	13
Others	352	449	293	526	1021	1548
Nationality undetermined	-	2784	12280	32400	25978	22141
Yugoslavs	-	2784	6616	25615	12075	527
Bosnians	...	...	...	...	...	8062
Regional adherenece	-	-	2652	3932	5187	1467
Other undetermined	-	-	3012	2853	8716	12085
Refusing to answer	...	...	...	...	...	48588
Unknown	211	1154	2678	5301	42355	126325

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

**Table 2: The population according to ethnic affiliation / share (%)**

**The population according to ethnic affiliation  
at censuses 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, and 2002**

	<b>1953</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2002</b>
Nationality Declared	99,99%	99,75%	99,11%	97,95%	96,43%	89,97%
Slovenes	96,52%	95,65%	94,04%	90,77%	88,31%	83,06%
Italians	0,06%	0,19%	0,18%	0,12%	0,15%	0,11%
Hungarians	0,75%	0,66%	0,53%	0,48%	0,42%	0,32%
Roma	0,11%	0,01%	0,06%	0,08%	0,12%	0,17%
Albannians	0,01%	0,02%	0,08%	0,11%	0,18%	0,31%
Austrians	0,02%	0,02%	0,02%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%
Bolgarians	0,00%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%
Bosniacs						1,10%
Czechs	0,06%	0,04%	0,03%	0,02%	0,02%	0,01%
Montenegrins	0,09%	0,09%	0,12%	0,17%	0,23%	0,14%
Greeks	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Croats	1,23%	1,97%	2,47%	2,93%	2,76%	1,81%
Jews	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Macedonians	0,04%	0,06%	0,09%	0,18%	0,23%	0,20%
Muslims	0,11%	0,03%	0,19%	0,73%	1,39%	0,53%
Germans	0,11%	0,05%	0,02%	0,02%	0,02%	0,03%
Polish	0,02%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%
Romanians	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%
Russians	0,04%	0,02%	0,02%	0,01%	0,01%	0,02%
Russinians	0,00%	0,02%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Slovaks	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,01%	0,01%	0,01%
Serbs	0,77%	0,86%	1,20%	2,27%	2,48%	1,98%
Turks	0,00%	0,01%	0,00%	0,00%	0,01%	0,01%
Ukrajinians			0,01%	0,01%	0,01%	0,02%
Vlachs	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Others	0,02%	0,03%	0,02%	0,03%	0,05%	0,08%
Nationality undeteri		0,17%	0,73%	1,76%	1,36%	1,13%
Yugoslavs		0,17%	0,39%	1,39%	0,63%	0,03%
Bosnians						0,41%
Regional adherenece			0,16%	0,21%	0,27%	0,07%
Other undetermined			0,18%	0,16%	0,46%	0,62%
Refusing to answer						2,47%
Unknown	0,01%	0,07%	0,16%	0,29%	2,21%	6,43%

**Graphs on age structure of ethnic groups**







