

## Minorities and the Media in Slovenia

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When addressing the issue of minorities and the media in Slovenia, we should take a look whether the structure of media landscape and the content of Slovene media make it possible to conclude that Slovenia is a culturally diverse (multicultural) country, in which, besides Slovenes, members of about ten other nations live traditionally or in substantial numbers? Is it possible to conclude, with regard to cultural and media policies, that the public authorities in Slovenia pay attention to this? Despite the regulated status and rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the recent attempts to regulate the status of the Roma community, and the efforts of some governmental bodies, a number of political decisions, systemic measures and actions are still required before the above questions can be answered positively.

### 1. Normative framework

Starting from the normative framework we should mention that the Constitution of Slovenia<sup>1</sup> recognises two *autochthonous national communities*, Italian and Hungarian. Number of special rights are granted to them according to the Article 64 of the Constitution, including the right to develop activities in the field of public information and publishing. The Article includes the provision that “the state financially and morally supports implementation of these rights”. Also constitutional and legislative provision is made for Italian and Hungarian language to enjoy equal status with Slovene for administrative, judicial and other purposes in certain parts of the country. In the field of broadcasting for instance, not only affirmation of the right to broadcast programming and advertising in Italian and Hungarian is provided, but also the obligation of proficiency in Slovenian language for certain editorial positions is removed for individuals aspiring to these positions in broadcasting organisations whose linguistic area of activity is Hungarian or Italian.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.us-rs.si> (accessed on 15 March 2006).

According to the Article 65 of the Constitution, status and special rights should be provided by the law to the Roma *community* in Slovenia, but such law hasn't been adopted so far. However, recent media regulation such as Mass Media Act from 2001 obliges the state to provide support for dissemination of programming important to exercise the right to public information of Roma community (among other explicitly mentioned groups).

Other ethnic minorities that also live in Slovenia, such as those belonging to nations of former Yugoslav Federation (Albanians, Bosnian Muslims, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs) or Germans, are not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. Consequently, their minority protection is not regulated.

## 2. Ethnic composition of Slovene population

According to 2002 census, the total population in Slovenia is 1,964,036. The ethnic composition of Slovene population is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Ethnic composition of Slovene population from 2002 census**

<b>Ethnic affiliation*</b>	<b>Number of declared persons</b>	<b>Percentage of total population</b>
Slovenes	1,631,363	83,06
Serbs	35,642	1,81
Croats	32,189	1,63
Bosniaks**	21,542	1,10
Muslims***	10,647	0,53
Bosnians	8,062	0,41
Hungarians	6,243	0,32
Albanians	6,186	0,31
Macedonians	3,972	0,20
Roma	3,624	0,17
Montenegrins	2,667	0,14
Italians	2,258	0,11
....	....	....
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1,964,036</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Census of Population, Households and Housing, Slovenia, March 31, 2003.<sup>2</sup>

\* Included those ethnic affiliations exceeding the number of 1,000 declared members.

\*\* Declaration for a Bosniak as a nation was enforced by the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994.

\*\*\* In the sense of ethnic and not religious affiliation.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.stat.si/popis2002/gradivo/si-92.pdf> (accessed on 17 March 2006).

### **3. Minority media landscape**

We will now present the minority media landscape in Slovenia, describing the profile of minority media organisations and the outlets. Special attention will be paid to the state financial support to the minority media in Slovenia.

#### **3.1 Media for Italian and Hungarian minorities**

We should start with the minority programming within the public service broadcasting Radiotelevision Slovenia. According to the new law on Radiotelevision Slovenia, passed on 12 November 2005, the RTV Slovenia is “a public institution of special cultural and national importance performing public service in the field of radio and television activities with the intention of fulfilling democratic, social and cultural needs of the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenians abroad, Slovenian national minorities in Italy, Austria and Hungary, Italian and Hungarian national communities in the Republic of Slovenia”.

According to the law the public service of RTV Slovenia includes among other channels and programmes also creation, reparation, archiving and broadcasting of one radio and one TV programme for the Italian and the Hungarian national communities respectively.

One radio and one television programme for Italian national community and the same for Hungarian national community have been produced regularly within RTV Slovenia. The programmes for Italian community are performed since 1971 through regional centre in Koper, including Radio Koper/Capodistria and Television Koper/Capodistria.

For Hungarian minority there is RTV studio in Lendava (firstly established in 1992; the new one was built in 2004), producing television and radio programmes. RTV Slovenia also has two programme boards for Italian and Hungarian minorities. Besides providing programming for Italian and Hungarian minorities, RTV Slovenia has also devoted a section on special interest programmes in its ethical code “Professional Standards and Ethical Principles of Journalism in the Programs of RTV Slovenija”<sup>3</sup>. According to that document, RTV Slovenia should “devote pertinent attention to the life and situation of both autochthonous ethnic minorities in Slovenia, as well as to other ethnic groups living here. /.../ The coverage of issues concerning ethnic minorities and groups must also be one of the major focuses of prime time news and current affairs programs of RTV Slovenia.”

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.rtv slo.si> (accessed on 17 March 2006).

The Governmental Office for National Minorities provides certain funds for programming and occasionally also for technical infrastructure for programming for Italian and Hungarian minorities within RTV Slovenia, but according to the reports of RTV Slovenia the majority of funding is provided by RTV Slovenia itself from licence fee and advertising. In 2004 the total governmental funding for minority programming and building of RTV studio in Lendava for Hungarian minority within RTV Slovenia was around 325 million of Slovene tolar (approx. 1.35 million of EUR).

The signal of TV Koper/Capodistria that produces eight hours of Italian language programme daily also reaches neighbouring Croatia and Italy. Radio Capodistria started airing in 1949 and had until 1954 aired programme in three languages: Slovene, Croatian and Italian. From 1954 to 1979 the programme was mainly Italian and in 1979 programs split on two transmitters. Radio Koper/Capodistria nowadays airs 14 hours of Italian language programme intended for Italian minorities living in Slovenia and Croatia.

According to the management of Italian language radio and television programmes, the programmes face problems since human and financial resources are rather low. The Hungarian language programme production is also facing problems with lack of adequate human resources.

Apart from radio and television programmes within the public institution RTV Slovenia Hungarian and Italian national minorities also publish print media. Newspaper La Voce del Popolo for Italian minority living in Slovenia and Croatia is published in Rijeka, Croatia in 4,000 copies. It is jointly funded by Slovenian and Croatian government. The Slovenian government provided in 2004 around 25 million of Slovene tolar for publishing of La Voce del Popolo (approx. 104 thousands of EUR). The amount is supposed to cover 20 % of the publishing costs.

The Hungarian minority in Slovenia publishes several print media among which weekly newspaper Nepujsag is financed by the Slovenian government. Its circulation is around 1,800 copies, and the governmental contribution is around 59 million of Slovene tolar (approx. 245 thousands of EUR).

### **3.2 Media for Roma community**

As we can see from the above mentioned new law on Radiotelevision Slovenia, its mission statement described in the first article of the law doesn't explicitly mention the Roma community and other ethnic minorities. Such provision was adopted despite the proposals from the Roma Association and the Peace Institute to explicitly mention at least Roma community in that article.

However, according to the law adopted in 2005, public service of RTV Slovenia includes – among other channels and programmes also creation, reparation, archiving and broadcasting of “one radio and TV programme for each the Italian and the Hungarian national communities” and “radio and TV broadcasts for the Roma community”.

It is for the first time since establishment of RTV Slovenia that the public service broadcasting includes radio and TV broadcasts for Roma community. The launch of these broadcasts will take place after the period of training of programming staff from the Roma community at the RTV Slovenia Training Centre, and hopefully will happen during 2006.

Roma community in Slovenia publishes several newsletters and journals such as Romano Them, Romano Nevijpe, etc. There are also several radio and television broadcasts for Roma ethnic community in Slovenia. Local radio station Murski Val in Murska Sobota for many years produces a weekly broadcast called “Romskih 60”. Several years ago similar weekly broadcast for Roma community in Novo Mesto started to be produced by local radio station Studio D.

There are also regular televisions broadcasts for Roma community in both above mention regional centers – Murska Sobota and Novo Mesto - produced by two local television stations. Production of these radio and television broadcasts are financed by the Governmental Office for National Minorities. In 2004, around 11 million of Slovene tolar (approx. 46 thousands EUR) was provided by the Government for production of radio and television broadcasts for Roma community by local radio and television stations. Most of these radio and television broadcasts are produced by non-Roma staff, except for Murski Val in Murska Sobota. But in all cases executive and editorial decisions with regard to the production and spending of governmental funds within these stations are taken without participation of Roma.

However there are three radio broadcasts produced by members of Roma community, but those are not receiving regular funding for production costs from the Government. Two of them are produced within student radio stations in Ljubljana and Maribor. In both these cities Roma community members have origin in former republics of Yugoslav Federation, therefore the Government doesn't consider them "autochthonous" and exclude their media activities from state support provided through the Governmental Office for National Minorities. The third one is produced within the Roma Information Centre, ROMIC, which was established in 2003 within headquarter of the Roma Association in Murska Sobota. Their weekly broadcasts are produced by Roma staff that has been trained by the Peace Institute trainers. The funding for radio production of ROMIC is mainly provided by non-governmental organisation Medienhilfe from Switzerland which is managing the Open Society Institute funds aimed at Roma media in Europe. The Medienhilfe's grant to Roma radio production is managed by the ROMIC staff, all of them being members of Roma community. The Governmental Office for National Minorities provided some funding for operations of ROMIC, mainly for purchase of small office in 2003. In 2005, the Ministry of Culture within its annual call for applications for state support for programme production and technical infrastructure for programming approved for the first time a funding for radio broadcasts for Roma community produced by ROMIC.

The main problem of the weekly radio broadcast produced by ROMIC is dissemination since they still operate without terrestrial radio frequencies. The broadcast is aired by some other radio stations, through cable TV network and through internet. Although ROMIC has applied for radio frequencies, the responsible authorities hasn't recognised their need and efforts and didn't grant them the frequency yet.

### **3.3 Media for Other Minorities**

Although without constitutional recognition and normative framework for minority protection, some activities for preservation of culture and identity of so called non-autochthonous minorities with origins from the republics of former Yugoslav Federation, have also been modestly and hesitantly financed from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture. Some of these activities are related to publishing of newsletters, journals, online publications and similar media-like outlets. For instance, Bosniak community regularly publishes a newsletter Bošnjak and an online publication, Croatian minority is also publishing a newsletter Pušlek, Serbian community is publishing a cultural journal Besede, Macedonian

community is preparing for launch its online publication etc. These communities are often categorized by the state bodies as “immigrant communities” although they oppose to such categorization and officially request status of national minorities, establishment of normative framework and adequate measures for their minority protection.

Within the same financial framework of the Ministry of Culture some funding is occasionally provided to media-related activities of German language minority also.

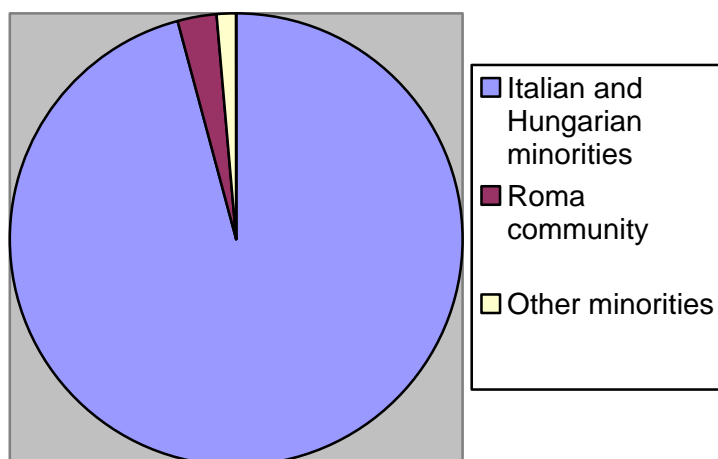
For the comparison we will at the end present the shares of state funding provided in 2004 to different minority communities in Slovenia for their media activities:

**Table 2:  
State funding in 2004 for media activities of minority communities in Slovenia**

<b>Minority community</b>	<b>State funding in 2004 in Slovene tolar (EUR)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Source</b>
Italian and Hungarian minorities	225.845.000 (approx. 941.000 EUR)	Radio and television programmes within RTV Slovenia	Governmental Office for National Minorities
Hungarian minority	100.000.000 (approx. 416.000 EUR)	Building of radio and television studio in Lendava within RTV Slovenia	Governmental Office for National Minorities
Italian minority	25.970.000 (approx. 104.000 EUR)	Newspaper La Voce del Popolo	Governmental Office for National Minorities
Hungarian minority	59.528.000 (approx. 245.000 EUR)	Newspaper Nepujsag	Governmental Office for National Minorities
<b>SUB TOTAL Italian and Hungarian minorities</b>	<b>411.343.000 (approx. 1.7 million EUR)</b>		
Roma community (indirectly)	11.210.000 (approx. 46.700 EUR)	Radio and television broadcasts at local radio and television stations Murski Val, Studio D, TV As and TV Novo Mesto.	Governmental Office for National Minorities
Roma community	1.050.000 (approx. 4.375 EUR)	Newsletter Romano them in Murska Sobota	Ministry of Culture
Roma community	300.000 (approx. 1.250 EUR)	Newsletter Romano glauso v Borejcih	Ministry of Culture
<b>SUB TOTAL Roma community</b>	<b>12.560.000 (approx. 52.325 EUR)</b>		

Bosniak community	2.500.000 (approx. 10.400 EUR)	Newsletter Bošnjak, online publication BIP-Bošnjaški internetni portal, newsletter Glas Sandžaka	Ministry of Culture
Serbian community	2.650.000 (approx. 11.000 EUR)	Newsletter Kontakt, journal Beseda, newsletter Mostovi	Ministry of Culture
Croatian community	450.000 (approx. 1.875 EUR)	Newsletter Glasilo	Ministry of Culture
<b>SUB TOTAL Other minorities (from former Yugoslav Federation)</b>	<b>5.600.000 (approx. 23.275 EUR)</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>429.503.000 (approx. 1.77 million EUR)</b>		

**Chart 1:**  
**State funding in 2004 for media activities of minority communities in Slovenia**  
 (data from Table 2)




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Sources: Governmental Office for National Minorities and 2004 Annual Report of Ministry of Culture.



#### **4. Conclusion**

In Slovenia, every government so far and the public opinion have had a problem with their readiness to acknowledge that we are a culturally diverse society and that in view of this it is necessary to reformulate public policies, normative framework including the Constitution, institutions, curricula, political and civil culture, and – why not - also the definition of the Slovene national identity.

The minority, cultural and media policies must therefore be harmonised and interwoven in such a way that it becomes clear to the public and in particular to minority communities who is responsible for the media integration of minorities in Slovenia and what are the goals. At the moment, this is partly the Governmental Office for National Minorities, but exclusively for the Italian, Hungarian and the Roma communities (i.e. its so called “autochthonous” part), and partly the Ministry of Culture via the department for the cultural activities of the Italian and Hungarian communities, the Roma community, other minority communities and immigrants. Furthermore, it is necessary to change the policy of exclusion into a policy of inclusion and offer equal access to the media, in particular to the public service broadcasting, and to the public resources such as frequencies and budgetary funds based on equal criteria for all the minorities in Slovenia.

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