

Ensuring and protecting the rights of national minorities in the Visegrad countries (on the example of Slovakia)¹

Nadiia Kichera²

<https://doi.org/10.25167/ppbs1850>

Abstract:

The main research objective of the study presented in this article was the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic, one of the V4 countries, namely the legislative base and the institutional ensuring the functioning of a system of protection of the national and ethnic minorities' rights. Slovakia is one of the postsocialist countries that has made the transition to democracy on the way to joining the European Union. The country's authorities conducted a series of reforms in the ethnopolitical sphere in accordance with European standards. An ethnopolitical picture and separate ethnopolitical challenges in the Slovak Republic are similar, especially in the border areas. Thus, the main goal of the ethnopolitics of Slovakia is to secure the rights of all minorities, interethnic tolerance and ensure the intercultural dialogue. Representatives of national and ethnic minorities in the Slovak Republic have a number of rights and opportunities, directly dependent on citizens whether they can organize themselves and use existing mechanisms for the benefit of their own community. In addition, the state's ethnopolitical strategy provides bilateral cooperation with the homelands of individual minorities. The bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia is one of the examples. Bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic in the field of protection and ensuring of minority rights is based on the work of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission for National Minorities, Education and Culture. The recommendations of the commission are an important tool for constructive dialogue between Slovakia and Ukraine, ensuring good neighborly relations.

Keywords:

Visegrad four, Slovak Republic, ethnopolitics, national minority, ethnopolitical management

Citation (APA):

Kichera, N. (2020). Ensuring and protecting the rights of national minorities in the Visegrad countries (on the example of Slovakia). *Pogranicze. Polish Borderlands Studies*, 8(1), 21-38.

Introduction

The European Union, especially the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, have always played an important role for Ukraine. At the same time, the V4 countries are a successful example of the integration into the EU of the states

1 The article is written in the framework of scholarship of the Visegrad Fund.

2 Nadiia Kichera, PhD (ORCID: 0000-0002-4998-7526) – Department of Political Sciences and Public Administration, Uzhhorod National University, e-mail: nadiia.kichera@uzhnu.edu.ua

with a socialist past. The Visegrad Group is the important stabilizing element for Ukraine that is interested in establishing friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation in the sphere of politics, economy and culture (Wawrzonek 2014). An equally important sphere, which can serve as an example for Ukraine, is the ethnopolitics of the V4 countries. Ethnopolitics is understood as the legislative and institutional base, ensuring the functioning of a system of protection of rights of national and ethnic minorities. In general, issues of ethnicity and race are extremely relevant in Europe. First of all, this is due to the multi-ethnicity of the countries and active migration processes. At the same time, the peculiarities of national policies regulating citizenship and ethnicity, the official use of relevant categories are different in European countries. The Visegrad countries' legislation provides minorities the right for the development of their culture and enables them to distribute and receive information in their native language, create national societies and establish educational and cultural institutions (Agarin & Regelmann 2012; Ganowicz 2015; Łodziński 2005; Mazurkiewicz 2015; Petsinis 2019; Ram 2003; Vermeersch 2003).

An example of V4 countries in the sphere of ethnopolitics is definitely valuable for Ukraine, which concerns not only legal and regulatory norms and guarantees, but also practical mechanisms of functioning and the implementation of ethnonational concepts. An ethnopolitical picture and separate ethnopolitical challenges in the Slovak Republic are close to Ukrainian realities (Csergo 2002; Tesser 2003, Vermeersch 2003; Zenderowski 2017). The Slovak Republic is one of the Visegrad countries that has a common border with Ukraine and also shares similar tendencies and discussion questions in the ethnopolitical plane, especially in the regional dimension, in particular, the question of Hungarian, Roma minorities, as well as Rusyns (Ruthenians), who are compactly living in the east of Slovakia (Duleba & Dulebova 2015; Kokaisl 2017). These questions are also relevant in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine. However, despite the existence of a number of legislative and non-legislative documents in the field of the state ethnopolitics, there is no law on national minorities that would clearly define the concepts of national and ethnic minorities nor does it specify the criteria for their classification. This issue is currently being updated. During the meeting of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups in November 2019, the draft law on national minorities was discussed. The Committee has indicated the need for broad public discussion of the project as the main task ('O krok bližšie k menšinovému zákonu').

The main aim of the article is to analyze key aspects of the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic, including legislative documents in the field of national

ethnopolitics that have been adopted since Slovakia became a separate state, as well as current non-legislative acts on minorities that have been adopted in recent years. The ethnopolitical course depends on the peculiarities of his vision by the authorities. In this context, the Slovak Republic is a non-exception. Slovak ethnopolitics has undergone a number of reforms, especially during the period of democratic transformations. That's why an exacerbation of relations between the authorities and representatives of national minorities is the characteristic of Slovak ethnopolitics. However, in the process of democratic transformation on the EU integration path, as well as at the present stage, Slovakia has formed its own model of positive integration of national minorities into Slovak society while preserving their identity.

Systematic and institutional approaches were used to analyze the basis of Slovakia's ethnopolitics, including legal framework and ethnopolitical management. It is also appropriate to use discourse analysis. It is used to determine the theoretical aspects of the research issues and the realities of its implementation in practice, in particular in the field of protection the cultural and humanitarian minorities' rights. Among the researchers of the problems of legislative, institutional support of minorities' rights in Slovakia, its implementation in various spheres of the lives of minorities, we can name: N. Lazar, M. Zan, L. Boronova, M. Musinka, A. Musinka, A. Duleba, M. Guy and others.

Since the establishment of the Slovak Republic as an independent state, the sphere of national ethnopolitics has undergone a number of changes. Beginning in the 1990s, a number of laws, amendments and non-legislative documents regulating the national rights of minorities in Slovakia were adopted. The institutional base of Slovak ethnopolitics has also undergone significant changes. Changes in the state's ethnopolitics depended, first and foremost, on the political authority. Likewise, an important factor in the period of democratic transformation was the country's EU integration course. During Mikuláš Dzurinda's term as prime minister, the country's EU integration course was established in the direction of full membership. Some tensions in the relationship between the authorities and national minorities can be observed during the terms of Prime Ministers V. Mečiar and R. Fico. This applies especially to the Hungarian minority, which is the most politically active in Slovakia. The main causes of dissatisfaction or criticism from minorities were: lack of a law on national minorities, specific amendments to existing laws restricting the rights of minorities, statements and policies of individual politicians or statements regarding minorities, peculiarities of functioning of institutions dealing with national minorities, financing of minorities activities, etc.

The formation process of Slovak ethnopolitics was quite complicated and controversial. During V. Mečiar's term as prime minister, the Law on Slovak language was adopted. The Law provided penalties for not using the Slovak language. The educational process of national minorities was changed and the financing of minorities' cultural and educational programs have been reduced. These changes were the causes of dissatisfaction of national minorities, especially the Hungarians in Slovakia (Drapak 2018). The Hungarian minority also expressed dissatisfaction with the work of the Council on National Minorities. The Council didn't properly represent national minorities, and its work was only advisory and consultative (Dostal 1998). The situation changed after the 1998 elections. The previous language law was changed. A new language law has been adopted. This law allowed for the official use of minority languages in places of their compact residence. Hungarian political representation - Party of the Hungarian Community advocated positive changes in ethnopolitics, supported V. Mečiar's reforms in the economic sphere and in government. Robert Fico's coming to power is characterized by a new aggravation of relations with national minorities, in particular regarding amendments to the language law. After the 2010 elections, the ethnopolitical picture in the country has become stable again. New changes in language law were made, and the required percentage of minority living was reduced to 15% for official language use.

The legal and institutional background of the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic

In view of the effective reforms of Slovak ethnopolitics in recent years, we can state that the policy of the Slovak Republic concerning national minorities is effective and consistent. According to the data of a census of 2011, ethnic Slovaks make up 80.7% of the population of the country which is almost 5% less compared with 2001 census data. National minorities in the SR are Hungarians, Germans, Rusyns, Ukrainians, in total 13 minorities which during the last censuses presented in the list of nationalities.

To the basic regulatory and legal acts in the sphere of protection of the national rights of minorities belong the international documents ratified by the state: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National minorities, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as well as national legislation: the Constitution of Slovakia, the Law of National Council of the Slovak Republic on the use of languages of national minorities, the Law on Funds for supporting the culture of national minorities and about changes and additions to some laws, some sectoral laws, in particular the Law about the Slovak television,

the Law about the Slovak radio and others. According to the existing legislation of the Slovak Republic, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups, their all-round development is guaranteed, the right for development of the cultural heritage is provided, receiving and dissemination of information in the native language, creation of associations, the organizations, educational and cultural institutions (Constitution 1992). What's more, representatives of national minorities are granted the right to study in their native language and use it in official communication (Zákón č. 184/1999).

In 1999, the Law of the SR on the Use of Languages of National Minorities was adopted (Zákón č. 184/1999; with amendments and additions in 2009, 2011, 2012), considering requirements of the Framework Convention and the European charter of regional languages or languages of minorities mentioned above. According to this law, Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Rusyn and Ukrainian languages are recognized as languages of national minorities. At the same time, the Slovak legislation does not contain an official list of minorities.

On December 8, 2010, the National Council of the Slovak Republic has adopted the special Law on granting subsidies by the government of the Slovak Republic, including, for the development of the culture of national minorities (Zákón č. 524/2010). This state assistance is allocated for preservation, manifestation, development, protection of identity and cultural property of national minorities, the sphere of cross-cultural and international dialogue. According to this, the electronic system of subsidies is developed. The first position in terms of the amount of financing is held by Hungarian, Roma and Rusyn minorities.

In 2017, the Law on Funds for the Support of the Culture of National Minorities and about amendments and additions to some laws was adopted (Zákón z 10. mája 2017), with amendments and additions that came into force in 2018. During the preparation of this law, the Ministry of Culture of the SR established a special working group, whose members were ten representatives of national minorities who have undergone a thorough selection procedure. The purpose of this law was to create a public institution whose main aim is to promote and ensure cultural development and the activities of national minorities. The institution is independent in its decision-making and distribution of funds and should consult with representatives of national minorities.

In 2005, the Law on Political Parties and Movements was adopted in Slovakia (Zakon zo 4. februára 2005), which also affects the interests of national and ethnic minorities, namely the procedure of formation, registration, financing of parties of national minorities. At a re-registration of parties of minorities, it is

necessary to provide information about the property (residences) and the statutory body of the party, and financing. The political representation in accordance with the law can have only the most numerous minorities.

For a better acquaintance of national minorities with the legislation of the republic at the initiative of the Representative for affairs of national minorities, a special Consultative language group was established which, in cooperation with the Ministry of justice (Ministerstvo spravodlivosti), prepared the translations of the main priorities of the authorities in the sphere of development of national minorities. In January, 2019 the Memorandum of long-term cooperation between the Representative and the Ministry was signed for ensuring continuous translation of separate legal norms and amendments in the languages of national minorities on the portal Slo-lex ('Správa' 2017-2018).

According to the latest monitoring cycles of implementation of the Framework Convention, the Advisory Committee of the Framework Agreement has emphasized the need to pay more attention to questions, concerning the rights of minorities. They have to be solved in close cooperation with representatives of national minorities and representatives of civil society. The same concerns legal and institutional bases promoting equality of minorities. The particular emphasis was placed on a comprehensive solution of the problem of intolerance concerning Roma, in particular in education. It is about the recommendation of inclusion of the Roma children to the integrated classes. Special schools have to be provided only for specific exceptional cases. The important recommendation is intensifying the efforts of the authorities for effective protection of Roma against discrimination by raising awareness of their rights, with the appropriate monitoring by the police of all cases of discrimination. The Advisory Committee noted the need for broad involvement of national minorities, including the Roma, in public life, including their participation in political processes, as well as in the civil service ('Správa' 2017-2018).

In 2018, the fifth report on implementation of the European charter of regional languages or languages of minorities on the basis of the next monitoring cycle was discussed and accepted. The main recommendations within implementation of the Charter concern, in particular, the study of regional languages or languages of minorities at all levels, improvement of training of teachers which would conduct educational process at schools in regional languages or languages of minorities, increasing support of television, radio, press in minorities languages or regional languages. Emphasis is also placed on the Roma language and strengthening its use of the Roma minority in various spheres ('Správa' 2017-2018; Miškolci, Kováčová, & Kubánová 2017; Rochovská & Rusnáková 2018).

An equally important part of the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic is the practice of adopting non-legislative conceptual documents by the government of the state in the sphere of ensuring the rights of minorities for a certain period. Among such documents in recent years is the Action plan for protection of the rights of people, belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups for 2016-2020 is important, which was approved by the Government of the SR at its meeting on October 26, 2016.

In 2015, the government decree of the SR adopted the Concept of fight against extremism for 2015-2019. The report on realization and efficiency of which should be prepared by September, 2020 ('Správa' 2017-2018). The concept contains strategic priorities of the state in the sphere of prevention of radicalism, extremism and other negative social actions, democratic norms of prevention discrimination on the reason of sex, race, skin color, ethnic, national identity and so forth. The Action plan for prevention and elimination of racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and other forms of intolerance was one more conceptual document in the sphere of protection of the rights of minorities, adopted by the Government of the SR in 2016. Prevention of emergence of prejudices, stereotypes, manifestations of hostility on the basis of national, racial, ethnic, religious and other forms of intolerance was the purpose of the document. A similar type of document is the Action plan for prevention of all forms of discrimination in 2016-2019. The main purpose of the document is to increase the level of public awareness about non-discrimination and rationalization of application of the anti-discrimination legislation ('Akčný plan' 2016-2019).

An important question in the sphere of ethnopolitics of the SR is a problem of integration of Roma. For this purpose, in 2012, the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for integration of Roma till 2020 was adopted, the purpose of which is to improve the protection of Roma from discrimination and the unequal attitude ('Strategia Slovenskej republiky' 2011). Within strategy realization, the action plans were adopted to facilitate integration of Roma in different spheres, namely education, employment, health care, the housing sphere as well as financing.

Along with the legal and regulatory ensuring of the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic, an effectively working system of institutional ensuring of ethno-national policy functions in the state exists. During the different periods, since 1990s, various political and administrative institutions functioned in Slovakia. Its competence included the protection of the rights of representatives of various ethnic communities.

A constant advisory body of the central level in the sphere of ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic is the Council of the Government of the SR on issue of

human rights, national minorities and gender equality (functioned under different names; Rada vlády SR pre ľudské práva, národnostné menšiny a rodovú rovnosť 2019), whose competence includes the protection of economic, social and cultural, individual and collective rights. As a part of Council work Committee on the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, and also Committee on prevention and elimination of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance ('Rada vlády SR pre ľudské práva, národnostné menšiny a rodovú rovnosť 2019). An important element of ethno-political management in Slovakia is the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for national minorities ('Splnomocnenec vlády SR pre národnostné menšiny' 2019), as well as the Fund for supporting the culture of national minorities. Advisory bodies for minorities function at various ministries. Thus, at the Ministry of Culture, the section of cultures of minorities works, whose duty is the organizational and financial support of cultural development of various ethnic communities, at the Ministry of schools – Council on schools of national minorities ('Štatút Rady ministra školstva' 2019), which includes representatives of national minorities.

The Council of the Government of the SR on the issue of human rights, national minorities and gender equality is electoral, advisory, coordinating and consultative body of the Government of the SR in the sphere of protection of basic rights and freedom of the person, including political and civil rights, the rights of person belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, the rights for protection of the living environment and cultural heritage, the rights of children, people with special needs, ensuring gender equality ('Rada vlády Slovenskej republiky pre ľudské práva, národnostné menšiny a rodovú rovnosť 2019). The Council has to provide also international relations and the rights of national minorities within own state on the basis of implementation of all ratified international agreements, protocols where the SR is the contractual party.

The important mechanism of participation of representatives of national minorities in decision-making concerning national minorities is the Committee on the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups ('Výbor pre národnostné menšiny a etnické skupiny' 2019). It is a permanent advisory body of Council of the government of the SR on issues of human rights, national minorities and gender equality. In the Committee 13, national minorities are presented. Representatives are elected directly by the organizations of minorities. The main tasks of the Committee are to consider legislative and non-legislative actions of the government or public authorities, territorial self-government or other subjects concerning the rights of national minorities. The committee provides its

conclusions, offers, statements, and also elaborates reports on the use of languages, cultural development, condition of education of national minorities.

The duties of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities include preservation, support and development of the rights of representatives of minorities. In his work, the Plenipotentiary is guided by the Statute of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for national minorities. The Plenipotentiary has the mandate of the member of Council of the SR on Issues of human rights, national minorities and gender equality while, at the same time, it performs functions of the Chairman of the Committee on the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups. For ensuring activity of the Plenipotentiary the office of the Plenipotentiary which is included into the structure of the Government of the SR is created. Members of the office of the Plenipotentiary for national minorities are elected people dealing with issues of separate national minorities. The office of the Plenipotentiary also performs functions of the secretariat of Committee on questions of national minorities and ethnic groups.

Monitoring of the legislation of the country, the adopted amendments regarding their relevance and effectiveness belongs to the main objectives of the Plenipotentiary. Besides, the Plenipotentiary cooperates with the media for the purpose of informing the public about national minorities and ethnic groups and also in order to avoid possible manifestations of intolerance, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, antigypsyism (slov. *anticigánizm*).

One of important fields of activity of the institute of the Plenipotentiary is to ensure effective functioning of a system of distribution of subvention for cultural development of national minorities. The program "Culture of National Minorities", which is approved by the government of the SR, is developed for this purpose. The Plenipotentiary for ensuring high-quality and effective functioning of this institute, which would correspond to real needs of minorities, also holds regular meetings with representatives of minorities for guaranteeing their progressing development or, at least, for maintaining the current state of national language, culture, schools of minorities.

One of the institutional mechanisms of Slovak ethnopolitics is the functioning of bilateral interstate commissions on national minorities. Within the framework of the implementation of international standards of protection of the rights of minorities for ensuring their prosperity, the Slovak Republic develops bilateral cooperation with the certain countries, including Ukraine and Hungary. For example, the bilateral cooperation with Ukraine is carried out on the basis of the agreement between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on neighborliness, friendly relations and cooperation (of June 29, 1993). Since 1994, the intergovernmental

bilateral commission, the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian commission on questions of national minorities, education and culture began to work (since 2003 updated name; 'Správa' 2017-2018). The Commission deals with the problems of the Slovak national minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian national minority in Slovakia, carries out continuous monitoring of bilateral cooperation in the sphere of culture, education, science, media of national minorities etc. The recommendations of the commission are the important instrument of dialogue between Slovakia and Ukraine providing good neighborly relations.

The Commission also formulates recommendations for the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and establishes informal contacts between the individual ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic controls the implementation of tasks which are formulated as a result of the Commission's work. The Commission also monitors the bilateral programs in the field of culture, cooperation in education, science, research, mass media, exchanges of Slovak radio and television programs with media partners in Ukraine. Ukraine and Slovakia actively cooperate in the implementation of a number of programs and projects within the framework of the EU, the Council of Europe, and others.

Elected in 2019, the president of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Caputova decided to cooperate with representatives of national minorities through an expert advisory committee with which constant meetings will be held. Thus, the Hungarian minority will be represented by Ilona Nemeth, the historian, the representative of Academy of Arts, Attila Simon - the director of the Forum institute for researches of minorities. Rusyn minority will be represented by Anna Pliskova - director of the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture and Peter Medvid - a representative of the Round Table of Rusyn and member of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. Representatives of the Roma minority will be Jurina Rusnakova - chairman of the Institute for Romological Research (Nitra), Viktor Teru from the Fund of education of Roma. Other minorities will be presented by the director of the Center of researches of ethnic and cultural origin Elena Gallova Kriglerova ('Čaputová predstavila' 2019).

Language and educational policies towards ethnic minorities in Slovakia

As it was already mentioned above, in 1999 the Law of the SR on use of languages of national minorities was adopted (Zákon č. 184 1999). The law provides a clear list of languages of national minorities. Besides, in 2015 in Slovakia, the process of parallel recognition of Russian and Serbian languages as

languages of minorities took place ('Správa' 2015). The law provides to minorities, who live for an extended amount of time in a certain region, the right to use their native language in the official sphere. Specialized dictionaries, in particular Hungarian, Rusyn and Roma were further developed to facilitate and simplify this process ('Odborné terminologické slovníky' 2019). Under the influence of the Council of Europe a 15% barrier was set for the official use of languages of national minorities, on condition of its preservation during two national censuses in places of compact residence. With the exception of bilingual names of settlements of a compact residence of national minorities, vital information is duplicated in languages of national minorities. Currently, to facilitate the work of civil servants and translators, who deal with languages of minorities in daily communication special glossaries are elaborated, which is a database of the most commonly used terms and phrases in various spheres of life, including public administration and local government. These are Slovak-Hungarian, Slovak-Roma, Slovak-Rusyn and Slovak-Ukrainian specialized dictionaries ('Správa' 2016).

An important question for national minorities is development of not only language, but also education. Teaching of representatives of national minorities is carried out in kindergartens, schools of different levels. According to the Slovak legislation, children and students who are representatives of national minorities are guaranteed, that education in schools and classes, where studying, is provided in the language of the corresponding national minority. In schools and classes where one of subject matters is language of national minority, language of studying of other subjects is the state language. In addition, separate subjects can be taught in minority languages (Zákon z 22. mája 2008).

It should be noted that in 2008, a new school law was adopted in the SR, to which additions were made in 2011 (Zákon z 22. mája 2008). According to this act, for representatives of ethnic, national minorities, the question of the equation of a number of hours, allocated for studying of Slovak language and literature and the native language was the most painful. The most active were the political and public organizations of the Hungarians, who emphasized the acceleration of assimilation processes after the enactment of this law. Some authors, in particular Marek Gaj, consider rather illusive prospects, for example the Rusyn school, taking into account the Slovakization of the Rusyn young generation (Gaj 2012)

In this context, school education of national minorities is especially important. At the same time, studying not only the language, but also traditions and the history of the people is important. The network of schools and other educational institutions, where languages of national minorities are studied or the language of minority is the language of studying includes kindergartens, of which

nearly 12% do not use Slovak as the language of studying, or the study is conducted in two languages ('The list of schools' 2019). The Hungarian national minority has the largest number of kindergartens. As for elementary school, in 2016, the number of elementary schools in comparison with 2015 slightly decreased, in 2018 their number is 256 schools ('Správa' 2017-2018). About 12.5% of schools use Hungarian, Ukrainian, German and other languages of national minorities as the language of study. In this area of education, Hungarians are the most numerous and the most active minority, and they also have considerable advantage. The following section of school education, presented by secondary schools, contains about 40 schools with a non-Slovak language of studying. At the same time, there are no schools with Rusyn and Roma languages of studying. Also, this area of education has the most bilingual schools. Among gymnasiums the majority are also bilingual. Hungarians also have the largest number of gymnasiums where there are gymnasiums with English language teaching, and one gymnasium is in Ukrainian. Among bilingual gymnasiums English prevails. There are also bilingual gymnasiums with Spanish, German, French and other languages of teaching ('Správa' 2015). The priority area of financing is the support of development of regional education and ensuring cross-cultural dialogue in the Slovak society.

With regard to higher education, the educational process is also provided in several languages of national minorities, in particular at such universities as Comenius University in Bratislava, University of Presov, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica and others.

According to the Slovak legislation, languages of national minorities have a wide range of functional use at the present stage - in the media, everyday life (family), political sphere, theatre and literary sphere, however, there are also disadvantages in this sphere. The key role in the cultural development of national minorities was played by the program of subvention of the government of the SR. Considerable funds are allocated for media, broadcasting, theaters, museums, libraries of national minorities, and the maintenance of traditions.

Ethnic minorities and the media

The significant role in national and cultural development of ethnic communities is played by media. The number of periodical or non-periodical publications in languages of national minorities in Slovakia is not limited. Hungarians have the most periodicals (Vincze & Harwood 2012), Czech, German and other national minorities have much less. Besides, in Slovakia, bilingual

periodicals are financed where also the Hungarian national minority has an advantage. For example, Rusyn have three periodicals - *Folk novelties (Narodni novynky)*, *Rusyn, Artos*; Ukrainians two - *New life (Nove zhyttia)* and *Rainbow (Veselka)*. In addition, there are publications in Rusyn and Slovak languages (*InfoRusyn, Blahovisnyk, Holos Rusyna*), as well as in Ukrainian and Slovak (SUREC). At present, periodical and non-periodical publications of national minorities receive grant financing in the framework of the program of subvention Culture of National Minorities ('Správa' 2015). Despite the fact that at the basis of distribution of state financing there was an objective criterion of the number of representatives of minorities, such policy is considered unfair by some representatives of the Rusyn movement, as such that stimulates assimilation of ethnic communities which are not numerous and influential, from the point of view of political subjectivity, as, for example, Hungarians.

The state support is provided to the broadcasting of national minorities in the native language provided by the Law on radio and television of Slovakia and about amendments to some acts (Zákon o Rozhlase a televízii 2010). For ensuring production and broadcasting of programs in languages of national minorities, a separate organizational unit of Slovak radio and television has been created, namely – The broadcasting center of national minorities. There are separate radio stations with broadcasting of national minorities (Radio Patriia, Radio Rezhina and also private - Radio the Rusyn FM, Radio Roma). In Kosice, the broadcasting of national minorities is functioning. The editorial office in Kosice provides 17 hours of broadcasting a week in six languages of national minorities, including Rusyn, Ukrainian, Roma, and others. (Správa... 2015). Important changes in broadcast, for example, Rusyn and Ukrainian broadcasting took place between 2015 - 2016. It was filled with topical information programs with a wider thematic range.

In the Slovak Republic actively functions television of national minorities. The broadcasting center of national minorities broadcasts daily half-hour programs devoted to national minorities on the Dvojka channel. Weekly broadcasts of programs of national minorities (Hungarian, Roma, Rusyn, alternate with Ukrainian) and also programs of less numerous national minorities - German, Czech, Russian, Polish, Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian. Jewish programs are broadcast in Slovak. All programs of national minorities on TV channels are devoted to community, cultural life and language of minority. All TV shows for national minorities are followed by subtitles in Slovak and prepared by representatives of the corresponding minorities ('Správa' 2015).

Conclusion

The practice shows the importance of the existence of an effective system of protection of the rights of national and ethnic minorities. Thus, the Slovak Republic is a progressive example in the sphere of ethnopolitics. Practice shows the importance and need of existence of the relevant constitutional legal safeguards for representatives of national, ethnic minorities and indigenous people. The functional combination of national and international law is effective in this case. The European Union pays considerable attention to the protection of human rights, including the national rights of minorities. This requirement is clearly stated in the Copenhagen criteria or the so-called EU “accession criteria.” Adaptation of the legal and institutional framework of the system for the protection of national minority rights in the Slovak Republic took place precisely on the path of integrating the country into the European Union.

Of course, Central European countries are not deprived of problems and controversial issues in the ethno-political plane. In Slovakia, for example, these are the Roma, Rusyn or Hungarian question. However, they show effective mechanisms in the direction of dissemination and implementation of the policy of multiculturalism. One of the important ethno-identification factors for any community is the language. Public use of languages of national minorities in the Slovak Republic is provided in all spheres of social, cultural and political life of national minorities. Slovakia provides minorities with opportunities for humanitarian development and political participation and cooperates with the homelands of a number of national minorities. Generally, efforts of the Slovak authorities in this sphere are aimed at strengthening the policy of understanding and reconciliation of citizens of Slovakia of all nationalities. Representatives of national minorities have large possibilities and rights, although it depends on citizens whether they can organize themselves and to benefit from them.

The analysis of the legal and institutional framework of the ethnopolitics of the Slovak Republic shows the high legal level of protection of national and ethnic minority rights in the country. The main goal of Slovak ethnopolitics is to ensure intercultural dialogue in society, cultural, educational, linguistic, religious, and political rights of minorities. To this aim, appropriate legal acts have been adopted on the eve of Slovakia's accession to the EU. Functional institutions have been established in subsequent years. In order to update the ethno-political course of the state and its correspondence to the urgent needs of time in the field of securing the rights of minorities, non-legislative acts, programs, and plans of action are adopted (Akčný plan predchadzania všetkým formam diskriminácie na roky 2016 – 2019, Strategia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Romov do roku

2020 etc.). These programs also include the observations and recommendations of the monitoring cycles of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe.

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Zapewnienie i ochrona praw mniejszości narodowych w krajach wyszehradzkich (na przykładzie Słowacji)

Streszczenie:

Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza etnopolityki Republiki Słowackiej. Zostanie ona przeprowadzona przede wszystkim w oparciu o bazę normatywną oraz zaplecze instytucjonalne, dzięki któremu funkcjonuje w tym kraju system ochrony praw mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych. Słowacja, to jeden z krajów postsocjalistycznych, który dzięki demokratycznej transformacji mógł przystąpić do Unii Europejskiej. Władze tego kraju przeprowadziły szereg reform w sferze etnopolityki dostosowując ją do standardów europejskich. Sytuacja etnopolityczna i związane z nią wyzwania, które stoją przed Republiką Słowacką są dość podobne do tych, z którymi ma do czynienia Ukraina, zwłaszcza w swoich przygranicznych regionach. Głównym celem etnopolityki Słowacji jest zabezpieczenie praw wszystkich mniejszości, zachowanie tolerancji międzyetnicznej oraz rozwój międzykulturowego dialogu. Przedstawiciele mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych na Słowacji posiadają szereg praw i możliwości działania. To bezpośrednio od samych wspólnot zależy, czy są one w stanie zorganizować się i korzystać dla własnego dobra z istniejących mechanizmów. Oprócz tego etnopolityczna strategia państwa przewiduje dwustronną współpracę z macierzystymi krajami poszczególnych mniejszości. Jako przykład może służyć dwustronna współpraca pomiędzy Ukrainą i Słowacją na rzecz zapewnienia ochrony praw mniejszości narodowych. Opiera się ona na działalności Ukraińsko-Słowackiej Międzyrządowej Komisji do spraw Mniejszości Narodowych, Edukacji i Kultury. Rekomendacje formułowane przez wspomnianą komisję stanowią ważny instrument dla dialogu pomiędzy Słowacją i Ukrainą na rzecz zapewnienia dobrosąsiedzkich stosunków.

Słowa kluczowe:

Grupa Wyszehradzka, Słowacja, etnopolityka, mniejszość narodowa, zarządzanie etnopolityczne