

## If Yes, Why Not? Minority Language Use and Accommodation of Minority Language Rights in Slovakia

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**Abstract.** This article gives an overview of the actual situation of language rights in Slovakia, focusing mainly on the minority language usage. The status of minority languages in Slovakia is still a politicized question and a series of conflicts arose especially between Slovak political elites and the representatives of ethnic Hungarians because of the controversial legislation of minority language rights. Slovakia was subjected in the field of minority protection and heavily criticized during the adoption of the State Language Law. Strict regulations on the use of state language have negative effects on the use of minority languages as well. In spite of the fact that in 1999 the Law on Use of Minority Languages was adopted and Slovakia ratified all of the international agreements in this field, the problem of minority language usage was not solved. This legal vacuum motivated the Hungarian civil sphere to take alternative actions in order to ensure bilingualism and promote the use of minority languages in official communication. Summarizing the legal accommodation of minority language rights, this paper is devoted to examine a recently less-observed civil activism supporting the use of regional languages in Slovakia.

**Keywords:** language rights, ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, State Language Law, bilingualism

It is indisputable that the use of minority language is vitally important for minority communities and minority language rights influence both directly and indirectly the everyday life and future prospects of members of such communities. Since democratization, minority language use and the struggle for language rights have been almost permanent features of politics and public life in Slovakia (Csergő 2007). This is unsurprising given that in the most recent census 12 per cent of the population identified themselves as non-Slovaks based on ethnicity. The census data also shows that 14 per cent of the population does not consider Slovak to be their native language, 10 per cent do not use the Slovak language in public life, and around 12 per cent use a language other than Slovak at home.

Since the fall of communism, in particular, minority language use and the protection of the official language have been controversial issues under almost all governments and numerous legal regulations have been adopted to settle these issues. Nevertheless, Slovakia offers only minimal language guarantees to the minority communities living within its borders. As the ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia have been the most active in this matter, it is not surprising that the Hungarian language has come to be regarded as a source of conflict in political life and that language regulation and guaranteed language rights have become, over the decades, both a legal issue and a significant factor in politics.

After 1989, Slovakia's official language policy has often been overtly hostile to Hungarian, but the rhetoric has changed in the post-Mečiar era. The adoption and amendment of the Law on Minority Language Use has failed to bring the anticipated progress although it has clearly resulted in positive changes in certain fields (Berényi 1994). In such areas as bilingualism, official language use, and minority language rights, Hungarian civil society actors have set in motion a number of unprecedented civil initiatives. Such initiatives are indicative of the importance of the issue and of the need to deal with unresolved problems. Despite all this, Slovakia's political leadership argues that the country provides high-level guarantees for minority languages in accordance with European standards and that it is the minority community who have failed to make use of their legally guaranteed rights – either because they are passive or because they have limited knowledge of the law (Szabó Mihály 2006). Experience has shown, however, that such rights represent merely the starting point for efforts to establish better and more viable (legal) regulations.

## **Development of Language Rights after 1989**

After the system changes, ethnic tensions that had been swept under the carpet during the communist period came to the surface and the issue of minority language use got a key importance. The opportunities for use of Hungarian (and other minority languages) have changed significantly; however, language use and the associated legislative process have risen stormy debates among politicians, in the media, and in public life as well.

In the newly independent Slovakia, none of the minority languages were granted official status. The direction and thrust of Slovak language policy was signalled by the 1990 Law on the Official Language, adopted before Czechoslovakia would split into two countries. Language policy was based on two main principles: firstly, to give priority to the Slovak language; secondly, to regulate the use of minority languages by law. This reflected the desire of the Hungarian minority community to give greater role for their language in both public and official

settings. The Language Law of 1995 may even be understood as the logical consequence of the idea of the Slovak political leadership. The Slovak language also received a prominent role among the government's political aims. Under the Mečiar government (1993–1998), protection of the state language was regarded as a precondition for the realization of Slovakia's national interest. The Language Law of 1995, which was subsequently amended, stipulated that Slovak language had to be both the state language and the manifestation of state sovereignty. The Language Law also defined language as an identifying characteristic of the Slovak nation, one that should be protected and given preference over all other languages. In the Slovak view, the Slovak language had been neglected under communism and then suppressed during the years of democratization by private media companies that were hostile to Slovaks (Chudzíková 2011).

Existence and activity of Hungarian schools and cultural institutions in Southern Slovakia were unacceptable for some populist and nationalist political leaders, who claimed that young ethnic Hungarians were dismissive of their right to learn Slovak language on high level. These decision makers assumed that the introduction of a strict language law will 'solve' this problem effectively.

The election victory of the anti-Mečiar Blue Coalition have brought subsequent changes in Slovakia's political climate, which positively influenced the rhetoric of the language policy. In the 2000s, the 'Hungarian issue' gradually disappeared from statements made on language policy and language rights. At the time of the Dzurinda government (1998–2006), the issue was no longer so divisive. The departure point for language policy continued to be the Language Law of 1995. Government Decree 131/2001 may be considered as a basic policy document of official language policy in the post-Mečiar period. The strategy attempted once again to justify the Language Law: it claimed that the Slovak language was 'a basic identifying mark' of the Slovak nation and that it was thus logical for the 'language of the state-forming nation' to be declared as the state language. Slovak language was seen as a means for the state to uphold domestic stability in cultural, social, and political sense. Slovak language was viewed as a 'means of contact that binds together, unites, and makes equal' the citizens in Slovakia. It seems that those citizens who do not speak Slovak are not equal with those who speak the Slovak language. The law also specifically addressed the relationship between the state language and the minority languages. On this issue, it declared that, for the sake of efficiency in public administration and the uninterrupted flow of information, the status of the state language must be guaranteed. However, it then added that the state also recognizes 'the rights of persons speaking a minority language'. Thus, Slovakia's language policy does not primarily recognize linguistic rights; rather, it recognizes individuals' rights, some of which are linguistic rights.

Slovakia has ratified all relevant international agreements and the right to use a minority language is even mentioned in the Constitution. Even so, the

complaints of the minorities living in Slovakia are still legitimate: compared with other minorities elsewhere, the minorities in Slovakia lag behind in terms of their language rights.

## What Does the Language Law Regulate?

The Language Law adopted in 1990 was conceptualized to establish the status of the official language, but it did not mention the term of 'state language'. The law was not the result of a government initiative but arose as the outcome of developments in society. In October 1990, demonstrators at a mass protest outside the parliament building demanded the granting of official status to Slovak as a response to the increased appearance of advertisements in Hungarian in those settlements where ethnic Hungarians were in majority. A draft bill submitted by the Slovak National Party and by *Matica slovenská*<sup>1</sup> failed to be adopted, but the Parliament approved a bill submitted by the political movement Public against Violence (*Verejnosc' proti násiliu*). The law permitted the use of minority language in official proceedings in settlements where the percentage of inhabitants belonging to a national minority was 20 percent or higher. It did not, however, stipulate that civil servants working in offices and institutions in these settlements must speak minority language; their competence was just to consider whether the minority language might be used officially or not.

The term 'state language' was introduced by the Constitution of 1992, on which basis the subsequent language law was adopted. Article 34 of the Constitution guarantees for citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups the right to develop their own culture, the right to disseminate and receive information in their mother tongue, and also the right to set up and maintain educational and cultural institutions. However, the Constitution also states that the implementation and application of minority rights must not threaten Slovakia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In addition to the Language Law, there were several other laws and regulations relating to the use of language. However, none of them were specifically concerned with minority language use. Act No 29/1984 on elementary schools and high schools was replaced in 2003 with the adoption of Act 596/2003 on the state educational system and the self-governing bodies of schools. According to the law, in elementary and high schools where the language of education is not Slovak, the official school records must be bilingual. Concerning the use of minority languages in the courts, the law allows interpretation for those who do not speak Slovak during the proceedings; however, the language of the proceedings must be Slovak.

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1 It is a scientific and cultural institution in Slovakia, established in 1863.

The Act on the Constitutional Court (1993) and the Act on Guaranteeing Civil and Human Rights (2001) allowed for private individuals to communicate with the ombudsman and with the Constitutional Court in their native language.

Although the Mečiar government's language policy was openly against the use of minority languages, there were some positive exceptions that need to be mentioned. One of these exceptions is Act No 300/1993, which allowed the official use of non-Slovak given names and surnames. Before the adoption of the law, it was an obligation to use and write non-Slovak names according to the Slovak grammar (e.g. the '-ova' suffix on women's surnames was required). It is important to highlight that not only national minorities were supporting this amendment, but Slovak women also openly expressed their satisfaction with this legal decision. One year later, the government adopted Act No 154/1994 on registers and Act No 191/1994 on road signs. The latter law permitted to use bilingual road signs in those municipalities where 20 percent of the local population is native minority language speaker. Despite the subsequent adoption of the Law on Minority Language Use, these three laws contain the most comprehensive provisions on these issues. These positively evaluated developments were the results of international pressure, and due to these laws Slovakia's accession to the Council of Europe was also successful (Sutaj, Sápós 2008).

The State Language Act adopted in 1995 by an overwhelming majority was accepted in order to ensure superiority of the Slovak language in public and semi-public spheres. However, the adoption of the law has another symbolic meaning: it was accepted as a reaction to the adoption of the Slovak-Hungarian Basic Treaty<sup>2</sup> signed in the same year.

Regulations of language law are based on the philosophy represented by the Slovak Nationalist Party (SNS), which says that in Slovakia only the Slovak language must have priority and it must be the only language spoken in all official spheres. According to their slogan "Na Slovensku po Slovensky" ("In Slovakia speak Slovak"), Slovak language must be the general vehicle of communication of all Slovak citizens living in the country. The law was regarded as the strictest language law in Europe and heavily criticized by the international community. In general, Slovakia was not able to prove its commitment to the European Union and, after accepting the State Language Law, the country was excluded from the group of states invited to start the accession negotiations (Hughes, Sasse 2003).

The State Language Law obliged state authorities, government ordinances, territorial self-government authorities and also legal and certain physical entities

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2 In 1995, after a long-lasting negotiation, the Bilateral Treaty on Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation was signed between Slovakia and Hungary. This treaty was heavily criticized by the Slovak nationalist parties. Due to this, the Slovak government attached to the treaty its reservations regarding the collective rights of minorities and the implementation of the treaty was also delayed.

to use Slovak language in public communication. Using Slovak language was also required for the employees working in state transportation services, in post offices, in telecommunication and in the armed forces, armed security corps, and fire brigades as well. All legal and official documents issued by state authorities had to be written in Slovak. The same was valid for the citizens as well: in written and oral communication with public and legal administration, the use of Slovak language was also required. The whole documentation of public administration and information intended for the public was obliged to be in Slovak. It meant that minority languages were excluded from public and official communication as well. What is more, the above mentioned 20 per cent threshold also ceased to exist after the adoption of the law. In spite of the fact that the previously adopted Act on Official Language (Act No 428/1990) entitled members belonging to minorities to use their native language in official and public communication in those municipalities where minorities exceed 20 per cent of the population, the State Language Act stated that the legal guarantees of using minority languages would be regulated by a separate law. However, there was no such legislation in Slovakia in that time. It means that the State Language Act created a legal vacuum which existed till the adoption of the act on minority language use in 1999 (Lanstyák 1999, Kopanic 1999).

The Slovak language was superior to all other languages and was required to be used in education as well. One of the biggest changes introduced by the law was that the educational documentation must be written in Slovak even in schools where the language of instruction is other than Slovak.

The State Language Law also prescribed the use of Slovak language in mass media, at cultural events, and in public meetings as well. Art. 5 concerned language use in radio and television broadcasting. According to this, all of the programmes must be conducted in Slovak; however, broadcasting productions in foreign language must be equipped with Slovak subtitles. Creating another legal vacuum, the State Language Law stated that broadcasting in minority languages must be administered by other specific regulations.

Cultural and educational events too must be conducted in Slovak, but cultural events of minorities are an exception. These events could be conducted in their own languages; however, conferential introduction of the programmes must be performed in Slovak first and then in the original language. The law strictly regulates the language use in the case of occasional publications, catalogues of galleries, museums, libraries, and programme sheets as well. These kinds of documents must be issued in Slovak or can be bilingual; however, in the latter case, any other language version must be printed only after the Slovak version and cannot be longer or written with other fonts than the Slovak version. The violation of the law could entail financial sanctions which are imposable not only on authorities but also on legal entities and natural persons as well. These

penalties were cancelled by Act No 184/1999 on the use of minority languages but reintroduced by the amendment of the State Language Law in 2009. The maximum amount of financial sanction was later decreased (Daftary, Gál 2009).

The amendment of the law in 2009 made several provisions stricter; however, there are some positive changes as well. One of the improvements made in the field of official communication was that the proof of Slovak language knowledge is no longer condition for employment in the civil services. The law allows to use other languages in the public sphere and also allows to display information intended to the public in minority languages as well. The changes applied on documentation in schools and educational institutions are controversial – in those schools where the language of instruction is other than Slovak the documentations must be bilingual. It can be evaluated as a positive development; however, the administrative obligations of teachers in these schools are higher than in other schools.

Similarly to the 1995 State Language Act, some absurd legal provisions can be explored in the 2009 version of the law as well. One of these is the Art. 5, which prescribes that the inscriptions on monuments and historical buildings as well as memorial plaques have to be written in the state language. Inscriptions written in other languages must be displayed only after the Slovak inscription and must be written with the same or smaller fonts. What is more, the developer is obliged to request a binding opinion from the Ministry of Culture as to whether the inscription is in compliance with the law or not. Despite that this clause is not valid for historical inscriptions on monuments and memorials, the absurdity of the law was hardly acceptable.

The law also allowed the use of minority language in healthcare and social services; however, these provisions are also controversial. In case the patient does not understand Slovak, it is allowed to conduct the communication in other languages as well. However, it is not required that the employees of healthcare and social service facilities shall speak any of the minority languages. According to the amendment, persons belonging to minorities are allowed to use their mother tongue in healthcare and social services in those municipalities where minorities exceed 20 per cent of the population. This is controversial because it does not protect minority language use in those municipalities where the rate of minorities is lower than 20 per cent. However, language use could be guaranteed and protected especially in these municipalities.

Despite that some of the controversial provisions were repealed, most of them are still valid. What is more, Slovakia signed and ratified all of the international documents which are protecting the language rights of minority communities. In the same year when the State Language Law was adopted, Slovakia also ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and six years later the European Charter for Regional and Minority



Languages was also signed. In the context of the State Language Law, the last two documents are the most important.

The European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe is regarded as the most comprehensive international standard in the field of minority rights. The framework is a soft-law instrument constructed as a series of principles and objectives for states to guide their minority population. Slovakia undertook to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his/her mother tongue both in private and public life as well. The framework set out a monitoring mechanism obliging states to submit periodic reports for examination. In connection with the State Language Law, the experiment report highlighted that Slovakia was not able to ensure proper use of minority languages and curtailed the rights of minority communities as well. The reaction of Slovakia was that minority languages cannot have priority over state language usage. Reports of the Advisory Committee of the Framework convention highlighted that the promotion of minority rights in Slovakia are stagnating and the State Language Law discourage people to use their languages. The Committee also asked the government to give *lex specialis* priority to the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, and also recommended not to stick to the census data when deciding about the conditions of minority language usage (Gyuricsek 2002).

The European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages signed in 2001 allows for the states to design their own legislation – they can ‘choose’ those obligations that are appropriate for their circumstances. The Charter was signed due to the effort of the Hungarian Coalition Party. The first version of the Charter prepared by the Cultural Ministry did not use the concept of ‘regional languages’ – the statement of the ministry was that in Slovakia there are no languages which are used regionally. Except the state language, all languages spoken by the minorities were not distinguished from each other; so, it meant that the Hungarian language spoken by half a million citizens of Slovakia would get the same conditions as the German language with a few thousands of speakers. Taking into consideration the remarks prepared by the SMK, the new version of the law was much friendlier and flexible with minority languages. Instead of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for the ratification of the law. The new version of the law gave special status to the Hungarian language and also recognized the existence of regional languages in Slovakia. Slovakia undertook to guarantee the use of minority languages in front of the court and during the proceedings. Furthermore, Slovakia also undertook to grant broadcasting programmes in minority languages in the national media. Minority language use would be guaranteed also official contacts, especially in hospitals and in other institutes of public services. Slovakia also added that these obligations would be fulfilled only with the recognition of the usage of Slovak



language. The Slovak Nationalist Party evaluated the ratification of the Charter as the first step towards the proclamation of territorial autonomy of Hungarians living in Slovakia (Vogl 2009).

In spite of the fact that Slovakia undertook important and remarkable commitments and obligations, the ratification of these international legal norms did not lead to any significant changes and the real implementation of these obligations was insufficient. The amendment of the language law in 2009 was heavily criticized not only in Slovakia but also on the international level as well. Due to this, the then Slovak Government formally requested the OSCE High Commissioners to analyse the law. The OSCE High Commissioner highlighted the legitimate purpose of the amendment; however, he also mentioned some problematic issues. He criticized that the amendment of the law creates legal uncertainty by referring to areas which are not regulated by the Law on the Minority Languages. He fully recognized the government's standpoint according to which without sanctions the law could be ignored. However, he also added that the application of the law could be ensured by other tools, and not with sanctions. The Slovak government declared this opinion as Slovakia's victory which declared the importance of the law. The Venice Commission's analyses of the language law were published only after the elections held in 2010. The new government led by Iveta Radicová responded to the critiques by preparing the amendment of the law on the use of minority languages.

## **Legislation on the Use of the Minority Languages**

The legal background of minority language use and the accommodation of linguistic rights of minority communities was enlisted to the short-term objectives of Slovakia's European integration. The experts of CoE, EC, and OSCE High Commissioner assisted the preparation of the law; however, the coalition partners were not able to reach a consensus about the law. Despite that some of the suggestions made by the Hungarian party were incorporated into the law, it was unacceptable for the SMK; so, in the end, the law was adopted without their support. The purpose of the law was to set down those legal conditions under which members of the minority communities could use their language in official contacts (Kemp, 2001).

The law entitled national minorities to use their language in official communication: the law allowed for them to submit official requests in their own language and administrative bodies are obliged to respond in the same language. According to the law, resolutions and official forms must be available in the minority languages as well. Governing boards and local administrative bodies are allowed to use other languages than Slovak at their meetings if all of

the participants agree with that. In spite of the fact that the public administrative bodies may use minority languages in official communication, it is not required for them to speak the minority language (Cúth 2011). It is also controversial that the official forms may be written in minority language as well, but the law does not clarify who is responsible to print these documents in these languages. The control of correct implementation of the law is also lacking. In spite of the fact that the ideology of the law re-introduced the pre-Mečiar practices and is based on the Slovak conceptualization of nation-state according to which minority language rights are weakening the rights of using the Slovak language, the EU welcomed the adoptions and Slovakia joined to the ‘fast-track group’ of the states joining the EU.

## **20 per Cent – Enough for What?**

The 20 per cent threshold for the application of minority language rights is also mentioned in the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. This number shows in which municipalities is allowed to use minority languages in official contacts. In those municipalities where the rate of the members of minorities exceeds 20 per cent of the population, they are entitled to use their language in official communication. However, this threshold is problematic not only from the minority perspective, but it was also criticized in the expert reports prepared by the CoE or by the OSCE. This threshold was implemented by the Law on Official Language Usage in 1990. Obligations undertaken in the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities and also in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages are implemented only in municipalities exceeding the 20 per cent threshold. If this threshold is enough or not is hard to decide. According to the report of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter, this threshold is too high, while in the view of the OSCE High Commissioner this number is in line with the international standards. However, this threshold in Slovakia allows to practise and implement linguistic rights only at local level. As we can see in the following examples, this threshold is hardly reached in bigger cities or in the regional centres. Consequently, Hungarian language in 503 municipalities, the Romani in 54 municipalities, the Ruthenian language in 83 municipalities, and the Ukrainian language in six municipalities was allowed to be used as official language. We can also find municipalities where not only one but at least two minorities exceeded 20 per cent of the population (these are mainly Hungarian and Romani or Romani and Ruthenian villages); however, the official use of these minority languages is doubted. Data of the 2011 census show us that the number of municipalities in which Hungarian language might be used as official language decreased (470 municipalities), but the number of municipalities with Roma or Ruthenian majorities increased. According to these data, we can say that 85%

of ethnic Hungarians, 25% of Roma population, 40% of Ruthenians, and 3% of Ukrainians are allowed to use their mother tongue in official communication. However, on regional level, these numbers are lower. While in 2001 the Hungarian language was allowed to be used in 13 districts (in Hungarian: *járás*), in 2011, this number was 11. On regional level, only 60 per cent of ethnic Hungarians and 23 per cent of Ruthenians are allowed to use their own language in official contacts.

**Table 1.** *Census data from 2001 and 2011 based on the results of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic*

	2011		2001	
	Nationality	Mother tongue	Nationality	Mother tongue
Slovak	4 352 775	4 240 453	4 614 854	4 512 217
Hungarian	458 467	508 714	520 526	572 929
Roma	105 738	122 518	89 920	99 448
Ruthenian	33	55 469	24 201	54 907
Ukrainian	7 430	568	10 814	787
Czech	30	35 216	44 620	48 201
German	4 690	518	540	634
Polish	3 084	311	260	273
Croatian	1 022	123	890	988
Bulgarian	1 051	132	117	100

Another problem is that national self-identification and language use is not the same. Census data prove that the number of native speakers of minority languages is higher than the number of national minorities. This tendency was highlighted by the international experts as well, who recommended Slovakia not to stick so exclusively to the census data. Despite that the amendment of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities lowered the 20 per cent threshold to 15 per cent, this will be implemented only from 2021.

## If Yes, Why Not?

Although positive development can be observed in the field of minority language use in Slovakia, some issues are still unsolved. Despite the amendment of the State Language Law, the ratification of the most important international legal documents, and the acceptance of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities, significant progress is not visible. Politicians often argue that the legal background is given, the real implementation of the law depends only on the minority communities. The legislation of the use of minority languages is controversial; the implementation of minority language law is mainly an option

and not an obligation. Since there are no sanctions in order to achieve the correct application of the minority language rights, the law could be easily ignored. Citizens are not informed well in which situations and when it is allowed to use their own language. In spite of the fact that even official forms could be issued in minority languages, in a few cases, these documents are not accepted as official documents. What is more, employees of administrative bodies are not able to express themselves in their minority language because they have learnt only the Slovak (official) terminology.

The 2009 amendment of the State Language Law triggered a reaction of the Hungarian civil society, and new civil initiations were founded. One of them is the Roundtable of Hungarians living in Slovakia, but the Civil Initiation for Bilingual Southern Slovakia must also be mentioned. Roundtable is an umbrella organization of Hungarian NGO-s in Slovakia and was created to articulate the interests of the Hungarian community. The Civil Initiation of Bilingual Southern Slovakia is a bottom-up initiative – they are supporting bilingualism and the use of Hungarian language in the southern part of Slovakia, where the Hungarian population is dominant. Their campaign is creative and friendly, what attracts citizens, but their activity has an important message both for the Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority. Their campaigns focus mainly on the problem of missing bilingual road signs in those municipalities where bilingualism is legally allowed. In their Nameless Villages Project, they called the attention of legal authorities to the missing road signs in more than 30 municipalities in the southern region. They also created the first road sign in Slovakia, which was removed within three days by the state authorities. The aim of their campaign is to fill the gap and call the attention of the citizens for the correct application of the Law of the Use of Languages in National Minorities. Although the association has been active for only less than two and a half years so far, they have been contributing to strengthening the Hungarian civil society, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, their campaigns contribute to making the best of the advantages of using Hungarian language where the law makes it possible, and not let it remain only on paper.

Summarizing the development of rights of the regional languages in Slovakia, we can say that more than twenty years were not enough to create a multicultural society in Slovakia. Minority language use is still a political issue and mainly the Hungarian language is seen as the ‘language of conflicts’. The problem of minority language use is not solved and the implementation of minority language rights is still highly polarized. On the other hand, it is also important to add that there is no consensus even within the Hungarian political parties in the matter of language rights. The Híd-Most and the SMK are not sharing the same opinion on how effective the given legal conditions are for minority language use. There is a need for a consequent, detailed, and clear language policy; however, Hungarian

political parties have not been able to create it so far. Another problem is that minority communities (except the above mentioned initiatives) did not start a campaign to emphasize the advantages of bilingualism. The political dead-lock would be changed by civil initiatives; however, the question is how much time is needed for political elites to change their attitude toward this issue.

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