

**POLICY PROPOSALS
FOR A BETTER INTEGRATION OF MINORITIES
IN SLOVAKIA**

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1 Introduction

"Basic changes that occurred after the fall of the totalitarian system - freedom of the press, freedom of speech, education, opinion, freedom of religion, all these civil liberties open space for various ethnic groups, national minorities and national groups so that these groups can begin to establish their independence in a certain natural way and to create their own, not artificial and controlled, mutual relations. The beginning of the corresponding part of the Copenhagen document of the Helsinki process provides one important idea, namely the fact that minorities can find their rights and their self-realization best of all in a democratic environment, under democratic conditions where democratic institutions and independent jurisdiction function properly, where the executive, legislative and judicial powers are separated, where freedom of speech is tolerated," said the president Václav Havel in his introductory speech at the second symposium about "Minorities in politics" which took place in the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava, in 1991. It was organized in the hope to succeed in the creation of a tradition of meetings at which European values of humanism and cultural pluralism would re-establish, create and strengthen, and in the effort to involve the capital of Slovakia into the European integration stream, looking for peaceful and constructive solutions to the problems of old Europe.

The functioning of an ethnic minority within a national majority country is a process of its adaptation in the sense of becoming accustomed to the position of a minority in relation to the majority community. J. W. Berry distinguishes three types of adaptations: integration, assimilation and self-segregation according to the relationship the minority has to its own culture and what value it ascribes to relationships with a majority community. Integration means that a minority regards as important and valuable the preservation of traditional culture and good relations with the majority nation. Assimilation is such a method of adaptation when a minority community feels very strongly about having good relations with the majority but it does not regard the preservation of traditional culture important. A contrary case, when only the preservation of traditional culture is regarded as being of value and good relations with the majority community are not regarded as important, is defined by Berry as self-segregation. Berry's classification seems to be an inspiring starting point for considerations about the position of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and about the role of the language in the process of its adaptation. The notion of "the preservation of traditional culture" is understood freely as the preservation of the language, traditions, folklore, ethnic peculiarities to which the realization of a minority also binds itself, that it is different from the majority and of their own identity.

As far as the notion of adaptation is concerned, the process of a minority's adaptation is not simple but it is a mutually conditioned interaction of the minority and the majority where the majority community plays an active role by creating conditions for the functioning of the minority, by their method of answering to the demonstration of existence and activity of the minority. Adaptation in the sense of integration, i.e. preservation of one's own identity as well as positive relationship with the majority community seem to be the most acceptable way of coexistence because "profit and loss" gained or incurred by individual parties are divided here in a very ill-balanced way the target condition is achieved with common effort. It is not generally accepted that one gains only when the other loses but if we use the analogy of non-zero games, profits of individual parties depend mutually one upon the other and then it is necessary to look for a way maximizing the profit for both parties. This means that the integration of a minority in a majority community requires a mutual activity, bilaterally positive gradual actions and the anticipation of consequences of individual actions, to put it simply, willingness, understanding and tolerance. It results therefrom that it is a way of cohabitation that requires good will on both sides, i.e. on the formal level - institutional and inter-personal, and it is exacting and complex for both parties. The point is that the minority has to find a measure of preservation, protection of its own culture and identity that does not isolate it from the majority or a degree of proximity to the majority that does not threaten its own identity. For a majority community, the basic problem is to what extent to tolerate and support the existence of a different, and foreign to a certain extent, element violating the homogeneity of the society with a possible threat of its destabilization, and to what extent to interfere with, and make decisions on, the methods of existence of the minority, and take responsibility for the minority. It is evident that a specific form of cohabitation of a majority community depends on many circumstances, on the character of the minority itself and on the characteristics of the majority community. An important role is played not only by the geopolitical and historical context and legal, legislative, demographic and social conditions and cultural and language differences but also the subjective reflection of these facts - the rate of their consciousness, acceptance and assessment both on the part of minority members and the majority community. Not only the Slovaks (Árochová, Bútorová, Gabzdilová, Paukovič, Plichtová, Rosová, Šebová, Šutaj, Zeľová), Hungarians (Bellér, Csepely, Gombár, Kiss, Konrad, Molnár, Orkény, Szabó, Szantó) but also many other experts from Western Europe (Allardt, Barth, Edwards, Galtung, Price, Thornerry), from the USA and Canada (Berman, Berry, MacKey, McDonald, Secada), and many others began to speak about the controversial periods of our common history, which taught us to look at our problems and conflicts from a dispassionate point of view and within the framework of a larger context

Within the framework of international symposia and conferences, the question is about the reasons and nature of ethnic conflicts. In their papers, participants deal with the questions of whether Europe will split into a number of larger or smaller countries if their rights to national self-determination have been fulfilled, whether minorities are islands of cultural differences which have to be defended in every possible way or they are crossings of cultures that have to be accepted in order to be able to participate in the decision making on the political and economic destiny of the area where they live. There are also recommendations about what it is inevitable to re-evaluate historical knowledge which is divided according to individual nations and to begin with education to democracy, civil rights, tolerance of differences, to educate a new generation liberated from prejudice of their parents, to support common inter-regional projects and to expand mutual contacts. The 21st century will be a century of European co-operation, cohabitation of various cultures, openness, and of a multilingual environment. It is necessary to always realize the existence of these facts. After all, the values of democracy, humanism and cultural pluralism which, as we believed, were won in Czechoslovakia after November 1989, were also in our country radically called into question by reproaches for weak defense of national interests and lack of loyalty to one's own nation. Passed wrongs, injustice and hatred are used as arguments apologizing to new enemies and new borders. Values with respect to man and to individual and cultural differences are explained as being weakness, naivete, cowardliness and escape from problems. Unfortunately, we can see now what we did not want to admit to at the time of euphoria, i.e., as a matter of fact, we are only at the very beginning of the birth of a free nation without prejudice and myths, a nation aware of its own historical experience soaked with feelings of injustice, uncertainty, pain, fright and hatred. For various reasons, the psychotherapy will be long and complicated, full of unexpected events. We have missed a great deal, we did not devote enough time to a number of problems because a partner and a reason were missing. Now, when we are able to speak about them together, they are still too burdened with our emotions and specific problems. Many problems, before we realize their nature, are attributed political importance, which occurs to such an extent that it is really very difficult to speak about them freely. We are building new walls of misunderstanding although we have not yet succeeded in removing the previous ones. This psychotherapy cannot be successful without good will and a firm resolution to overcome what was divided, and is still dividing, us in the Danube area. It is necessary to have strong will to avoid forced solutions, solutions to the detriment of one party. Most international human rights conventions and agreements define minority rights fairly narrowly. In general, they include the rights of individuals to non-discrimination, cultura

development, and religious freedom, in addition to the freedom of speech, assembly, and organization.

The topic of minorities is a key to the further development of democracy in all countries which have got rid of Communist dictatorship. The point is that a new state and power structure are being formed, we often encounter opinions on what democracy is. e.g. 'democracy is the right of the majority to make decisions.' It is therefore necessary to introduce a contrary opinion of a minority and if every group of citizens, unless their interests are destructive, have a legal possibility to satisfy their own needs. And if we realize that these needs must not be in variation with the interests of the state, then it is also necessary to define clearly such interests and separate them from the interests of political parties even if such parties are in power at a particular moment.

During the last population census in 1991, 85.7% of the citizens of the Slovak Republic Slovak nationality was professed. The other most numerous nationalities are in descending order as follows: Hungarian (576.000), Romany (76.000), Czech (53.000), Ruthenian (17.000), Ukrainian (13.000) and Moravian (6.000). According to official and unofficial estimates, the real number of members of some of the minorities is substantially higher.

Minorities are building blocks of a civil society. In a stricter sense of the word, the question is in particular to national minorities, although this notion covers political, religious, social and various other minorities. In the political sense of the word, for example, parliament should not make a decision by a simple voting and enforce an opinion of the coalition majority in power but it should look for optimum solutions in which also senators would participate equally who, during coalition discussions, represent an evident minority group.

The provisional agreement of the European Council on the protection of national minorities presupposes that 'parties in power will support the spirit of tolerance and a dialog among cultures and will take effective actions in order to support the idea of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation among all people living on a territory no matter what their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity they belong to, in particular in the sphere of education, culture and the mass media.'

A similar idea is expressed also in the European Charter of regional or minority languages: 'The member countries bind themselves to support mutually, taking appropriate actions, understanding among all language groups in a particular country, especially to include an idea of

respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages into educational and professional training targets in respective countries as well as stimulation of the mass media.'

The notion itself 'national minority', however, encounters criticism in the European context. People speak about national minorities, ethnic groups, etc. The senator to the European Parliament, Mr Berns Posselt, wrote last year that "the notion of minority has often an after-taste of inferiority or a lack of legal protection and becomes a depressing one because political minorities and majorities may take turns in a democratic society but not in a national minority."

As a part of this report, I have carried out a series of interviews with officials of various organisations dealing with minority problems in Slovakia as well as in Hungary and Ukraine. Many of these organisations are concerned with minority relations and strive to eliminate discrimination and prejudice wherever they exist. In these interviews my principal objective was to find out how much thought and consideration had been given by these organisations, and integration, of whatever nature.

The main conception of my report is the ethnic minority problem in the framework of a wider context of civilization, it means social, religious and the language problem in its basis. Within this wider perspective the culture and language rules and laws of ethnic minority in Slovakia are aimed at our thoughts towards identity, rich variety and mutual respect and not towards separation, uniformity and mutual animosity as the way politics and nationalism do.

The topic of my report is extremely current and at the same time extremely demanding, especially at present in Slovakia.

The report is divided into an introduction containing the basic concepts, the framework of the issues and the hypothesis. The following chapter gives the historical background survey of the ethnic minorities in Slovakia. The third chapter entitled 'The present state of affairs' elaborates in more detail the problem of the main ethnic minorities in our country, Hungarian, Ruthenian/Ukrainian and Romani. In the last chapter of my report I give proposals for a better integration of minorities in Slovakia on the basis of my interview materials and an examination of the published literature which is presented in the references.

2 Historical Background Survey of the Ethnic Minorities Situation in Slovakia

After centuries of Hungarian domination, Slovakia became a constituent unit of the newly created Czechoslovak state at the close of World War One. Territorial revisions left a substantial Hungarian (or Magyar) minority in Slovakia. In 1920, Hungarians numbered about 634.000 people, or 21% of the population. A majority of Hungarian politicians were unable to reconcile themselves to the loss of „Upper Hungary“ (Slovakia), and together with Hungarian minority leaders in Slovakia pressed for the region's return to Budapest. Although the Czechoslovak state was comparatively liberal by standards prevailing elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Hungarian activists charged that discriminatory policies were applied against them, particularly as the constitution gave the Czech and Slovak languages a privileged position in public life. In addition to Hungarians, inter-war Slovakia also contained about 140.000 Germans, 85.000 Ruthenians and Ukrainians, approximately 70.000 Jews, and a handful of smaller nationalities.

The Czechoslovak state was dismembered by Nazi Germany in 1938. The regions of Bohemia and Moravia were transformed into German protectorates, Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia was wholly annexed by Hungary in March 1939, while Slovakia became a quasi independent protectorate ruled by a pro-German fascist regime under the presidency of the Catholic cleric Monsignor Jozef Tiso. The government in Bratislava introduced various anti-Jewish measures, including the seizure of property and systematic exclusion from economic life. During 1942, the Slovak authorities assisted the Nazis in shipping the bulk of the Jewish population, over 50.000 people, to death camps in German-occupied Poland. The remaining Slovak Jews were either incarcerated in labour camps, escaped to Hungary, or perished after the Slovak uprising in August 1944 when German authorities launched further deportations and exterminations.

Czechoslovakia was reestablished at the close of World War Two, initially under a multi-party coalition government. In 1948, the Communist Party under Soviet direction began to centralize the political and economic systems along Stalinist lines. Despite earlier Communist promises, Slovakia did not attain autonomy in the revolutionary state.

During the 1950's and 1960's the country remained a staunchly pro-Soviet satellite, exhibiting little tolerance for regional autonomy or political dissent. At the close of the war, over 500.000 Hungarians had been left in Slovakia. The new government in Prague initially planned to expel them or conduct large-scale population exchanges with Hungary, but it eventually desisted under allied pressure and Soviet opposition and citizenship rights were restored to the Hungarian minority. In the interim, between 1945 and 1948, about 90.000 Hungarians were transferred to Hungary in exchange for over 70.000 Slovaks.

The Communist authorities launched a programme of Slovakization among Hungarians believed to be of Slovak origin, and tens of thousands of Hungarians declared themselves to be Slovaks largely to avoid official recriminations. The Hungarian population dipped to some 200.000 at the height of the campaign but rose again to over 530.000 in 1961 after the programme was abandoned. The demographic strength and potential political influence of the Hungarian minority was also diminished through the reorganization and merger of Slovak counties. as a result, Hungarians retained a majority in only two of the enlarged southern counties. Although under Communist rule Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Ruthenians were formally provided with legal rights to their own independent schools, newspapers, and cultural associations, many of these guarantees were not implemented or remained under strict part supervision. In addition, the Ukrainian Uniate Church and the Roman Catholic Church were subjected to vigorous government persecution.

The ethnic-minority issue was not paid much attention by Czechoslovakia's Communist leadership until several years after World War Two. No authorized statistics were even cited until 1965.

During the short-lived Prague Spring liberalization in 1968, Slovakia attained some measure of political autonomy. The framework of this arrangement survived the Soviet-led invasion and the Communist „normalization“ that extinguished democratic reform throughout the country. In January 1969, Czechoslovakia was declared a federal socialist state consisting of two republics: Czech and Slovak ones, with nominally equal rights in the federation. In practice, the federal structure remained subordinated to the Communist Party's centralism and monopolist control over the country's political, economic, and cultural life.

The Prague Spring reforms also loosened restrictions on minority population by improving their cultural and educational facilities and employment opportunities. The possibility of Ukrainian-Ruthenian and Hungarian autonomy within Slovakia was also discussed. However, following

Moscow's intervention, the Slovak authorities reversed their policies towards the minorities in their pursuit of ethnic and republican homogenization. The campaign was opposed by local Hungarian leaders fearful of losing their hard-won linguistic and cultural liberties. Despite this resistance, they were subject to repression and persecution and to operate under harsh political conditions throughout the 1970s and 1980s under the Gustáv Husák and Miloš Jakeš regimes.

In 1968, Constitutional Law No 144 was introduced on the nationality question in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic establishing rules for the treatment of minorities. While this law included the right for minorities to receive education in their own language, the prevailing view was that the law was too vague and needed further specification. While the short-lived Prague Spring in 1968 raised hopes for major constitutional and legislative enactments to codify minority rights, throughout the years of normalization the position of ethnic minorities deteriorated once again even while Constitutional Law No 144 remained valid.

Following the Czechoslovak „Velvet Revolution“ of November 1989 and the rapid collapse of the Communist Party rule, pressures began to increase in Slovakia demanding extensive political and economic autonomy. Several Slovak political parties became more outspoken on the issue of self-determination and capitalized on the painful effects of economic reform to accuse Prague of discrimination and of neglecting Slovak interest. Slovak deputies pressured the Federal Assembly into changing the country's name to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, but the move simply revealed the deep-seated mistrust and served to stimulate Slovak aspirations further.

Slovak nationalists opposed President Václav Havel's calls for a referendum on the future of the federation. They feared that confronted with a simple choice, the majority of Slovaks would choose to remain in the federation. Following the June 1992 elections, in which pro-independence forces gained ground in Slovakia, Prague and Bratislava proved unable to agree on a restructured federal arrangement. By October 1992, the two sides agreed on a formal division, and on January 1, 1993, two new states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, came into existence.

Since the democratic changes in Czechoslovakia, not only Hungarian, but also the Ruthenian and Ukrainian populations have become more active. Questions have been raised over the precise size of these communities, as in previous censuses Ukrainians and Ruthenians reportedly

disguised their ethnic identity for fear of official repercussions. An additional complication has arisen over the precise ethnic identity of this Slavic population that has been denominationally divided between Greek-rite Catholic and Orthodox. In 1991 Czecho-slovak census, a Ruthenian nationality was registered for the first time without parentheses and almost half of those who had previously declared themselves Ukrainian now defined themselves as Ruthenian. This rediscovered Ruthenian consciousness created rifts and conflicts within the community and even within villages and families at different stages of assimilation or re-identification. The free expression of Ruthenian and Ukrainian identity also began to have an impact on relations between Bratislava and Kiev, particularly as Ruthenians in the Transcarpathian region rediscovered or strengthened their ethnic distinctiveness when Ukraine moved toward independence.

The Czechoslovak Communist regime refused to register the Romani (Gypsy) population as an ethnic minority. Unemployment rates remained high among Romani, but the authorities attempted to erase this problem by simply considering the unemployed as disabled and paying them pensions. Romani have maintained the highest birth rate of all nationalities in Czecho-Slovakia, and some sources predicted that they will compose almost 8% of the population within the next 10 to 15 years. The low number of Romani who openly declared their ethnic identity pointed to both a widespread fear of discrimination and a low level of national awareness. After the fall of Communism, unemployment among Romani rose as high as 40% to 50% in some regions. While there were no official statistics, illiteracy rates were also believed to be overwhelming among this population. In addition, Romani were perceived to be the cause of a disproportionate percentage of crime, while prejudice, discrimination, and animosity against Gypsies remained common place among the general public.

3 Present State of Affairs

At the end of the 20th century Slovakia belongs to the European multi-national countries. The citizens of this relatively small area in the neighbourhood of a relatively large number of countries belong to more than eight nationalities. Almost 15% of the Slovak citizens is of a different nationality than Slovak. The problem of national identity is very complex and extraordinarily complicated, especially on the territory of a country having its own rich historical experience with incorporating into, and setting apart from, various political and geographical entities.

In the foreword to my report I decided to mention the results of the sociological research entitled „Aspects of national identity of the inhabitants of Slovakia“ as performed with a representative group of 1.385 respondents in 1996. Within the framework of this research 99.0% of respondents answered that they were citizens of the Slovak Republic. The most important condition for a citizen living in Slovakia who wants to regard himself/herself Slovak is his/her feeling that he/she is Slovak. So the Slovak citizens define their nationality on the basis of their feelings.

Since the end of the Second World War, three types of collective identities have been formed in Europe. First, it is consciousness at a regional level, i.e. people feel bound to a certain region. This type of identity is constantly gaining strength in Europe. Also the results of the research in the Slovak Republic showed that 85% of men and 84% of women expressed their closer relationship to a certain area or village. One of the most significant differential indices was age. The higher the age the higher the number of respondents regarding their relationship to their place of dwelling as a very close one. Education, on the other hand, acted as a contrary criterion. Respondents with basic education regarded their relationship to their place of dwelling as a close one (as many as 92%) whereas in the case of university graduates this number is only 77%. Respondents who are graduates from secondary schools may be regarded as the most satisfied

ones. 71% of them said that they had settled in the place where they had lived a greater part of their childhood.

The second type of the present territorial identity is labeled as national and state consciousness. This type is strongly linked with economic, cultural and communicative globalization of a modern society. It decreases with the development of globalization. In Slovakia it has begun to form in a gradual way. Opinions of respondents on their relationship to the Slovak Republic were also influenced by the present problematic Slovak-Hungarian relationships. In spite of the fact that a majority of members of various nationalities has a positive relationship towards the Slovak Republic, great differences have been registered. As many as 91% of Slovaks characterized their relationship to the Slovak Republic as a close one, in the case of the other nationalities this number was 84% of respondents and in the case of the Hungarian nationals it was only 72%. To sum up, we may say that the territory of the Slovak Republic functions, in spite of the said differences, as a certain identification element also for other nationalities. Relationships to a different country were not analyzed in this research.

Respecting free will of a country's citizens when they want to make decisions on further orientation of their country is considered to be one of the conditions for a well-developed democracy. Such free decision making is linked with the third type of collective identity. Attitudes of citizens characterized as European consciousness are formed in connection with the establishment of a unified political and economic union. A majority of Slovak inhabitants supported the entry into integration groupings. The basic problem, i.e. whether or not to adhere to the European Union, was lack of information. More than 60% of people said that they had only little or no information at all on the European Union. Better informed people expressed more positive expectations towards the EU, this being the reason, at the beginning of 1996, why the question of entry into the EU was the most significantly influenced by age, education and knowledge of a foreign language. Opinion on the EU and the NATO, as analyzed in the research, coincided in a significant way. Similar to the question of entry into the EU, was the question of adherence to the NATO in the case of which the number of people who did not respond or who had not decided in its favour was relatively large - 30%.

About 78% of respondents mentioned Slovakia as a country in which they would like to live rather than in a different country. However, classification according to nationality disclosed very big differences: 80% of Slovaks felt proud that they live in Slovakia as compared to Hungarian

nationals where the number was only 51% with the other nationalities some 53% had this feeling of pride. The feeling of pride on selected areas was also very differentiated according to nationality. Citizens of Slovakia felt the greatest pride in their past (74%), there of 77% of Slovaks, 33% of Hungarian nationals and 37% of the other nationalities. In 1996 citizens were the least proud in the functioning of democracy and in the political influence of Slovakia in the world. As many as 75% of respondents answered the question of democracy as follows: „I am not proud at all“ and „I am not very proud“ and the question of political influence in Slovakia was answered in a similar way by 70% of respondents without significant differences according to individual nationalities.

Only 2% of respondents consider Hungary their country of origin, 96% said that Czechoslovakia was the country of origin of their parents. To be born in Slovakia is regarded by only 54% as being important for a person's consciousness and feeling that he/she is Slovak. To know how to speak Slovak is considered important by 92% of respondents. When analyzing these answers, interesting differences appeared according to nationalities. The said facts were regarded as significant by 93% of Slovaks and by 87% of members of the other nationalities, in the case of the Hungarian nationality, however, the number was 76% of respondents. Religion was classified as being a less significant factor for a person's feeling that he/she belongs to a certain nationality. Only 26% in total consider religion an important condition. The greatest need to be a Christian is felt by 40% of members of the other nationalities.

The opinion that the state should support minorities in order for them to preserve their customs and traditions is regarded as good by 52% of respondents, but according to the nationality classification, this opinion was expressed by 49% of Slovaks, 88% of Hungarian nationals and 92% of members of the other nationalities. Significant differences in answers show that there are still latent differences, if not problems, in understanding the present social situation. Many of the answers classified according to the nationality viewpoint disclosed frequent short circuits between nationality communication networks. Should this problem be solved at too slow a pace, the present small differences could get even worse.

It is not possible to characterize clearly the specific national identity of the Slovak nation in such a way as is sometimes called for. The said research proved that the establishment of a new state did not bring with itself an „ethnically pure“ Slovak nation, nor will it bring one in the future. Citizens of Slovakia represent a varied set of ethnic identities. The basic attitude of Slovak

citizens is their identification and the feeling that they are members of a new country no matter what nationality, Slovak, Hungarian, Ruthenian, Romani or other, they belong to.

3.1 Hungarian minority

The Hungarian minority is both a historic and territorial minority. There are no greater civilization or cultural dissimilarities between the Slovak and Hungarian inhabitants, neither are there any racial differences. They have their common history and, to a great extent, customs and traditions, certain elements of folklore, religion, comparable social and educational structure. They are divided only by the language and certain elements of historical and cultural traditions. The position of Hungarian minority has proved to be the most contentious nationality issue in Slovakia since the democratic changes. After the „Velvet Revolution“ Hungarian activists began to organize openly and to campaign for their collective rights. Whereas some leaders calculated that demands for minority rights should not take precedence over the wider democratization process, other groups viewed the nationality problem as paramount and were accused of radicalism and separatism. The largest minority organization, Coexistence, styled itself as a multi-ethnic and not simply a Hungarian movement and denied that it was seeking secession from Slovakia. The organization gained seats in the Slovak National Council and campaigned for the expansion of minority educational, media, and publishing activities. Hungarian groups claimed that the position of minorities was under threat from rising Slovak nationalism and increasing disengagement by Prague. They claimed Bratislava would apply various restrictions and discriminatory measures. Hungarian organisations also expressed concern over the incitement of ethnic conflict by ultra-nationalist Slovak forces, some of whom staged anti-Hungarian demonstrations and even called for the whole-sale expulsion of the Hungarian minority. Conversely, radical Slovak groups accused Budapest of assisting Hungarian organizations in search of territorial gains, a charge that was strenuously denied by the Hungarian government. Hungarian leaders remained troubled that Slovak independence would have a

negative impact on the position of the Hungarian minority. They argued that Slovak self-assertiveness could be turned against Hungarians, who would be increasingly depicted as threatening national interests and challenging the republic's territorial integrity. Such conflicts could escalate during a period of severe economic dislocation, high unemployment, and popular susceptibility to nationalist and populist slogans. Slovak independence could prove to be a double-edged weapon for Hungarian population. On the one hand, it could result in more repressive policies by Bratislava and undercut many of the rights gained since 1989, while Hungarian leaders would have no recourse to protection from Prague. On the other hand, Slovak sovereignty could actually galvanize Hungarian activism and fuel demands for minority self-determination and even territorial autonomy under Budapest's patronage.

After the fall of communism, the status of ethnic minorities gained increasing importance in Czechoslovakia. Among the new features of the first post-Communist census, held in March 1991, was the opportunity to declare oneself part of an ethnic minority that had not been recognized by the previous regimes, for example, Romani, Moravian, or Ruthenian. Another key development was the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Liberties, adopted by the Federal Assembly in January 1991, that formed a new legal basis for the treatment of ethnic minorities. This document outlined the basic human, civil, and political rights of Czechoslovak citizens and was to serve as a foundation for the future federal and republican constitutions. In a special section that addressed minority rights, the charter provided everyone the opportunity to decide on his/her nationality, prohibited anti-minority discrimination, and permitted all minorities to form their own associations. It also stated that under certain conditions minorities would have the right to be educated in their own language and to use it in dealings with officialdom.

However, Hungarian spokesmen contended that the charter may have inadvertently reduced the existing rights of minorities by defining the state as the „national State of Czechs and Slovaks“ and abrogating earlier constitutional laws relating to minorities. In protest, Hungarian deputies walked out of the Federal Assembly for the duration of the final vote on the charter. Hungarian leaders also objected to laws adopted by the Federal Assembly relating to compensation payments for property expropriated after World War Two. The Compensation Act and the Land Act passed in 1991 referred only to property confiscated after February 1948, the date of the Communist takeover. No compensation was offered for losses sustained by Hungarians between 1945 and 1948, a period when explicitly anti-Hungarian decrees deprived the minority of their property and citizenship rights.

Article 12 of the Slovak constitution, ratified in September 1992 and effective the following month, guaranteed basic rights and liberties regardless of language, national or social origin, affiliation with a nation or ethnic group, as well as the right to choose nationality without pressure to assimilate. Articles 33 and 34 on the Rights of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups formally secured the right of minorities to develop their culture, to disseminate and receive information in the mother tongue, to establish educational and cultural institutions, and allowed for the functioning of national-minority associations.

The Language question was dealt with by reinforcing the need to master the „state language“ while guaranteeing the right to education in the mother tongue and the right to participate in solving problems pertaining to their status but in doing so they needed to exercise their rights in a manner that would not jeopardize the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic.

Hungarian members of the Slovak National Council unanimously rejected the constitution, arguing that it failed to guarantee the identity and self-governemnt of minorities or allow for the creation of territorial „self-administrative“ entities that would satisfy Hungarian aspirations. Hungarian deputies strongly objected to the constitutional definition of the new country as the „National State of Slovaks“, claiming that there were no explicit guarantees for the preservati and safeguarding of minority identities. Specifically, they pointed out that only „national organizations“ could be formed by ethnic minorities thus opening up the possibility of dissolving Hungarian political parties at any time. Moreover, the constitution declared that the rights of minorities could not endanger Slovak sovereignty and territorial integrity, a provision that was allegedly open to abuse. Hungarian deputies proposed a constitutional amendment to guarantee the right to develop one´s national, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural identity, while banning any activities that lead to assimilation.

Hungarian leaders claimed that the constitution failed to stipulate the rights of minorities to establish and maintain schools in their mother tongue. The constitution also replaced the concept of the „official language“ with that of the „state language“ and offered no legal guarantees for the use of minority languages in dealing with the authorities. The language issue was further defined by the controversial Language Law passed by the Slovak National Council in October 1990. The law declared Slovak the official language, allowing Czech to be used in official transactions, and states that if members of an ethnic minority constituted 20% of the population in an administrative area they were entitled to use their language formally. There was, however, no stipulation requiring state officials either to be proficient in minority languages or to employ them if they were. The application of the law also resulted in Hungarian names no longer being

registered in birth registers, invalidated any moves toward restoring Hungarian appellations for municipalities, and abolished bilingual street signs. It also permitted officials to refuse to conduct marriage and funeral services in Hungarian.

After Slovakia became a member of the Council of Europe in June 1993, Bratislava came under international pressure to alter some of its minority rights legislation. Indeed, in July 1993 the Parliament passed a law again allowing minorities to register their names in their mother tongue. Further conciliatory measures to defuse domestic and international criticism appeared likely. Although the version of the language law that was finally passed in 1990 was not as radical as some Slovak national parties had proposed, the legislation itself, as well as the Slovak constitution, were depicted by Hungarian leaders as impediments to minority right. The Hungarian-dominated political movement Coexistence criticized the Language for not ensuring the rights of national communities to use their native language in official matters, for eliminating bilingual signs, and for disregarding the referendums that voted to replace the original township names.

The main Hungarian movement, Coexistence, on its fourth congress condemns Slovak government policies that are evidently intended to curtail minority rights, and calls for „political and economic self-administration“ for the Hungarian - inhabited areas of southern Slovakia.

Hungarian activists also persistently complained that Slovakia's educational system had purportedly failed to reverse the assimilationist pressures evident since the 1950s. They argued that the steady reduction in the number of schools contributed to the fact that during the 1990-1991 school year over 36% of Hungarian pupils were unable to attend Hungarian-language schools. As a result, the educational level of Hungarians was purportedly lower than that of Slovaks: 50% had only primary education, and mere 2% managed to obtain a college or university diploma. Since 1989, the federal and republican governments have rejected the principle of educational autonomy, leaving no firm legal safeguard for developing education in the mother tongue for national minorities. Additionally, the Slovak government did not approve the creation of an independent Hungarian-language teacher's college. To counter Hungarian criticism Slovak officials asserted that Hungarian schools accounted for over 8% of all teaching facilities in the country, while twelve of the 135 senior high schools were Hungarian. In addition, the state evidently supported the publication of 25 Hungarian magazines, as well as two theatres and several publishing houses.

The Hungarian minority in Slovakia has set its clear orientation to maintain its mother tongue, positive attitudes towards the preservation of its national peculiarities and tradition, intensive consciousness. This minority ascribes importance to its own ethnic affiliation on the individual (I am a Hungarian) and group level (I am a member of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and I am a citizen of the Hungarian nation), which gives evidence of the fact that the members of the Hungarian minority have a tendency to assess and preserve their own culture and identity in a positive way. One of the basic prerequisites of integration - good relationships with the majority - is the possibility of communication, which requires the mastering of the language of the majority by the minority, or the language of the minority by the majority. The data about the use of the language give evidence about clear supremacy of the Hungarian language as a means of communication within its own group. The dominance of the Hungarian language as a basic ethnic differentiating and integrating sign of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia is strengthened by the high concentration of Hungarian inhabitants, high ethnic endogamy, proximity of the country of their origin and material, cultural and spiritual liaisons with it. A majority or respondents of the Hungarian nationality at least partially speaks Slovak and uses it in communication with the Slovaks, in particular in the public life when the Slovak does not speak Hungarian. In other cases, they prefer speaking Hungarian. The members of the Hungarian nationality expect greater adaptability on the part of Slovaks in their being able to speak Hungarian, as compared to the expectation of respondents of the Slovak nationality. The compact character and density of population of the Hungarian minority probably causes that the language orientation to the mother tongue does not bring them any greater problems in everyday life. They do not much admit that the Slovaks living with them could face similar problems if they did not speak Hungarian and they expect the Slovaks to show a greater rate of adaptability.

According to the last census in 1991, the Hungarian national minority with the number of 566.741 inhabitants, i.e. 10.8% of the population of the Slovak Republic, is the largest minority. This area of settlement spreads in all the regions of southern Slovakia from the region of Trebišov in the east as far as the regions of Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Nové Zámky, Bratislava - vidiek in western Slovakia. Similar to other ethnic groups, it has common psychic and cultural signs. The language, one of the most decisive of the preservation of ethnic identity and continuity, is also a distinguishing sign. Its existence is an inevitable condition for the contact of people in all spheres of social life. Perfect mastering of the language is insured especially by the school that also forms national consciousness and makes pupils acquainted with the cultura

heritage of the nation. The school is then the most typical cultural and social institution that creates conditions for the existence and further development of the nation and the national minority. For this reason, teaching in one's mother tongue belongs to the basic prerequisites of their development. According to the constitutional law (Charter of basic rights and liberties), to the most important rights of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia belongs the right to education in their mother tongue.

Education of children and young people of the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Republic is, at the moment, being insured on the level of pre-school institutions (kindergartens) and primary and secondary schools. The question is about independent institutions where teaching is done in the Hungarian language, or about the institutions where there are Slovak classes in parallel with classes in which Hungarian is the primary language.

Studies at all colleges and universities in Slovakia are conducted in the Slovak language, except for the Hungarian Department at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra. The number of students of Hungarian nationality who applied for study at a university and took part in entrance examinations was unfavorably influenced by unsuccessful realization of entrance examinations, especially written tests. These results were probably brought about by a weaker level of mastery of the Slovak language which was the language of entrance examinations. A more favorable situation was with the oral tests.

The problem of the language is not only the key problem of the position, self-actualization and identity of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia but also a key to good relationships with the majority or a source of conflicts and misunderstanding both on the inter-personal as well as institutional level. Minimization of the contact surface requires the setting of conditions, frameworks and guarantees for the fulfillment of the needs of the minority to preserve its own culture and identity on the one hand and, at the same time, its incorporation into the society represented by the majority on the other hand. In connection with the language it means that the members of the minority will be given the possibility to use their mother tongue, develop it and to educate people in it, which will, at the same time, insure conditions for mastering the Slovak language. It is also important to limit exactly the scope and circumstances for the use of the languages on the institutional level. Guaranteeing special rights to groups of citizens defined by their affiliation to a national minority, as set forth in the charter of basic rights and liberties is, in this sense, only the basic prerequisite. Unless the conditions and rules of application of the said

rights and supervision over their observance have been exactly specified in subsequent laws or regulations, we may only speak about an incomplete solution. There is still enough place for misunderstanding, different interpretation and sources of conflicts related thereto.

The results of comparative research with Hungarian-Slovak bilingual people show that it is questionable to speak about a Slovak-Hungarian bilingual character. Children of the Hungarian minority remain monolingual people with different level of mastery of the Slovak language. They use this language only rarely, in the majority of cases in contact with their Slovak friends in the place of their domicile. At home, they communicate exclusively in Hungarian, even in cases of mixed families. Hungarian schools do not balance the preferred use of Hungarian, they do not create conditions for equal mastery of both languages. The low level of integration capacity of the Hungarian population may be explained not only by an insufficient knowledge of Slovak and a low portion of educated people and their mobility tied thereto, but also by different historical consciousness.

Many episodes from the history of Slovak-Hungarian cohabitation still represent taboo topics. Reluctance to speak openly about delicate and sensitive questions does not, of course, replace correct reflection, neither does it contribute to mutual understanding. As compared to other minorities living in countries with one official language that are fighting for the acknowledgement of their own language as being equal to the language of the majority and that are trying to enforce the right to bilingual education, the efforts of the Hungarian minority for completeness and autonomy of the Hungarian educational system (from kindergartens to universities) are totally a different matter. The use of Hungarian also at official institutions has been legally established by the Language Act only in villages where more than 20% of the Hungarian population live. The Language Act, for that matter, permits bilingual, not autonomy of the regions with a majority of the Hungarian population.

Bilingual education of children of the Hungarian minority is in compliance with the said act. This, however, would mean that alongside the teaching of Hungarian and in Hungarian, part of the study subjects would be taught in Slovak. The number of lessons taught in Slovak would thus adapt to the level of its mastery. In the first-year classes, Slovak would be taught only in special classes in which the comprehension is also supported by non-linguistic means (e.g. mathematics, arts and crafts, musical education). In higher classes, also some linguistically more demanding subjects could be taught in Slovak.

At Hungarian schools, Slovak is obligatory, similar to other foreign languages. The entrance level of mastery of the Slovak language is different, it depends on whether and to what extent a Hungarian child came into contact with the Slovak community (whether it attended a Slovak kindergarten). Since the Hungarian minority lives for the most part in villages (65% in 1986) of nationally compact character, its immediate communication with the Slovak ethnic group is not intensive. The majority of the members of the Hungarian nationality regards education of their children exclusively in their mother tongue as being the most substantial condition for the preservation of their national identity. They realize at the same time that better knowledge of Slovak would contribute to the improvement of the educational level of the Hungarian minority which is lower, as compared to the overall Slovak average. The citizens of Hungarian nationality see the starting of this as an unfavorable condition in bringing education as such to a higher quality level, teaching of the Slovak language, in expanding the possibility of studying in the Hungarian language at secondary schools and universities in Slovakia and, finally, in expanding the possibilities of study in Hungary. The question of teaching in a particular language is exceptionally important also from the point of view of language integration of the Hungarian minority because for many children, especially from villages, school is the sole place where they can hear Slovak.

The level of education of the Hungarian minority is influenced by many factors. One of them is the social structure of the Hungarian inhabitants. A further factor is insufficiently stimulating claims for the working force which result from the social and economic level in the areas inhabited for the most part by Hungarian people. The social structure is connected with educational ambitions and place of education in the value structure of not only children but especially their parents. The development of the educational structure of the Hungarian minority is further influenced by the peculiarities of its historical development as well as demographic and ethnographic factors. The question is, in particular, about the language and the big differences between Hungarian and Slovak. Insufficient education in the past had its degree of influence on this condition of the whole society. In spite of a large number of problems which also result out of the former development of education, Hungarian schools represent, at the moment, a vital and functioning part of the educational system in the Slovak Republic.

3.2 Ruthenian / Ukrainian minority

According to the present internationally acknowledged borders, Ruthenians live on a more or less compact territory between the borders of three republics of the former Soviet Union (the Ukraine, the Slovak Republic and Poland). A small group of Ruthenians, descendants of the immigrants in the 18th and 19th centuries, can also be found in Yugoslavia. Their total number reads about 1.2 million people. Out of this number about 130.000 people are living in the region of Prešov, in the northwest of Slovakia. Ruthenians are members of the ethnic group from which the Ukrainian nation also originated. The spoken Ruthenian language is a Ukrainian dialect, although very distant from standard Ukrainian. These attributes, origin and language are important prerequisites for the formation of national consciousness but they are not decisive for its preservation. National consciousness is weakening but it may also disappear unless it is constantly renewed and strengthened, i.e. revived. This is only possible in cohabitation and in the formation of a common history.

In our opinion., this explains the question of why the Ruthenians, if they regard themselves as Ruthenians, do not feel the unified with the Ukrainian national community although they come from the same ethnic group and their language belongs to the system of Ukrainian dialects. A

far as the Ruthenian are concerned living not only in our country but also in the Trans-Carpathian region, it is known that they had lived for hundreds of years in the Hungary state, thus being separated from the ethnic group from which they come and from which has developed the Ukrainian nation, so their history is different, they have different traditions, historical experience and historical personalities.

According to the tradition, the term „Ruthenian“ was used by eastern Slavonic inhabitants in the Carpathian region to give denomination to themselves. In the 20th century, especially in its second half, the historical term „Ruthenian“ was replaced by the term „Ukrainians“ in the Soviet Trans-Carpathian region and in Slovakia. In several cases, these changes in self-denomination of the nation came gradually, having been accelerated either by intellectual conviction or national assimilation, especially in families with nationally mixed parents.

In this case, children regard themselves, similar to their parents, a dominant nationality in the country, i.e. either Slovak or Polish. Such changes in denomination, however, much more frequently occurred as the result of an issuance of government decrees according to which the name „Ruthenian“ was not allowed in the official contact, as well the case of the Soviet Trans-Carpathian Ukraine and in Poland after 1945 and in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the 50's. As a result thereof, nowadays, in the same ethnic-linguistic group, in the same village and, in several cases, even in the same family it is possible to find people who regard themselves Ruthenians, Lemks, Ukrainians, Slovaks or Poles. When communist regimes were established in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1945 and 1948 respectively, they adopted the Soviet line and declared the Ruthenian minorities on their territories as Ukrainian. They prohibited the Ruthenian press and the name „Ruthenian“ in official documents.

After the February coup d'état in 1948, the Czechoslovak Communist Party was also dealing with the minority question „according to the Soviet model“, i.e. they used the gross administrative method: the Ruthenians were declared to be Ukrainians by a governmental decree, their schools were changed into Ukrainian schools. The teachers who had no pedagogical qualification, had to attend six-week courses to master standard Ukrainian.

There arose a Ukrainian cultural organization, Ukrainian newspapers, magazines, and radio where people worked people exclusively without necessary qualification. In Slovak text-books, there was no mention that in Slovakia there also live Ruthenian-Ukrainians, let alone about their history and culture.

The last map of the ethnic composition of the population in Eastern Slovakia was issued in 1952. Historical monuments of the Ruthenian minority were presented according to the territorial, never according to nationalistic or ethnic, principle, this being the case even in the regions where the Ruthenian-Ukrainian origin was undeniable: icons, small wooden churches. If we take into account the fact that Ukrainization was executed in parallel with the liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church through forced introduction of the Orthodox Church, then no wonder the majority of the Ruthenian population did not accept it and expressed their discontent by declaring themselves to be of Slovak nationality. Fear played an important role in the question of the renouncing of their national identity: fear of forced deportation of Ruthenian-Ukrainians to the Ukraine or to the Czech border regions, fear of annexation of the territory of the Ruthenian ethnic group to the Soviet Union.

The overall anti-Ukrainian atmosphere also played its part of the role in after-war Czechoslovakia, this atmosphere was provoked by a fight against the remnants of the Ukrainian rebellious army on our territory (Bander groups). The ethnonym „Ukrainian“ was very often associated with the term „Bander bandit“ (similar to „German“ and „Nazi“). At the beginning of the year 1952 in Czechoslovakia, the introduction of the Ukrainian identity proved to be an advantage for those Slovaks who had always said that „their Ruthenians“ had in reality been Slovaks of „Greek-Catholic religion“. In its substance, the forced Ukrainization in the fifties and sixties (in combination with the liquidation of the local Greek-Catholic church and forced collectivization of farm land) led to the quickest rate of Slovakization and national assimilation that the Ruthenians had ever experienced.

In spite of this fact it is true that the Czechoslovak government also offered large financial support for the establishment of a number of cultural organizations that were Ukrainian in their national format but socialistic in their content. The well-paid local Ukrainian intelligentsia had even succeeded in achieving scientific and literary success. A positive role was played also by Ukrainian organizations:

the Cultural Union, research institutes, departments at universities, museums, publishing houses, radio, theatre, song and dance ensemble and the Union of Writers. More than 500 books were published of scientific literature and belles-lettres and more than eight hundred textbooks.

This, however, had little influence on the masses of Ruthenian farmers in Slovakia. For them the selection was very simple: if one could not be Ruthenian, then it is better to declare oneself Slovak rather than Ukrainian, which was, among other things, connected with the so much hated East.

There are several reasons the Ruthenian-Ukrainians renounce their own national identity and incline to a foreign, majority, nationality. One of the main reasons is the weak national consciousness of the Ruthenians - Ukrainians. They, as compared to other nations and nationalities in central Europe, had not yet completed the process of national consciousness. In the past, the Ruthenians associated their nationality with religion, „the Russina religion“. They defended their religion carefully but they did not care about their nationality so much. As early as the time of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, a vast majority of Ruthenians, especially the intelligentsia, regarded themselves as belonging to the Hungarian nationality and, after the Czechoslovak Republic was founded, to the Slovak nationality.

Official policy both during the Austrian-Hungarian empire and the first Czecho-slovak Republic supported assimilation tendencies between the Ruthenians. The policy of the Slovak State was oriented to their forced assimilation. The main defendant of the national rights of the Ruthenians was, at that time, the Greek-Catholic Church which is, at the moment, supported their assimilation with the Slovaks.

After the changes which the Velvet revolution brought with itself in Czechoslovakia in 1989, new committees arose which founded their own Ruthenian organizations and publications. By the end of 1990, the Ruthenians founded five new Ruthenian organizations on the territory they live in. These organizations set in principle the same requirements: to acknowledge the Ruthenians as an independent nationality, to codify the Ruthenian literary language and finally to use it at schools as a teaching language, to insure full rights of a national minority for the Ruthenians in the countries they live in and to acknowledge the Ruthenians as a dominant original nationality in Trans Carpathian Russia.

In March 1991 in the Slovak city of Medzilaborce, the first World Ruthenian Congress was held on the initiative of the Society for National Revival of Ruthenians. In spite of the historical relationship between the Ruthenian communists in their home country and the immigrants in the USA, it was for the first time when representatives met in one place from all the countries in which the Ruthenians live (Trans-Carpathian Ukraine, Czecho-slovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and the United States.) This congress constituted as a constant all-encompassing organization and its existence itself had an immense influence on the stimulation of Ruthenian national pride of the more than 300 people who took part at it, not to speak about a number of those who read about the congress in generally available newspapers.

In 1991 in Czechoslovakia, a regular census was taken in which for the first time since the second world war, the people had the right to say that they were of Ruthenian nationality. In spite of the problems arising from the way the question of nationality was submitted and subsequently analyzed, some 17.000 people claimed to be Ruthenians in Slovakia, as compared to 14.000 Ukrainians. In spite of forty years of communist oppression, the Ruthenians were not exterminated. Today, still exist Ruthenian organizations, Ruthenian publications and a relatively large community of writers, teachers, experts and farmers who constantly declare, in the press and at public meetings, their affiliation to the independent Ruthenian nation.

Today, the Union of Ruthenians-Ukrainians registers about 10.000 members. In addition to the central organization of the Union of Ruthenians-Ukrainians, there exist also many others: the Ruthenian Revival, the Society of A. Duchnovič, Ruch, Obruč, Tarasov's Ukraine, the Association of Ukrainians in Slovakia, the Association of Ukrainian Writers in Slovakia, the Union of Trans-Carpathian Youth, and others. Each of these organizations has its own statutes and program. Without exception, all want to develop their activity only within the framework of Slovakia and none of them tries to annex the Ruthenian-Ukrainian ethnic group to a different country. The Ruthenian-Ukrainians were and want to be in the future an integral part of the Slovak Republic.

The Ruthenians are only one of many groups that suffered under the totalitarian regimes ruling in Eastern and Middle Europe during the last 40 years. Now that these regimes no longer exist we have a real possibility of correcting the mistakes of the past and of insuring the survival of the Ruthenians in the future. Similar to other minorities, the future of the survival of the Ruthenians depends on the good will of the countries with which they live, on providing them with adequate legal protection and, if necessary, financial support for their national development. For these reasons, the Ruthenians have to inform the international community of, and constantly remind it, that they exist. On the other hand, the Ruthenians must expect the international community to monitor their situation and, if necessary, to force the governments in the Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia to insure them protection of their international rights. All four countries on whose territory the Ruthenians live signed several agreements at the meeting of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), agreements concerned with national minorities. Of exceptional significance for the Ruthenians was the decision adopted at the Copenhagen conference of CSCE in June 1990.

It was agreed in Copenhagen that „affiliation to a national minority is the matter of individual choice of a person and no disadvantage may result from such a choice“. Further it provides that „citizens belonging to national minorities may claim their rights both individually and within the framework of the community with other members of such a group“. This means that irrespective of the way the Ruthenians could be defined by scientists or individual governments, if there are individuals or groups that call themselves Ruthenians, who are persuaded that they represent an independent nationality, they have the right to act so and to be acknowledged as Ruthenians in the countries where they live. The Copenhagen meeting also acknowledge the role of extra-governmental organizations in the course of enforcing the interests of national minorities and asked the interested countries to insure that the teaching of history and culture in educational institutions „include also history and culture of national minorities.

As far as Slovakia is concerned, the situation of the Ruthenians. especially since the November revolution in 1989, has been better than in the Trans-Carpathian Ukraine or in Poland. Until recently, however, the Slovak government, usually through the Ministry of Culture, provided only ad hoc grants to new Ruthenian organizations and publications.

Subsidies from the government support several departments at universities and institutes at the university in Prešov, the Ukrainian Radio station, the Ukrainian publishing house, the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník and Alexander Duchnovič Theatre (former the Ukrainian National Theatre).

In Slovakia, however, two clearly defined ethnic orientations exist: Ruthenians and Ukrainians. If support of national minorities is to continue in Slovakia, than governments have to financially support both Ruthenian and Ukrainian organizations. How can the government distribute funds among the East Slovakian minorities that were until recently regarded as only Ukrainian? In the beginning, one might think that the only reasonable way would be the acceptance of such a percentage distribution that is reflected in the results of the census in 1991, which would mean 55% of the budget to Ruthenian and 45% to Ukrainian cultural organizations, schools and the mass media. Exceptionally problematic is the question of schools in Slovakia because since the sixties the teaching language has been changed in a majority of villages inhabited by Ruthenians, at the request of the parents themselves, from Ukrainian into Slovak. Furthermore, as part of the consolidating process during the last two decades, a number of small primary schools have been closed down in villages inhabited by Ruthenians. If state-controlled or private schools reopened also in Ruthenian villages, it is very probable that the teaching language would be Slovak. The Slovak Ministry of Education, however, has to provide teachers and textbooks in the Ruthenian

or Ukrainian language to those villages that will submit such an application. What is, however, the most important is that textbooks on history in Slovakia should contain an analysis of the history and culture of the Ruthenians living in the western region as well as of other minorities, which will be of significance for all pupils. This would be in compliance with the Copenhagen agreement CSCE which is, together with other „international agreements about human rights and freedom“ and in accordance with the new Constitution of the Slovak Republic „generally binding on its territory and over-rides its own law.

3.3 Romani minority

The March 1991 census showed that after 60 years it was the first time the Roman population in Czechoslovakia had the possibility to adhere freely to their ethnic affiliation. In Slovakia, 80.627 people, i.e. 1.53% of the Slovak citizens adhered to the Romani population. However, according to the 1989 census of municipal and communal state administration authorities, there were 253.943 Romani people living in Slovakia, which was 4.8%, i.e. more than triple the amount. Since these statistics do not include the Romanies having the same standard of living as the majority of the population, the Romani political and cultural bodies think that the number of Romani people in Slovakia is higher. The demographic data show that there are about 5% Romanies in the Slovak Republic. The population growth of the Romani people is about four times higher than that of the rest of the population.

At the moment, according to the results of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Romani population in Slovakia belongs to the least educated ethnic group. They are homogenous by class and by profession finding only the least qualified jobs, which is in sharp contrast to the structure of professions in the entire society. The participation of the Romani population in the economic development of the society is very scarce. The existence of the Romani population in the former Czechoslovakia was not mentioned in any legal regulation, it had never been legally acknowledged or embodied. They were only mentioned in regulations of lower legal power that regulated social allowance and services. This resulted in the impossibility of establishing a Romani institution, which was justified because of the low level of educational influence of the society in the case of segregation institutions.

From 1945, the policy of the State, as regards the Romani population, had gradually realized the following concepts:

1. the concept of social assimilation of the Romani population - from 1945 when the so-called „Romani issue“ began to be centrally dealt with on an institutional level,
2. the concept of controlled dispersion - the question was about a planned and organized dispersion of the Romani population from the places of high concentration in Slovakia especially to the Czech lands - from the year 1965,
3. the concept of the integration of the Romani population into the society - from the year 1972.

A natural wish of the Romani minority was to achieve the acceptance by the majority. As early as the inter-war period, F. Štampach described the fact when Romani musicians tried to get rid of their Gypsy origin, they applied powder on their faces and also refused to use their mother tongue. This process continued on a significant level in the period after the Second World War. The said political attitude towards the Romani population resulted in the fact that the Romani people were regarded as a peripheral and socially degenerated layer of the society. Adherence to the Romani ethnic community at that time meant volunteer adherence to anti-social elements. At school, Romani children did not learn anything about themselves, their history and culture, neither did belles-lettres, except for a few cases, picture a positive Romani hero with whom the Romani reader could associate. Such an attitude had finally resulted in the devastation of positive ethnic consciousness.

The Romani people deprived of their own identity did not find the purpose or sense of their existence. Their whole after-war development could be classified as being a process of

deculturization and social and moral retardation. In such a situation, more resolute individuals who wanted to liberate themselves from their backward: and to live on the same standard as the majority of the population, selected a method of distancing themselves, in a decided way, from their ethnic origin. It is a well-known process when a person freely selects their own way of negation of their ethnic origin that represents for them a feeling of insecurity and inferiority with an aim to successfully integrate oneself into the society of a different culture.

This process was evident in several regions in Slovakia, in particular in the fact that some Romani parents consciously did not teach their own children the Romani language because they would not need this language in the everyday life. They consciously try to adopt the way of life of the majority of the population not only outwardly (way of dwelling, dressing, cooking) but also by adopting themselves to the local customs (e.g. at weddings, Christmas) and they demonstratively refuse the traditional Romani ways, superstitions, practice of folk medical treatment and regard them as being the customs of the past and primitive way of life.

It has been at least two decades that a small group of Romani people has existed among the Romani population that wants the Romani population to be accepted as a distinctive ethnic community. The said group is represented by the people who have overcome the handicap of the past and a new positive ethnic consciousness is being born in themselves. They are mostly educated people, graduates from secondary schools or universities, this being not a matter of rule. Many of them do not speak Romani and have to learn it at an adult age. They realize that one of the ways of solving of the unsatisfying social position of the Romani population and of being equal with the majority community is the way of positive ethnic self-identification, realization of the values of one's own language and culture.

After November 1989, the Romani population began to look for their place in the social organization of the society, create their own cultural institutions, ethnic networks, e.i. to institutionalize their ethnic character. A part of the Romani intelligentsia took the leading position in various civic Romani groups and political parties that participated in the 1990 election. The Romani civic and political movements, however, are marked by a complicated search for the Romani identity within the Romani community as a result of the former historical development.

In April 1991, the government of the Slovak Republic adopted new principles of attitude of the State to the Romani population. The government based this fact on the principal idea that it is not possible to associate the roles of the State as regards the Romani ethnic group as a minority

population (represented by political parties and movements in legislative bodies as well as in central bodies dealing with nationality issues) and as regards the part of the Romani population who are socially and culturally backward.

The typology of Romani families living in Slovakia discovered different patterns in the behaviour of the Romanies in the sphere of partnership behaviour and partnership which result in a different process of life cycle of a Romani family. Together with the different work behaviour it means that the Romanies in Slovakia represent a totally different culture and social behaviour patterns, as compared to the rest of the population living in this country. Attitudes and relationships of the inhabitants towards Romanies are rather negative. Stereotypes and superstitions prevail, which cause social isolation of Romanies and a large social distance between them and the rest of the population.

The identity of Romanies brings with itself a contradictory relation towards its ethnic nature - beginning with its devaluation and disrespect (either hidden or real) through the feeling of inferiority and ending with an uncritical and exaggerated evaluation. In political movements as well as leaders find it difficult to orient in the complexity of its problem and to find the core of one's ethnicity, to comprehend its connections and to find objectives and ways for its completion. A characteristic feature of Romani civic and political movements are conflicts and contradictions, prejudice and various maneuvers of their leaders as part of the political processes in which they took part. They became leaders of various political parties, cultural unions and religious groupings.

In spite of the fact that these organizations had set similar targets with a view of overall raising of the standard of the Romani population, development of its culture, elimination of illiteracy, decreasing criminality etc., yet they did not agree on one issue, they even stood sharply one against the other: a different degree of ethnic identification demonstrated in the different opinion on one's own ethnic position within the existing ethnic composition of the population.

The Romani Civic Initiative, in the beginning the most numerous Romani movement, set their primary objective to achieve legislative equality of Romanies with the other minorities in Czechoslovakia by acknowledging the status of nationality and by respecting their own ethnic denomination as „Romani“ rather than the commonly used „Gypsy“ which they feel is pejorative.

In Slovakia, this idea was also supported by the Democratic Union of Romanies but the Democratic Romani Union Party did not express themselves with regards to this issue (the representatives of the party justified their attitude by the fear of the decomposition of the membership). A firm stance was maintained by the Romani Integration Party which in its action program, Article 13 specifies: ... In our work we do not want to separate from the rest of the Slovak population by legalizing the Romani nationality but with our political and public education activities we do not want to support faster assimilation of the Romani ethnic group. The issue is probably about a curious case of a political body constituted on the ethnic basis which sets its objective to be the decline of its own ethnic group.

Against the acknowledgment of the Romani nationality originally expressed their opinion also some other bodies - the Association of the Romani Intelligentsia and the League of the Romani Unity which later adjusted their opinion. During personal negotiations with the advocates of these attitudes, a great number of answers was registered: the majority said that they were afraid of being discriminated against - or not being accepted for work if they had the Romani nationality marked in their personal documents.

There were also numerous opinions that the process of self-constitution of the Romani ethnical group was only at the beginning, that the Romanies are not yet a nation or a nationality but only an ethnic group. Last but not least, there is also a group of people who realize their ethnic origin, they want to help the others. They, however, identify with the Slovaks (they do not accept the possibility of being ethnically associated with the Romani population), in some cases it is possible to speak about a double identity.

Czechoslovakia belonged to the Central and East European countries with the highest absolute and relative number of Romanies. Although the Romani ethnic group has been living on this territory for centuries, the Romanies create a separate ethnic community with its own culture. They were and still are clearly separated from the rest of the society and create an ethnic minority different not only from the majority ethnic group in Slovakia but also from the other ethnic minorities living in Slovakia. Cultural under-development and a low social and economic level of a great majority of Romanies represented not only an economic, but also ideological problem for the socialist country and socialist state administration. Often proclaimed social equality of all citizens, their real and planned living standard was in sharp contrast with the real standard of living of the Romanies, their income, education, health condition, etc.

The socialist „social state“ in the spirit of its proclaimed ideals and paternalistic - protector´ attitude to all its citizens „committed“ several discrepancies. It denied the existence of the Romani population as an ethnic group, but at the same time it classified them as belonging to a group dependent upon social support and making use of special social advantages and achievements that were not provided to the rest of the population:

- purchase of shacks, priority allocation of flats, food allowances for children in kindergartens and primary schools, priority acceptance of Gypsy children to secondary schools, colleges and universities.

In the last years of the socialist state, a large apparatus was created which in Slovakia employed as many as a hundred thousand people whose sole working task was practical field social work among Romanies, its methodological and administrative management.

In spite of large costs and investments, the deformation of the policy as regards Romanies brought satisfaction neither to Romanies nor to the rest of the society. The contrary is true, it resulted in the fact that the social distance and tension in the contacts between Romanies and the rest of the society persisted and was even growing.

In its effort to eliminate the remnants of the protector´s attitude of the state with regards to Romanies, in April 1991 the government of the Slovak republic adopted the Principles of Attitude to Romanies that grant the Romanies their ethnic status without exception which is equivalent to the status of the other ethnic minorities living in Slovakia.

In the social sphere, Romanies are regarded, in the sense of the said principles, as being equal citizens of the state who, in the case of social dependence, have the right to make use of the same social advantages and support.

The principles adopted by the government cancelled the central control of the „Romani issue“ and grant the power and liability to local governments that should be provided with the means and possibilities in a different way to cope with the issues covering a particular part of the Romani population. By having adopted the said principles, a first step had been taken towards the change of the overall concept of the state policy not only with regards to Romanies but also, indirectly, to the other ethnic minorities in Slovakia. The government has not yet decided, neither do its further steps show clearly whether it will support liberal - pluralistic or corporative - pluralistic concept of attitude towards ethnic communities. We regard the difference between these concepts as principal.

The liberal - pluralistic regime prevents the existence of official favoritism of individual ethnic groups. Such a system tolerates voluntary and spontaneous ethnic associations and ethnic

groupings, tolerates cultural division of labour, i.e. stratification of employees according to ethnic origin and a policy realized by ethnic minorities unless they interfere in public affairs and activities. The state, however, does not encourage, nor does it strengthen, the ethnicity by supporting ethnic institutions. Ethnicity is regarded as a private matter of citizens in which the state does not interfere, does not prohibit it but supports the civic principle in the practical decision-making process.

The corporative - pluralistic regime provides the ethnic communities with a separate but equivalent legal status and political possibilities and distributes advantages on the grounds of ethnic quotas or ethnic - regional rights. Such a system tolerates and supports segregated institutions and politically protects ethnicity. Legally, this system is represented most often by a federation which ensures equal positions with regards to ethnic groups.

Federation is for the most part formed by ethnic groups with approximately similar dominant position. There are very few countries that use the corporative - pluralistic attitude to ethnic minorities. The obstacle is the institution of the state itself. In order for a state to function properly, it needs a certain degree of cohesion and ethnicity always represents a potential of political (and not only political) splitting off.

By preferring one or the other concept, it has a number of different practical consequences in relation to ethnic groups. The idea of, for example, the ethnic segregation of educational institutions is understood in a different way, priority assurance of posts at schools not according to performance but according to the affiliation to an ethnic group (a system of ethnic quotas, the so-called affirmation action). The „equality of opportunities“ in a different social background is also understood in a different way.

Resulting from the above the official acknowledgement of ethnicity of a certain community and its political support and maintenance mean two different things. The Romani ethnic group in Slovakia is still fighting for only the first step. It is, to a certain extent, a prestigious fight, cultural and moral fight, a fight for the social and legal status. It is fought by only a small number of the Romani intelligentsia and to a great extent it is fought not only against the majority ethnic group but also against those members of an ethnic group who do not want their own ethnicity.

The issue is about those Romanians who have invested a great deal into being at the same level with the majority both materially and socially. They have paid a large sum for it and their life experience tells them that the price for the achievement of the Romani ethnic identity is not equivalent with the possible loss of such a position achieved. So it is more and more evident to them as well as to the whole society that the Romanians in Slovakia are at the moment, and fulfill

all the requirements to be also in future, a group which is most frustrated by unemployment, low and certain social status and by political helplessness. Under the conditions of transfer from „social state“ to and „economic state“, a state with market economy, there change not only value systems and morality of both individuals and the society. It has become a question of whether the most adequate term for the development of ethnic communities in such a state is the term „integration“. If we comprehend integration in the sense of ethnic integration, then the legal acknowledgement of the ethnic Romani community and its placement among the other minorities in Slovakia, without respect to the support of ethnicity from the state, already contains such integration. If we comprehend integration from the social, cultural and spiritual point of view, we find ourselves in the sphere where the question of ethnic tolerance, ethnic superstitions, stereotypes and discrimination play the main role. If we comprehend integration in the social economic sense, it is a problem of economic stratification and social - economic mobility of the members of the Romani ethnic environment.

4 Conclusions

Proposals for a better integration of minorities in Slovakia

In connection with the complex project on the life and prospects of the national minorities in Slovakia I feel competent to express my experience resulting from a deeper study of this highly topical and important issue. It is easier to orient ourselves in solving the experience from past inequalities as well as in the formation of hopes and opinions, in the recommendation of new approaches and proposals. Looked at historically, it is a natural tendency.

In spite of the above mentioned I agree with the important and updated themes formulated at the 2nd Bratislava symposium which concerned the question of national minorities living in

Slovakia. I recommend that the needs of national minorities regarding education be satisfied not only by a formal acknowledgement of their rights, but also by creating a corresponding institutional framework.

In ethnically mixed regions the following principles should be respected:

- minorities should always take an active part in the decision making process in the sphere of public administration,
- the staff of public administration bodies should communicate in both languages.

This principle should also be spread into the sphere of local governments, rescue, fire control and police services as well as into courts of law and legal system in order for individuals or groups of people not to be discriminated against,

- the composition of the local administration should correspond to the composition of the local population, i.e. the system of proportional representation should be introduced,
- to strengthen the infrastructure of minority groups institutionally, in particular when the State ceases to financially support voluntary cultural activities. In such a case it is necessary to apply for an active financial support with sponsors,
- religious rituals and weddings should be executed in the language of a particular ethnic group. It results therefore that the clergy is assigned a significant social role in the reproduction of the language and culture,
- it is necessary to assure a better system of education for the Romany and Hungarian community as well as bilingual education of minorities in those regions where large numbers of these inhabitants live together,
- to support to a greater extent the cultural activity of professional institutions of all ethnic groups,
- to support such a solution of social conflicts which is acceptable for all interested parties,
- to invite external experts in order for them to analyze a particular conflict from the point of view of an external observer and to serve as agents in providing experience with the solution of similar problems in different countries.

The mutual minority - minority and minority - majority relations are of a multilayer character and function on several lines. On the vertical line, it could be said that the basis is formed by psycho-social feelings that, to a certain degree, determine the whole superstructure of relationships and reach the world-wide level. Here also belong inter-group feelings, such as is hatred, inferiority or superiority complex, or more positive feelings such as is trust and willingness to help.

The collective rights of minorities are significant in the assurance of their equal civil rights. It is a question of compensation for natural advantages enjoyed by the majority population. The identity of minority groups may also be strengthened through private cultural institutions.

The collective rights enrich the citizens by their pluralistic substance thus suppressing the trends directed to the totalitarian power of monistic nationalism. This should be accompanied by political decentralization, self-administration of citizens, communities and private institutions as well as positive support on the part of the State that could help with the elimination of discrimination of minorities. Stress should be laid upon the right to self-determination and autonomous organization, upon the transferring of power into regions and upon the significance of solving conflicts arisen on a local level.

The collective rights assure also for the minorities to be able to take part in the life of the society as its citizens. Extra-governmental organizations may play a constructive role in the process of building cultural institutions. The State should help with the economic, social and cultural development in order for the collective rights to be really satisfied. No culture can survive without its own cultural institutions, neither can any culture without being resistant to external influences.

The relations among minorities mutually and the interactions between the majority and the minority that function on several levels are complex. We often accept a different view and the making a stereotype of a minority is often an inexact simplification.

Within the proposals and recommendations regarding the problem of the Romany minority living in Slovakia it appears suitable to mention that the right of an ethnic group to associate, create ethnically segregated institutions of all types in the positive sense, encourage and create the ethnic environment and ethnic borders, gain prestige, self-respect and ethnic pride is an inevitable degree and step in the development of any ethnic group. It is, however, questionable whether it is a step that will be sufficient to overcome social backwardness, social exaltation and development of

this ethnic community as a group. On April 9, 1991 the government of the Slovak Republic accepted the requirement of equality of Romanians with the other ethnic minorities in Slovakia.

The right to freely decide on one's own ethnic affiliation is also assured in Decree of Basic Rights and Liberties adopted by the Slovak Republic. Individual ministries develop accepted principles of the new attitude of the government to the Romany minority assuring them rights in the sphere of culture and education. The public opinion must also be taken into account, it is mostly oriented anti-Romany. The April 1990 research performed by the Social Sciences Institute in Košice, Slovakia showed that 45.2% of respondents said that they would expel Romanians out

of their country, 20.3% would accept them only as visitors from a different country and only 4.7% would accept them as close neighbours. Similarly, the public opinion organized by the Slovak Statistical Office in May 1991 showed that 45% respondents characterized their relation to Romanians as unfriendly, 33% as indifferent, and 20% as friendly.

With regard to the existent superstitions of the society, the Romany population is faced with the role to overcome fear of not being accepted by the majority, which makes the process of search for one's own identity more complicated to a great extent. It will be interesting to follow the development of the process of ethnic identification of the Romany population which we are witnesses to. This occurs in the period when the high percentage of the Romanians have more serious problems - problems of basic existence: unqualified workers or workers with lower qualification are among the first to lose their jobs.

In the period to come it will be necessary to focus on the problems of development of Romany culture, on the codification of the Romany language, on the utilization of this language in the educational process of Romanians, on the problems with textbooks which should contain information on history and culture of the ethnic minorities living in Slovakia, including the Romany minority

From the negotiations, and in the course of discussions, about the Romany minority in Slovakia at the 2nd Bratislava symposium under the title of Minorities in Politics resulted the following generalizations:

The Romanians in Slovakia have been recognized as a minority with the ethnic status that is equivalent to the other ethnic minorities living in Slovakia. Out of this equality also stems a factual possibility of ethnic and cultural development, i.e. development of the language, education, their own periodical press and belles-lettres - the possibility of a positive process of self-consciousness. Although basic documents exist regarding the orientation of the government of the Slovak Republic with regards to the Romany population, the present day condition of their living standard is not favorable, unemployment affects Romanians first of all, their standard of living and income are lower than those of the majority of the population. They continue to be the least educated group in the society.

In this connection it is recommended that an analysis be worked out of connections, relationships, alternatives of development and prognoses of the Romany ethnic population as a whole, as well as an interdisciplinary research be executed into the history, culture, traditional and present day way of life of the Romany minority and the programs of development of the education of Romanians

be supported. It is also recommended to focus upon the solution of problems of development of the regions with which the development of the Romany communities living on these regions is also directly connected and upon the education of the society, inter-ethnic tolerance, elimination of superstitions and intolerance. Not less important is also making the exchange of knowledge and experience on the international level more intensive.

Since the onset of the democratic changes, several Slovak nationalist groups have not only campaigned for Slovak independence but have demonstrated against the republic's minorities, particularly against Hungarians who were scapegoated for alleged subversion, and the Romani, the perennial stereotype of criminality and disorder.

The Slovak government has been criticized for failing to protect the Romani population from acts of violence perpetrated by racist radicals or from persistent discrimination in employment, education and housing. Nonetheless, Romani have been able to establish their own political organizations and to participate in local and legislative elections. Because they remained embryonic and splintered, Romani parties proved unable to pass the threshold for parliamentary representation.

The Slovak citizenship law passed in January 1993 did not stir any significant controversy, although some of its stipulations for acquiring 'state citizenship' could precipitate bureaucratic discrimination against some minority groups. For instance in applying for citizenship by the end of December 1993, an individual needed to prove mastery of the Slovak language and the absence of a criminal record during the past five years. The former provisions could theoretically be used to disenfranchise some older Hungarian residents whose knowledge of Slovak was often rudimentary, while the latter stipulation could discriminate against Romani residents particularly if the onus was the individual to prove his or her innocence.

In order to solve the issue of the Ruthenian / Ukrainian national minority living in Slovakia, I recommend and propose the following:

The Ruthenian minority is characterized by its complex inner structure. The question is about the Ukrainian, Ruthenian and Carpathian - Russian orientation of the Ruthenian minority, while the first two orientations have a decisive effect on the population of the Ruthenian nationality.

Permanent tension between these orientations and their organizations, as represented by the Union of Ruthenians-Ukrainians of the Slovak Republic and the Ruthenian Revival, has been the source of constant conflicts since the beginning of their existence. The aforesaid organizations profess to be the representatives of all Ruthenian population in Slovakia. They have their own members and followers at home as well as abroad.

In addition to these two organizations, as well as organizations having a liking for one of the two orientations (in the terminology of political science they are understood as being their supporting clubs), there exists a third orientation in Slovakia which is characterized by the Carpathian-Russian orientation. To put it simply, one may say that in their orientation they are successors to the so called Great Russian orientation which still follows from the fifties. It is not known how many members they have and their influence is negligible nowadays. In the attitudes of all the three orientations there prevails a common opinion, namely that the state or certain political forces do not meet their requirements. The most frequently expressed opinions of supporters of the Ruthenian and Carpathian orientations are those influenced by the fear evoked by reminiscences, i.e. whether or not the Ukraine will try to realize its megalomaniacal intentions as evidenced in the former Soviet Union. The present social and economic situation in the Ukraine does not show this country as an attractive example.

In May 1995, a new political entity was established - the Dukla Democratic Assembly. Although it stresses in its program that it operates among the inhabitants of the north east Slovakian region no matter what nationality they belong to, it is evident that its activity is strongly oriented to solving problems of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) ethnic group. It seems that pro-Ukrainian opinions meet the greatest response in this party. If the Dukla Democratic Party does not succeed in addressing also pro-Ukrainian oriented followers, its competence and importance will substantially diminish, or as a counter-balance, a new political entity can arise which in its turn, could be much more pro Ruthenian oriented.

Looked at objectively, as well as according to opinions of many a representative of both the pro-Ruthenian and pro-Ukrainian orientations, the present situation is also getting worse as a result of the bad condition of the legislature in relation to national minorities.

To sum up the question of the Ruthenian nationality, it is necessary to say that formerly unified if small number a nationality, denoted as Ruthenians or Russian before 1952 and after this year as Ukrainian, split, according to the last census, into two smaller nationalities: Ruthenian and Ukrainian. This splitting was enabled by the fact that after the fall of the totalitarian regime, the Ruthenian population could affiliate itself also to the Ruthenian nationality. They did not have such a possibility before because the totalitarian regime abolished the Ruthenian nationality in 1952.

The population made use of the possibility to freely affiliate themselves to their own nationality, as compared to 13.847 people of Ukrainian nationality. In the last census, the people filled up the information about their nationality by themselves, so we cannot speak about manipulation. As far as the above said is concerned, the question has been settled. From the human point of

view, however, we recorded a splitting of one community that has its common ethnic origin, spoken language, history and historical experience. We realize the seriousness of this decision if we take

into account the fact that the splitting also affected many families.

The division of the Ruthenian population into Ruthenians and Ukrainians has been accepted but it is recommended to regard this division as being an internal matter of the Ruthenian population. State authorities must carefully watch their policy making in order not to give reason to believing that they give priority to one over the other.

The outlook for optimism regarding the future of the national minority of Ruthenian-Ukrainians is, however, very poor. This national minority that for centuries has preserved its own identity and has resisted all efforts to be liquidated is nowadays on the verge of extinction. Its splitting into two parts - Ruthenians and Ukrainians - did not but speed up this extinction. Competent authorities in the Slovak Republic should realize this situation and adopt effective measures in order to avoid this extinction. Any extinction of a living organism is a loss, impoverishment of the human civilization. Slovakia, for this matter, is not so rich to incur such a loss.

In connection with the proposals for a better integration of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, it is suitable to mention the following facts. The recent research showed the fact that the conflicting character of self-identification processes of the majority and the minorities is more marked in the case of the Slovak - Hungarian development of its cultural life than is specified in KBSE.

The mutual relations between Hungarians and Slovaks are burdened by various historic sins, forced assimilation by both parties and a different historic memory.

While on the Hungarian side, the national identity is being strengthened by the feeling of affiliation to the former ruling nation, on the Slovak side, it is a feeling of inferiority, injustice and humiliation. The results obtained from representative samples show that Slovak attitudes towards the Hungarians minority are nourishing to a lower degree by negative stereotypes and superstitions in the mixed regions where both ethnic groups live together, as compared to the regions settled only by Slovaks. These hypotheses about the positive influence of the mutual contact were supported by several research findings.

Among the most frequent features that the Slovaks attribute to the 'Hungarian' character belong: superiority complex, arrogance, underrating of other people, expansiveness, domineering behaviour, nationalism and chauvinism.

The Slovaks still feel fear of Hungarian assimilation in the mixed regions, accusation of the Hungarian minority of intolerance, unwillingness to reach an agreement, suspecting Hungarians of claiming territorial rights in the mixed regions.

Within the Hungarian minority, that characterized the Slovak - Hungarian relationship in a more positive way than the Slovaks, negative stereotypes on the 'Slovak' character are less known and less strong. The Hungarian community 'accuses' the Slovaks of nationalism, chauvinism and jealousy.

The Hungarian minority as a whole is characteristic for its significant self-segregation, though its integration with the Slovak nation is low. To its reservedness contributes a relatively compact settlement of a mostly rural character, high ethnic endogamy, strong national consciousness with the historic memory of the Hungarian nation as a dominant nation.

A substantial factor of the still existing isolation of the Hungarian minority is, however, especially the high degree of language reservedness, unwillingness to communicate in the Slovak language. This is also the result of the educational policy applied for a long time.

Hungarian children attend special schools in which study subjects are taught exclusively in Hungarian. Slovak is taught alongside with other foreign languages only in special classes. As regards university education, the number of students of the Hungarian minority deserves careful consideration on whether it is necessary to create an institution on a university level that would serve to the needs of these citizens of the Slovak Republic. On the grounds of the research it was stated that the age structure of the teachers at Hungarian schools falls mostly within the category of 50-60 years old.

The urgent need for younger qualified teachers calls for a new policy oriented towards acquisition and recruitment of new teachers. In order to overcome the undesirable isolation of the Hungarian minority, we recommend that a supporting organization for the program of exchange of Hungarian and Slovak students be established, aiming at deepening their mutual knowledge and understanding. It would be perhaps interesting to establish a common school for Slovak and Hungarian children with a bilingual and bicultural educational program in cooperation with the local community and parents and to solve the conflict of the officially used language in the sense of equality of both languages, Slovak and Hungarian.

Members of the Hungarian minority interpret the question of civic society from the point of view of the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement in the following way:

'Nowadays in the Slovak Republic we are witnesses of an incomplete and not always serious discussion about the position of Hungarians - citizens of the Slovak Republic. It is to the detriment of the cause that we did not initiate this discussion ourselves, that almost the whole world must

force us to do so. Governments, parliaments, international institutions and foundations encourage us to begin a dialog on this question. However, we are often reluctant to take into account the fact that it is first of all in our own interest to agree seriously upon a specific model of coexistence. Minorities do not want to accept the status of inferiority, forced assimilation, the fact that they are regarded as a permanent source of insecurity and tension, they do not want to be eliminated from public life, they hate constant and militant paternalism on the part of the state power and the majority. And many of them feel a certain fear. Without a serious discussion and without any effort to solve this question in a proper way we will remain where we are. The Hungarian minority's model of solution may be summarized into four items: language rights, autonomy of culture, autonomy of education and regionalism. They must be guaranteed by the Constitution, their functioning as well as concept must be insured by a law on minorities. Financial insurance should be made by an adequate portion of taxes. This capital would grant all minorities their administrative autonomy.

As is evident, justified claims of the Hungarian minority represent a whole specter. Let us mention some ideas uttered by a member of the Hungarian Civic Party who stated that '...integration of the Hungarian minority is often regarded as its political integration whose essential point being the question: Why does not a Hungarian political party combine with a Slovak political party of similar political and ideological orientation? Why do Slovak democrats think that the Hungarian minority, being fully and internally organized, should renounce its political organization which they feel important? Another burning requirement imposed on the minorities is that their members should be loyal to the state and be proud of the state they live in.

The Hungarian Civic Party tries to answer the question:

What does it mean to be loyal to the state? What does it mean to be proud of the state? Does anybody want to change the frontiers of this state by force? Do the Hungarians break the laws of this state to a greater extent than the Slovaks? No, they don't. Do they avoid payment of taxes to a greater extent than the Slovaks? No, they don't. Should they be loyal to the inhabitants of the state? It is in particular the state itself that should be loyal by equally guaranteeing basic rights and freedoms to all citizens without exception and by insuring them equal conditions for a worthy life. Under the term 'loyalty of minorities' the present Slovak government understands an infinite and openly expressed gratitude of the minorities to the government for the fact that they have been granted 'super-standard rights'.

Since such heartfelt words of gratitude do not still come, it results therefrom that the Hungarian minority is not loyal to the state. Why should citizens of any national minority be grateful to the government for the fact that it grants them basic rights? Integration is a question of mutual

agreement. Isn't it a matter of course that the majority be demanded to make itself acquainted with and respect the culture, customs, traditions, living conditions and language of one tenth of its fellow citizens?...

This is the way the Hungarian minority's argumentation is presented. We, however, regard the principle of collective rights for minorities or formation of autonomous structures on the ethnic basis as a risk-bearing factor interfering in the formation of a democratic environment. Middle and East European post-Communist countries are now being formed as national states. It is not by coincidence that it is in these countries where appear requirements for the formation of autonomous structures on an ethnic basis, an example thereof being the declaration adopted at the conference entitled 'Hungary and Hungarians living abroad' (held on July 4 and 5, 1996 in Budapest) under the participation of the representatives of the Hungarian government, Hungarian parliamentary political parties and representatives of political and other bodies representing Hungarian national minorities

living outside their mother territory. The key requirement set forth in the declaration is the formation of ethnic autonomies and local self-governments on the territory of the countries where the Hungarian national minority is living. The reaction of the countries on the territory of which inhabitants of the Hungarian minority live was critical to the document mentioned above. The Slovak party felt most offended since, by signing the Agreement of Good Neighbourhood and friendly Cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary (on March 19, 1995), the Slovaks showed that they had the intention to create suitable conditions for the historic Slovak - Hungarian reconciliation. In this context it is also necessary to understand the declaration of the government of the Slovak Republic (on July 9, 1996) from which one can read at least two facts:

(1) Unfortunately, the Hungarian party breaches the stability the stability in the Central European geographic and political environments as well as the basic Slovak-Hungarian Agreement,

(2) The concept of ethnic autonomy is an unacceptable way of solution of the minority problem because it contains 'possible conflict-causing issues from the point of view of the near future.

Last but not least, it can also lead to segregation of the citizens who are equal before the law, to separatism or even to formation of 'ethnically pure territories' and eventually to strengthening of 'nationalism'

Therefore a state based on the national principle is not an appropriate way of solving of the minority question. Neither is it an appropriate way of solution of the question of ethnic autonomy.

For descent civic coexistence and inter-ethnic communication, the most suitable form is a civic state with a highly-developed political society. A second is based on a particular type of state

policy. The question is (1) whether to accept consensus policy which is capable of building up, even under conditions of a state based on the national principle, principles of modern democracy or (2) to support conflict-causing policy which tries to build a democratic state based on the majority principle ignoring the rights of minorities. As for the second case, the requirement for a territorial autonomy is only a logical self-defensive answer of a national minority to the growing pressure of the government's power policy.

Ethnic separatist efforts do not begin by calling for territorial autonomy. Territorial autonomy results from breach of civic equality. This means that there arises a nation as a dominant group of the second category, on the other hand. When building up a national state in Central and Middle Europe, it is the democratic component of transformation in the sphere of the political system that should be devoted the greatest attention.

The future of Europe should not lead to an anachronistic splitting off of countries into a number of mono-cultural states composed of a single nation. We should make use of this historical opportunity and create a common Europe with a number of cultures that would stem out of traditional values of plurality and tolerance. It is motivating to follow the work of the International Minority Rights Group seated in London which has more than twenty associated members in many parts of the world, mostly in Europe. Its objectives are:

- to stand up for justice for minority or majority groups that are discriminated by monitoring their situation and publishing as many facts as possible on them, by educating the public and encouraging the public opinion over the world,
- by publishing the cases of breaching human rights we help to prevent such cases from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, after having been polarized, would be difficult to solve,
- on the ground of research, we support and disseminate international understanding of factors that lead to a biased attitude and tension among groups. We help in this way to increase consciousness regarding human rights in the world.

Minorities should be looked at as being a source of contacts and different traditions that may stimulate economic development and suppress conflicts. The above offers a broad sphere for further research.

The international arena is critically important for helping to ensure that states and minorities interact productively and peacefully. Each government needs to conclude binding bilatera

agreements with neighbouring states, mutually guaranteeing the rights of the relevant minorities and renouncing any latent territorial pretensions.

Simultaneously, binational or multi-national monitoring teams could be established to observe and report on the position of minorities in the states. Such arrangements would deflect charges that specific states were being singled out for special and unfair treatment or were being pressured to grant more rights to resident minorities than neighbours. Some moves in this direction have in fact already been taken in Slovakia.

In my report I have presented only a small, if substantial in its specificity, part of the questions which must be answered in the interest of democracy in Slovakia. Democracy is impossible without a civic society. In a civic society rights and interests of minorities are broadly applied. In addition to the Hungarian and Ruthenian minorities there are in Slovakia also the Romany, German and Czech minorities with their specific features.

At present, general democratic principles guaranteeing peaceful development of minorities are being declared in Slovakia. The legislature calls for an immediate revision, which would enable the minorities to fully realize the rights guaranteed to them.

In conclusion to my report, I cannot but state it is in the interest of Slovakia, a country in which Hungarians, Ruthenians/Ukrainians and Romany population live, to become a part of a broader European community. The way the Slovak Republic settles the question of national minorities will be partially determined also by the extent to which it is prepared to become a member of new Europe.

Although the proposals outlined above will not rapidly eliminate all the sources and manifestations of conflict in Slovakia, they can provide a certain basis for dialogue, compromise, and conflict reduction.

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