



The Republic of Serbia – the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

**THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARIAT
FOR REGULATIONS, ADMINISTRATION AND NATIONAL COMMUNITIES**

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**THE REPORT ON
EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO THE OFFICIAL USE OF LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS OF THE
NATIONAL MINORITIES IN THE AP OF VOJVODINA**

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INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism, multiculturalism and multiconfessionalism shall represent a universal value, highly significant for the AP of Vojvodina.

The obligation of all provincial bodies and organisations, within the scope of their rights and obligations, shall be to foster and assist preservation and development of multilingualism and cultural heritage of ethnic communities that traditionally live in the AP of Vojvodina, as well as, by specific measures and activities, support mutual respect and familiarisation with different languages, cultures and religions in the AP of Vojvodina, Article 7 of ***the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina*** ("Official Journal of the APV" No.17/2009).

In part II (the Exercising of Human and Minority Rights) of the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina in Article 20 under the headline **Prohibition of Discrimination**, under the first Paragraph it is stated: In performing tasks falling within the scope of competence of the AP of Vojvodina, all citizens shall have equal rights and obligations, irrespective of race, gender, birth place, **language, nationality**, religion, political or other belief, education, social background, assets or any other personal feature.

Also in this section under the headline: **National Communities Rights** in the Article 22 it is stated: Persons belonging to national communities constituting numerical minority in the total population of the AP of Vojvodina shall enjoy special protection and all rights guaranteed to national minorities and persons belonging to national minorities according to the acts of the Republic of Serbia.

In Article 23 under the headline **Protection of Acquired Rights** it is stated that the achieved level of human and minority rights, both individual and collective, may not be reduced.

The AP of Vojvodina may provide additional or supplementary rights i.e. establish a higher level of protection of rights of persons belonging to national communities constituting numerical minority in the total population of the AP of Vojvodina.

In the ***Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 98/2006) in Article 10 it is laid down that Serbian language and Cyrillic script shall be in official use in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, whereas the official use of other languages and scripts shall be regulated by law. The matter of official use of language and script shall be regulated by the Republic ***Law on Official Use of Language and Script***, "Official Gazette of the RS, No. 45/91, 53/93, 67/93 and 48/94). This law, unchanged, has been in force for 19 years (changes that have been made are related to the amount monetary penalties), and was passed in one post-constitution time with the appropriate objectives and requirements. Competent provincial authorities and institutions have initiated its amendments or enactment of new legislation, which would regulate these issues in a newer, more current and more modern way on several occasions.

Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities ("Official Gazette of the FRY", No. 11/02) shall regulate the manner of exercising the guaranteed individual and collective rights of persons belonging to national minorities, but also leave a possibility to regulate more closely some of the issues in this field (Article 1 Para 3) by republic and provincial regulations.

Starting from the then existing legal powers, the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina at the session held on 15 May 2003 adopted the ***Decision on More Specifically Regulating Particular Issues of Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*** (The Official Journal of the APV", No. 8/03, 9/03).

Harmonization of the titles of the existing regulations based the new Statute of the AP of Vojvodina, the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina at the session held on 14 December 2009 enacted the Provincial Assembly Decision on the Implementation of the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina ("Official Journal of the APV" No. 18/0 9.), which in Article 5 Item 8 states: The decision on more specifically regulating particular issues of official use of languages and scripts of national minorities in the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina shall become ***the Provincial Assembly Decision on More Specifically Regulating Particular Issues of Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.***

The aforesaid Decision shall stipulate that the Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina **shall submit a report to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina on the exercising the right of official use of languages and scripts of national minorities. The report encompasses the years 2008 and 2009.**

The latest Report on the Exercising the Right to Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the AP of Vojvodina was discussed and adopted at the second session of the Executive Council of the APV held on 23 July 2008 and submitted to the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

I - REGULATIONS WHICH REGULATE THE SCOPE OF USE OF LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

The right to official use of mother tongue in private and in public is an unalienated right which is in conformity with principles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in conformity with the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe.

The main international source in this field is the **Council of Europe Framework Convention** for the protection of national minorities, which, among others, also contains provisions on use of the minority languages in the signatory countries. On 3 December 1998 the National Assembly enacted the Law on Ratification of this Framework Convention, and the convention was ratified on 11 May 2001. The Assembly of the State Community of Serbia and Montenegro also ratified **The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**, which is aimed at protecting historical regional and minority languages, through politics, legislation and practices of the signatory countries.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 98/06), stipulates that Serbian language and Cyrillic script is in official use in the Republic of Serbia, and that official use of other languages and scripts shall be regulated by law, based on the Constitution.

In the section on rights of persons belonging to national minorities and in particular Article 75 of the Constitution, it has been stipulated that through the collective rights persons belonging to national minorities, either directly or through their representatives, they shall participate in decision-making or they, themselves, shall also **decide on official use of language and script**, in accordance with the law. In addition, Article 79 of the Constitution shall establish **the right of persons belonging to national minorities to preserve uniqueness**, which among other things, involve the right to use their language and script, then in the areas where they constitute significant population, the right to have proceedings conducted in their language, by state bodies, organizations conferred with public powers, bodies of autonomous provinces and local self-government units, then the right to education in their language in state institutions and institutions of autonomous provinces, the right to use their name and surname in their own language, the right, in areas where they constitute significant population, to have the traditional local names, street names, settlement names and topographical signs written in their native language. Additional rights of persons belonging to national minorities may also be established by provincial regulations in accordance with the Constitution, based on the law.

Law on Establishing Competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 99/09), under the headline Official Use of Language and Scripts, in Article 76 shall regulate the following:

The AP of Vojvodina, through its bodies, shall more specifically regulate official use of language and script of national minorities in the territory of the AP Vojvodina in accordance with the law.

The AP of Vojvodina, through its bodies and in accordance with the law regulating official use of language and script, shall perform the inspection supervision.

The task under Paragraph 2 of this Article shall be performed as a delegated task.

Article 91 establishes that this law shall enter into force on the eighth day of its publication in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" and become enforceable as of 1 January 2010...

Similar provisions on administrative supervision from this scope and on regulating, have been regulated in Article 18 of the Law on Establishing the Competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 6/02).

The matter of official use of languages and scripts of national minorities is encompassed by the **Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities** ("Official Journal of the FRY", No. 11/02), as well as by the **Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 45/91, 53/93, 67/93 and 48/94) - which is the only law that is fully engaged in these issues. Then, the **Law on Local Self-Government** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 129/07), the **Code on Criminal Procedure** ("Official Journal of the FRY", No. 70/01 and 68/02, then, "Official Gazette of the RS", No. 58/04, 85/05, 115/05, 46/06, 49/07 and 122/08), the **Law on Civil Proceedings** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 125/04 and 46/06), the **Law on General Administrative Procedures** ("Official Journal of the FRY", No. 33/97 and 31/01), **Law on Registers** ("Official Gazette of the RS, No. 20/09"), the **Law on Identity Cards** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 62/06) as well as the **Regulation on the Establishment of House Numbers, Numbering of Building and Marking of Inhabited Settlements' Names, Streets and Squares** ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 110/03) in its domain of regulations.

As regards the provincial regulations the supreme legal act regulating this field is the **Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina** ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 17/09). The Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina at the session of 14 December 2009 enacted the Decision on Proclamation of the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, which, after 18 years of validity of the old statute of the APV, enacted the new one. This Statute in a new manner shall regulate the issues of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, status, territory, the holders of the right to provincial autonomy, ethnic equality, multiculturalism, symbols of the APV, official languages and scripts. Then, it shall regulate its bodies and organizations (the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina, the Government of the AP of Vojvodina, Provincial Administration) and in them also official use of languages and scripts, funding, competences of the AP of Vojvodina - and more specifically regulate official use of languages and scripts of national communities that constitute the numerical minority in the overall population of the AP of Vojvodina, in conformity with the law and etc.

The first provincial legal act that is entirely engaged in this subject matter is the **Provincial Assembly Decision on More Specifically Regulating of Particular Issues of Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina** ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 8/03, 09/03 and 18/09 - hereinafter: the Decision), as well as the **Decision on the Allocation of Budgetary Resources of the Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, Bodies and Organizations Whose Work Involves Official Use of Languages of National Minorities** ("Official Gazette of the APV" No. 06/08).

This matter is partly regulated by the **Provincial Assembly Decision on the Multilingual Forms, Certificates from Registers and the Manner of the Registration in them** ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 1 / 01, 08/03 and 18/09), then the **Provincial Assembly Decision on Foreign Language Exams or National Minorities Languages Exams to Work in the Administration Authorities** ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 14/03, 02/06 and 18/09).

II – LANGUAGES IN OFFICIAL USE IN THE WORK OF PROVINCIAL BODIES

Ethnic languages which are in official use in the work of the authorities of the autonomous province shall be stipulated by its Statute (Article 10 Paragraph 3 of the Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts)

In conformity with this provision of the Law, the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina, under the headline Official Languages and Scripts, in Article 26 shall establish:

In bodies and organisations of the AP of Vojvodina, the Serbian language and Cyrillic script shall be in official use, as well as Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian and Ruthenian languages and their scripts, in accordance with the law and the Provincial Assembly Decision.

The application of Latin script of the Serbian language in the bodies and organisations of the AP Vojvodina shall be regulated by Provincial Assembly Decision in accordance with the law.

The right to official use of languages of ethnic communities, which are not stated in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be exercised in accordance with the ratified international treaties, the law and the provincial assembly decision.

In Article 27, in the section Competences of the AP of Vojvodina it is regulated that the AP of Vojvodina through its bodies – shall regulate the election, organisation and operation of bodies and organisations whose founder it is, as well as the official use of languages and scripts in them.

Compared to the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina from 1991 the new Statute of the AP of Vojvodina shall establish in addition to the former use also **official use of Croatian language and script** in the bodies and organisations of the AP of Vojvodina.

Formerly, only *the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina* ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 23/02) established that in the work of the Assembly in official use, along with the Serbian language and Cyrillic script, and Latin script in the manner established by law, are the Hungarian, Slovak, **Croatian**, Romanian and Ruthenian languages and their scripts (Article 5).

The Translation Service provides oral and written translation from Serbian into Hungarian, Slovakian, Romanian and Ruthenian language and vice versa (as well as in English, that is not the official language in the work of provincial bodies, but because of its widespread use in contacts with foreign partners the extreme need for translation from English and into English occurs). Although there is a systematised position of Croatian language translator, it has not been filled yet, but with the entry into force of the new Statute of the APV there will be a need to fill the post in the nearest future. Services of this office are used by all provincial bodies and organisations as well as by some other entities in the AP of Vojvodina, if this obligation arises from the regulation.

Regarding the announcement, Article 65 regulates that:

The Statute, The Provincial Assembly Decisions and by-laws of the Assembly as well as the provincial regulations and the Provincial Government's decisions shall be published in the **Official Journal of the AP of Vojvodina**.

Acts of the Provincial Government, apart from the acts specified under Paragraph 1 of this Article, acts of the provincial administration authorities and organisations shall be published when these acts provides it for them.

The acts under Paragraph 1. 2 of this Article **shall be published in all languages which are in official use in the work of the AP of Vojvodina**. In case of disharmony, the authoritative text is the one published in Serbian language.

In reports and information to the competent provincial authorities and bodies, regarding these issues, compliance and consistency with the existing regulations in this field have been stated. New boards with the names of the Government of the AP of Vojvodina at the front door of the building have been done in compliance with the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina.

III – OFFICIAL USE OF LANGUGES AND SCRIPTS IN TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITEIS

In the territory of a local self-government unit where persons belonging to national minorities traditionally live, their language and script may be in equal official use.

A local self-government unit is obligated to introduce the language and script of a national minority into official use if the percentage of the persons belonging to the national minority of the total population in its territory reaches 15% according to the latest census.

In the local self-government unit where, at the time of the enactment of this law, the language of a national minority has been in the official use, it shall remain in official use. (Art. 11 of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities)

Towns and municipalities in which persons belonging to nationalities live shall determine when ethnic languages, too, shall be in official use in their territory.

Language i.e. languages of nationalities that have been in the official use in the town and municipality, shall be determined by Statute (Art. 11 of the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts).

Starting from the authorisation from the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts the Statute shall determine which languages are in official use in the territory of the town and municipality, **in 39** (out of 45) **Vojvodina towns and municipalities** in addition to Serbian language a language of a national minority is also in official use. Of these, in **31 towns and municipalities** official use of one or more languages of national minorities has been determined in their entire territory, whereas in **eight** only in certain inhabited places. **In all towns and municipalities**, also by the Statute, official use of Serbian language and Cyrillic script has been established, and in **23 towns and municipalities** official use of Latin script has also been established.

The Serbian language only is in official use in **six municipalities** (Indjija, Irig, Opovo, Pećinci, Ruma, and Sremski Karlovci), of which in **three municipalities** (Indjija, Irig and Ruma) official use of Serbian language and **the Cyrillic script only** has been established.

Hungarian language is in official use throughout **the entire territory of 28 towns and municipalities**, namely: Ada, Bač, Bačka Topola, Bela Crkva, Bečej, Vrbas Vršac, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Kanizsa, Kovačica, Kovin, Kula, Mali Iđoš, Nova Crnja, Novi Bečej, New Kneževac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Plandište, Senta, Sečanj, Sombor, Srbobran, Subotica, Temerin, Titel and Čoka. Apart from them, **Hungarian language** is in official use also in four inhabited places in the municipality of Kikinda (Banatska Topola, Kikinda, Rusko Selo and Sajan), two inhabited places (Kupusina, Svilojevo) in the municipality of Apatin as well as in the City of Pancevo, cadastral municipality of Vojlovica and inhabited place of Ivanovo.

Slovak language is in official use throughout **the entire territory of the ten towns and municipalities**, namely: Alibunar, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Plandište and Šid. **This language** is also in official use in the inhabited place of Stara Pazova (Stara Pazova municipality), in the inhabited place Bajša (municipality of Backa Topola) and Lug (municipality Beočin).

Romanian language is in official use in the following **nine towns and municipalities**: Alibunar, Bela Crkva, Vršac, Žitište, Zrenjanin, Kovačica, Kovin, Plandište, Sečanj and in the City of Pančevo, in the inhabited place Banatsko Novo Selo.

Ruthenian language is in official use in Vrbas, Žabalj, Kula, Novi Sad and in Šid. Besides, this language is in official use in the inhabited place Novo Orahovo in the municipality of Bačka Topola.

Croatian language is in official use in the City of Subotica, as well as in the territory of the inhabited place Stara Bingula (City of Sremska Mitrovica), inhabited places Bački Breg and Bački Monoštor (City of Sombor), and Sonta (municipality of Apatin).

Czech language is in official use in the municipality of Bela Crkva.

Bulgarian language is in official use in the inhabited place Ivanovo in the City of Pančevo.

Macedonian language is in official use in the inhabited place Jabuka in the City of Pancevo.

Five languages and scripts are in official use in the City of Pančevo in its individual inhabited places. **Four languages and scripts** are in official use in six towns and municipalities, **three languages and scripts** in 13 towns and municipalities, and **two languages and scripts** are in official use in 19 towns and municipalities in the territory of the AP of Vojvodina.

The Law on the Official Use of Language and Script **did not establish more specifically criteria** when a language of a national minority was to be compulsory introduced into official use and the issue was entirely left to the municipalities, themselves, to assess the need for it. The Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities **binds** the obligation to introduce a minority language into official use **to the participation percentage of persons belonging to national minorities** in the total population of the local government unit (15%). Bearing in mind this criterion, **none of the Vojvodina towns or municipalities has an additional obligation** to introduce a new minority language in official use, because it is already done even with a smaller participation percentage of the population of minority representation in the overall population.

However, at the same time **the municipalities may not narrow** the existing round of official languages in use – independent from the participation percentage of persons belonging to national minorities in the total population in their territory according to the latest census, - because it is prohibited by the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, by **general provision on the acquired minority rights**, as well as by a special provision according to which a minority language remains in official use in the local self-government unit, if, at the time of the adoption of the Law (26 February 2002), it was in official use.

When a language and script of a national minority is not in official use in the entire territory of **the local self-government unit, the language and script of the national minority shall be introduced into official use in a settlement or a local community in its territory if in the settlement or local community, the percentage of persons belonging to a certain national minority reaches 25 % according to the latest census.** (Articles 8, paragraph 3 of the Decision).

In compliance with the provision, in some local self-government units where official use of a language of a national minority has not been provided for in the entire territory there is a need for the Statute amendments in terms of the introduction of a national minority language in official use in certain settlements i.e. local communities.

The municipality Apatin acted on **the Decision of the Constitutional Court of Serbia** in conformity with this obligation, where Serbian language is in official use, but in the inhabited places Kupusina (with 78.8% Hungarians) and Svilojevo (with 58.1%) in addition, it has been established official use of Hungarian language and script, and in Sonta (with 59.41% Croats) the Croatian language and script.

The Croatian language has been introduced into official use also in the **City of Sremska Mitrovica** for the populated place Stara Bingula (28.94% Croats).

It is extremely important that after a long period, in late 2008 this requirement was satisfied in the cities of Pancevo and Sombor.

The Statute of the City of Pancevo has established official use of Serbian language and Cyrillic script in the city territory and official use of Hungarian language in the local community Vojlovica and inhabited place Ivanovo (39.96%), and in Ivanovo also the Bulgarian language and script (27.14%), in Banatsko Novo Selo (27.71%) Romanian language and script, whereas in Jabuka (32.54%) Macedonian language and script.

In the City of Sombor the statute has established the official use of the Croatian language and script in Backi Monostor (52.11%) and Backi Breg (53.17%).

The **municipality Vrsac** by amending the municipality statute in early 2008, again returned in official use the Romanian and Hungarian language and script in the whole territory of the municipality, and by then it had occurred in some inhabited places.

Other **municipalities that have not harmonized** their statutes with this provision are:

In **Indjija municipality** there is a need to establish official use of Slovak language and script for the territory of Slankamen vineyards, because Slovaks constitute 74.81% of the population in that area.

In Irig municipality, the Hungarian population constitutes 75.59% in Dobrodol, i.e. 63.4% in Šatrinci.

There is a need for the Croatian language and script to be introduced into official use in **Šid municipality** for the populated place Sot (40.07%).

IV – USE OF LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN THE WORK OF BODIES

Official use of languages and scripts of national minorities in particular involve: use of minority languages in the administrative and judicial proceedings and conduct of administrative proceedings and court proceedings in the language of a national minority, use of a minority language in communication between an authority holding public powers and citizens; the issuance of public documents and keeping official records and collections of personal data in the languages of national minorities and the acceptance of these documents in such languages as valid, use of language in ballot papers and voting materials, use of language in the work of representative bodies (Article 11 Paragraph 4 of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities).

The right to use their own language in administrative or judicial proceedings is fundamental constitutional and human right, and if the same is guaranteed to foreigners, why should it be denied to a person belonging to a national minority in the case when the language of a national minority is not in official use at the seat of authority in which the proceedings is conducted.

It happens that in practice courts have restrictively interpreted the right to lodge petition in a language of a national minority, only to the client in the proceedings but not to their proxies i.e. lawyers. In judicial proceedings, a violation of the right to use their own language and script is regularly treated as a relatively significant violation of the proceedings rules, and in each case it is in particular examined whether the violation could affect the final decision. We believe that this violation should be treated as absolutely essential violation which in the second instance proceedings automatically would lead to the abolition of the first instance decision, and especially because the right to official use of minority language is not provided primarily due to ignorance of Serbian language.

The problematic attitude is that some courts often take - that in most cases, the request for the conduct of proceedings in a language of a national minority is treated as an abuse of the right to delay the proceedings. There are other procedural steps that allow delaying the court proceedings, but these powers are not thereby denied to the client, and for the same reason there is no a priori need to deny any right to use their own language and script, just because there is potential for abuse.

The right of a person belonging to a national minority **to use their own language with an interpreter and translator**, when the proceedings are not conducted in their language, is respected before the court. However, although the law stipulates that the cost of translation shall be borne by acting bodies, they very often do not have enough funds for such purposes.

Almost all bodies that in their work provide a right to official use of languages of national minorities **are faced with financial problems**, because it **represents an additional cost for the body that bears the burden of it**, and that fact is not taken into account when the funds needed for their work are planned. Financing method of a body is the same both in the territory of a local self-government unit where no minority language is not in official use and in those units in which a language, or even more languages of national minorities have been introduced into official use and therefore have increased expenditures for the costs of interpretation/translation, installation of appropriate computer programs, forms provision, professional development of employees and the like. They, incidentally, are not materially encouraged either, on the basis of the knowledge and use of languages in official use. In addition, this Secretariat has repeatedly initiated and proposed to the competent ministries, **systemic solution for funding local government units** in which a language and script of a national minority is in official use.

One of few positive steps in this direction is the Law on Stipulation of the Maximum Number of Employees in the Local Administration ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 194/2009), which, in stipulating the required number of employees in local self-government authorities, accepted the

special needs for interpreters/translators in self-governments where several languages are in official use. Particularly important is the stipulation of Article 2 second paragraph that says that exceptionally, the maximum number of employees for an indefinite time in the local administration in which one or more languages of national minorities are in official use, shall be increased by 0.1 employees per 1,000 inhabitants (0.1 Per mil) for each language of a national minority which is in official use.

Bodies ... shall accept, as valid, petitions, documents and other documents from citizens that have been made in the language and script of national minorities and that are in official use in the territory of the body.

If there is a need for it, petitions, documents and other documents specified in paragraph 2 of this Article, are translated into Serbian language at the expense of the body and are attached to the files. (Article 2 Paragraph 2 and 3 of the Decision).

This provision is in principle consistently applied by the provincial, city and municipal authorities. However, there have been information that documents written in a language of a national minority have not been accepted by certain organizational units of Republic bodies in the territory of AP Vojvodina and the clients have been obliged to submit translations in Serbian language at their own expense, but after the intervention and attention being drawn to this obligation they have nevertheless accepted such petitions as valid.

A person belonging to a national minority is entitled to have oral or written response in the language in which he addressed the authority.

In the event that a person employed by the authority, whose job is mainly related to working with clients, does not have sufficient knowledge of the language of a national minority, the authority shall provide an interpreter at its own expense.

Bodies ... in their act on internal organization and job systematization shall prescribe that certain number of employees at posts where employees work with clients or conduct the administrative proceedings as a condition to get the job have to know a language of a national minority in official use.

When determining the number of employees in Paragraph 6 of this Article ethnic composition of the population is taken into account and the total number of persons belonging to certain ethnic minorities according to the latest census in the territory of the authority. (Article 2 Paragraph 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Decision)

During the recruitment process into public services, including police, the national composition of the population, adequate representation and the knowledge of the languages spoken in the area of the body or service are taken into account (Article 21 of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities). A similar provision is found in the amended **Law on Civil Servants** ("Official Gazette of the RS" No. 79/05 and 116/08, 104/09), whose Article 9, paragraph 3 states: "When recruiting people in state bodies it shall be taken into consideration that the national composition, the representation of sexes and people with disabilities reflect the structure of the population to the maximum possible extent."

The clients shall be entitled to address authorities orally or in writing in their own language and there are objective possibilities to de facto exercise this right, except in case of some small settlements where the percentage of persons belonging to national minorities is low. In some environments a special decision has even been made on the application of laws and other regulations regulating the use of languages and scripts of ethnic minorities in public services whose founder is the municipality assembly.

The clients shall address the provincial authorities, as a rule, in Serbian language. Slightly more frequent addresses in a minority language (mostly in Hungarian), due to nature of work, are reported in the work of the Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities. This Provincial Secretariat announces competitions for funding organizations and events of national minorities as well as traditional churches and religious communities. The competition text is published in all official languages and the tender documents (forms) are also provided for in the official languages of the AP of Vojvodina. Organization of various national minorities and churches that mostly gather persons belonging to national minorities use the opportunity of written language use in

a very different scope. According to the analyses of the submitted requests it may be concluded that organizations that bring together Hungarians use the opportunity to use their language to the greatest extent. In fact, according to the data of the competition for grants to organizations of ethnic communities in the AP of Vojvodina, announced in 2008, out of the total of 176 applications received from these organizations, 154 or 87.50% were in Hungarian language, and 22 or 12.50% in Serbian language. Also, out of the total of 141 reports submitted to this competition (four reports were in two languages), 112 or 79.43% were in Hungarian language, and 29 or 20.57% in Serbian.

In 2009 two competitions were carried out for this purpose. At the first competition from the organizations that bring together Hungarians, out of total of 168 received applications 138 or 82.14% were in Hungarian language and 30 or 17.86% in Serbian language and out of the the 40 received reports 30 or 75.00% were in Hungarian and the rest in Serbian language. On the second competition 185 applications in total were submitted from these organizations, out of which 164 or 88.65% were in Hungarian and concerning the received reports all six were in Hungarian language. This percentage of submitted applications to both competitions last year is accompanied by submitted application from the Croatian national community organizations. It is a pity that such a representation of submitted applications was not present in Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian organizations, where it barely reaches 40% of the requests in Serbian language.

Differences in use of mother tongue indicate that members of different ethnic minorities whose respective languages have been recognized as official ones do not have the same needs for official use of their own languages. Documents that arrive in the official language of a national minority are translated as needed, and the responses are provided in the official language of the national minority. If necessary, **the Translation Service** performs translation tasks for the other provincial authorities as well.

In order to provide conditions for linguistic equality to persons belonging to national minorities in the AP of Vojvodina, translations have been made and texts of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the Statute of Vojvodina, Law on Establishing Competences of the AP of Vojvodina, the Law on National Councils and etc have been published in all languages that are in official use in the authorities and bodies of the AP of Vojvodina (Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian language and script).

In the last period the Translation service has also translated texts for the needs of the Clinical-Hospital Centre of Novi Sad web site into the languages of national minorities that are in official use in the City of Novi Sad (Hungarian, Slovak and Ruthenian language), then translated the brochure of the Centre for police training in minority languages and the like.

Of the total number of cities and municipalities in which a language of a national minority is also in official use, in the majority of them (19), by the Act on Internal Organisation and Jobs Systematisation, it is prescribed that the appropriate number of employees have knowledge of the adequate language of a national minority **as a condition of employment**. Even in those local self-government units in which it is not the case (16), a certain number of employees who work with clients or conduct administrative proceedings have knowledge of the language of the national minority which is in official use.

The Assembly of the APV in 2003 enacted the **Decision on the Foreign Language Exam and National Minority Language Exam to Work in the Administration Authorities** ("Official Journal of the APV" No. 14/2003), **which establishes the test as a way to test knowledge** of these languages for the work in local self-government bodies and the Provincial Administrative authorities. **Certificate of the passed exam** acquired in accordance with this Decision may be used to work in the administration authorities when the appropriate level of knowledge of foreign languages and languages of national minorities has been established as a condition to perform duties and tasks, but it may also be used by other agencies and legal entities when their acts provide the need of appropriate level of language knowledge so as to perform tasks. **The exam is taken in compliance with the Book of Rules** on the method of testing knowledge of a foreign language and a language of a national minority ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 6/2004). In the process of implementing the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina this decision becomes the **Provincial Assembly Decision on the Foreign Language Examination and National Minorities Languages Examination to Work in the Administrative Authorities** ("Official Journal of the APV", No. 18/09).

During 2008 the total number of issued certificates of minority language knowledge is eight, whereas during the last year the total number of issued certificates is 11. Originally, candidates showed a great interest in taking these examinations, however, now the interest is three times less.

So as to perfect the knowledge of minority languages, the Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities has continued to organise professional language seminars designed for employees in the state administration bodies and judiciary who conduct proceedings or communicate with clients in these languages. The sixth seminar meant for the employees who communicate in Hungarian language was held in 2008, and the Seventh one last year in cooperation with the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority in the AP of Vojvodina.

Persons belonging to national minorities **are not proportionally represented in the state government bodies**, i.e. in their regional units in the territory of Province. With the aim to overcome this situation, the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities with the professional service of the Government of the Republic of Serbia harmonised the text of the Action Plan to increase the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in state administration bodies, which provides constant monitoring of ethnic structure of employees and undertake measures to improve this structure. On the basis of it, the Government of the Republic of Serbia passed the Resolution on **measures to increase the participation of persons belonging to national minorities** in state administration bodies ("Official Gazette of the RS", No 60/06). To the knowledge of this Secretariat the Government and the Human Resources Service of the Government have not undertaken any systematic measures in recent years with the aim to place on record national belonging, nor with the aim to, as much as possible, systematically ensure proportional national composition in the state administration authorities, an obligation stipulated by the law.

The biggest disproportion in the representation of minorities, i.e. in terms of knowledge of an official language of national minority in the area of state bodies and services in the AP of Vojvodina has been recorded in the administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This statement is true when it comes to members of the MIA and when it comes to employees in the counter service of the MIA. It is the consequence of neglecting this problem for decades, therefore, quick results can not be expected. MIA began to undertake measures to more effectively integrate all communities. The police personnel education planned reform has envisaged taking the entrance examination in the minority language, learning these languages (Senta, Ada, Novalja, etc.), new educational programmes, taking examinations and the like, which may contribute to the police profession to become more attractive. Positive results have already been recorded when the border police job advertisement has been published in minority languages, too.

The local government units in which the languages of national minorities are in official use within the municipal administration shall **establish a translation service. For economical and efficient reasons several local government units may establish a joint translation service.** (Article 9 of the Decision)

In no city or municipality in the AP of Vojvodina was a special translation service for the languages of national minorities organized. There is no joint translation service for several city or municipal administrations. **In 21 local governments a post of an interpreter/translator** has been systematised and filled, but they perform other tasks, too, and vice versa workers from other services are engaged to interpret/translate, as necessary. In ten city or municipal administrations the translation into the languages of national minorities is organized, at the request of a client, whereas in eight there was no request for translation.

V - USE OF PERSONAL NAME OF A PERSON BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITY AND ISSUANCE OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

Persons belonging to national minorities are entitled to free choice and use of personal names and names of their children, as well as to register these personal names in all public documents, official records and personal data collection according to the language and script of a person belonging to a national minority. (Article 9, Paragraph 1 of the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities)

A person belonging to a national minority is entitled to register their own name and names their children in the register in their original form, in the script and orthography of their language.

If in the records under Paragraph 1 of this Article a personal name of a person belonging to a national minority has been registered in their original form, the very personal name shall be in the same form registered in public documents (identity documents, birth certificates, etc.), which are issued, regardless of the language and script on the form of a public document. This does not exclude the writing of a personal name in the Serbian language and script too, next to the names in their original form. (Article 3 of the Decision)

Our practice of registering personal names has been **very different** so far and problems arose, particularly in nationally heterogeneous areas as for the lack of special laws, as for frequent changes in regulations that have not encompassed all possible real life situations. The issue of personal name has now been regulated by the Republic Family Law ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 18/05). Article 344 Paragraph 2 stipulates that parents are entitled to record the child's name in the birth register in mother language and script of one or both parents, too. The provision favors the registration in Serbian language, and only as a subsidiary right recognizes the right to be registered in the original. The new Law on Registers ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 20/09) enacted last year in Article 17 regulates that the registration of a personal name for persons belonging to minorities is primarily done in the native language and according to the orthography of a national minority with the possibility of a parallel registration in Serbian language and Cyrillic script.

The Provincial Assembly Decision on the Multilingual Forms, birth certificates and the manner of registration in them ("Official Gazette of the APV", No. 1/01 and 18/09) in Vojvodina **has corrected this omission**. According to this Decision, in local self-governments in which the languages and scripts of national minorities are in official use, the management issues a register certificate in two-language form to the person belonging to national minority at his request. The personal name is written in the form in which the original registration was performed. If the personal name was written in the register in the language of a national minority, too, the name and surname of the person belonging to a national minority is written in the certificate in that form first. If his name was written only in Serbian language in the register, the registrar shall inform the client that he may request the registration of personal names in the register in their original form after the completion of the summary or the full administrative proceedings for changing personal names, and the registrar at the conclusion of the proceedings shall issue an appropriate certificate.

After the entry into force of the aforesaid Decision, the Secretariat has made an **Explanation for the implementation of the Decision** and held instruction seminars for administrative staff who perform such jobs.

Harmonization of views concerning the disputed issues is necessary, especially bearing in mind the right of citizens to the issuance of bilingual forms of ID cards, in which there is a need that the personal name of the person belonging to a national minority, on the basis of the bilingual registration in the register and issued bilingual certificates from the registrar, is written first in the language of a national minority.

In cities and municipalities in the AP of Vojvodina, in which in addition to official use of Serbian language are also languages and scripts of national minorities, in 2009 a total of **858,857 certificates from the registrar** were issued, out of which 7,694 or 0.89% in the Serbian-Hungarian form, 5,480 or 0.63% in Serbian-Slovak, 30 or 0.003% in Serbian-Romanian, 30 or 0.003% in Serbian-Ruthenian and 3,150 or 0.36% in Serbian-Croat. In total, 16,384 or 1.908% were issued in the languages of national minorities, **which is a significant increase** in the number of issued certificates in the languages of national minorities compared to the previous year.

In 2008 a total of 706,806 certificates from the register were issued (in 2007 a total of 719,287 were issued), and out of that number 10,854 or 1.57% (in 2007 a total of 14,389 or 2.00%) certificates were issued in the bilingual forms of the total of issued certificates. Out of the total issued certificates 5,962 certificates or 0.844 (7,842 certificates or 1.09% in 2007) were issued in the Serbian-Hungarian form. Out of the total number of issued certificates 2,742 certificates or 0.385% (3,422 certificates or 0.48 in 2007) certificates were issued in Serbian-Slovak forms. Out of the total issued certificates 18 certificates or 0.003% (125 certificates or 0.02 in the year 2007) were issued in the Serbian-Romanian forms. Out of total issued certificates 30 certificates or 0.004% (17 certificates or 0.001% in

the year 2007) were issued in Serbian-Ruthenian forms. In Serbian-Croatian form 2,130 certificates were issued or 0.301 (2,983 certificates or 0.41% in 2007).

Based on the performed data analysis there is evident increase in the number of issued statements in the Serbian-Ruthenian forms, and reduced number of certificates in the Serbian-Hungarian, Serbian-Slovak form, Serbian-Romanian and Serbo-Croatian forms compared to the previous reporting period.

Comparing the total number of issued certificates with the number of issued bilingual certificates per municipalities and towns in the **municipality Bački Petrovac**, as in the previous reporting period, **the most bilingual certificates were issued**, where out of total 1,597 issued certificates from the registrar, 1,577 or 98.75% certificates were issued in the Serbian-Slovak form, of total issued statements (in 2007 in Bački Petrovac a total of 2,670 certificates were issued from the registrar, of which 2,293 or 85.88% of total issued statements were in the Serbian-Slovak form,). In municipalities Alibunar, Beocin, Plandište, S. Mitrovica, Titel and Žabalj none of the bilingual certificates were issued from the registrar.

In 2009 **11,575 certificates were issued from registers** of which in Serbian-Hungarian 339 or 2.29% were issued, in Serbian-Slovak 503 or 4.34%, in Serbian-Romanian, none, in Serbian-Ruthenian 16 or 0.13%, and in Serbian-Croatian 17 or 0.14%. In the languages of national minorities a total of 875 or 7.56% were issued, **which is almost double** compared to the number of certificates in 2008.

Out of total of 12,046 certificates from the register that were issued in 2008, 449 or 3.73% certificates were issued in multilingual forms of the total number of issued certificates (686 certificates or 6.14% in 2007), in Serbian-Hungarian form 139 certificates or 1.15%, in Serbian-Slovak form 271 certificates were issued or 2.25%, in Serbian-Romanian form one certificate was issued or 0.01%, and in Serbian-Croatian form 27 certificates or 0.22% were issued. In Serbian-Ruthenian form in the course of 2008 11 certificates were issued or 0.09%, which is a significant step forward for in 2007 none certificate was issued from the registers.

The highest number of certificates from registers was issued in the municipality Backi Petrovac (75.72%) and Kovacica (42.09%) in Serbian-Slovak form and the municipality of Kanizsa (70%) and Ada (57.15%) in the Serbian-Hungarian form.

Reviewing the number of issued bilingual certificates from registers in the towns and municipalities, it may be concluded that in 2008 449 bilingual certificates were issued from registers, i.e 237 certificates less than compared to the previous year.

In 2009 **a total of 510,155 certificates from citizenship registers were issued**, of which in Serbian-Hungarian 568 or 0.11%, in Serbian-Slovak 425 or 0.08%, in Serbian-Romanian one or 0.0002%, and in Serbian-Croatian 451 or 0.09%. In total, 1,457 or 0.29% certificates from citizenship registers were issued in languages of national minorities.

In 2008 a total of 358,466 certificates were issued (in 2007 302,135 certificates were issued). Out of all issued certificates in the languages of national minorities in official use, 1,518 certificates were issued or 0.42% of the total number of issued certificates (4,138 certificates or 1.37% during 2007). In Serbian-Hungarian form 342 certificates or 0.10% were issued, in Serbo-Slovak form 209 certificates were issued or 0.06%, in Serbian-Croatian 966 certificates or 0.26%, and in Serbian-Ruthenian form during 2008 none of certificates were issued from citizenship register, unlike the previous year when four certificates were issued or 0.001%. In Serbian-Romanian form in the course of 2008 one certificate was issued, that is 0.001%, unlike 2007 when four certificates were issued or 0.001% of the total number of issued certificates. By analysing bilingual certificates issued from the citizenship register it may be concluded that in 2008 2,620 certificates less were issued than compared to the previous year.

In 2009 **2,437 proceedings were conducted in administrative proceedings** for changing personal names, of which 186 or 7.63% in Serbian-Hungarian and no proceeding was conducted to change a personal name in other languages in official use.

In course of 2008 1,841 proceedings were conducted (1,749 proceedings in 2007), of which 172 proceedings or 9.34% were conducted in the languages of national minorities that are in official use (37 proceedings or 2.12% during 2007). In Serbian-Hungarian language the entire 172 proceedings or 9.34% were conducted of the total of the conducted proceedings for the change of a

personal name (37 proceedings or 2.12% in 2007 in Serbian-Hungarian language), while no proceedings was conducted in other languages.

In 2009 in administrative proceedings to change the registration of a personal name in the registrar 530 proceedings were conducted, of which 201 or 37.92% in Serbian-Hungarian, whereas no proceeding was conducted in other languages that are in official use.

In 2008 666 administrative proceedings were conducted, (776 administrative proceedings in the course of 2007). Of the total number, in 323 cases or 41.50% (14 cases or 1.80% during 2007) the proceedings were conducted in the languages of national minorities, i.e., only in Serbian-Hungarian language whereas no request was submitted in other languages in 2007 and 2008.

The highest percentage of proceedings for changing personal names in minority languages were conducted in the municipalities of Backa Topola, Becej, Kovin, Kula, Novi Becej and cities of Subotica and Zrenjanin, and they were conducted in Serbian-Hungarian language.

In 2009 in administrative proceedings of data correction in the register a total of 2,506 proceedings were conducted, of which 186 or 7.42% in Serbian-Hungarian while none of proceedings were in other languages.

In 2008 1,968 proceedings were conducted (1,999 proceedings in 2007), of the total number 33 or 1.67% proceedings were conducted in the languages of national minorities (in 2007 two proceedings or 0.10% were conducted) of the total number of first-instance administrative proceedings for data correction in the register.

The Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities **has repeatedly given a written opinion on these issues**, either at the request of the clients who could not exercise their right to use a personal name or on request of acting body.

The Secretariat formerly betokened the lack of multilingual forms of ID cards and other documents, the inconsistent implementation or unimplementation of regulations on free choice and use of personal names of persons belonging to national minorities to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Citizens have been informed about the possibility of obtaining ID cards via media, information boards in police stations and in direct contact with the officers.

Certificates of acquired education, when teaching was conducted in a language of a national minority, other public documents, as well as other documents that are of interest for the implementation of the law and other regulations on established rights of citizens, which are issued on the basis of evidence ... at the request of persons belonging to national minorities, are issued in their own language, too.

Forms of public documents, as well as forms of evidence for the needs of areas where languages of national minorities are in official use, are printed bilingually, in Serbian and in the language of each ethnic minority whose language is in official use.

Employees of the authority which issues a public document is obligated to inform a person belonging to a national minority about his right to require his public document to be issued in two languages - in Serbian language and the language and script of the national minority, on the bilingual printed form (Art. 4 Paragraph 2, 3 and 4 of the Decision).

The aforesaid provisions have been observed in the majority of cases. Grade books, report cards and certificates are printed in two languages, but when the data were writing down certain errors have been noticed: they sometimes are filled in only one (Serbian) language; when writing the name of an inhabited place and institutions, in the part which is provided for entering data in a minority language, these data are written only in Serbian and the like.

According to a survey conducted in local governments in which a language of national minority is also in official use, it may be concluded that in the majority of local government units in the territory of the AP of Vojvodina, clients – persons belonging to national minorities are ensured to be informed about the fact that they may obtain documents in a bilingual form, as well. Notifications are most often in writing, placed on the information board, although the information may be obtained verbally. However, beside all this, certain clients are not sufficiently informed about their rights.

VI – USE OF LANGUAGES IN THE FIELDS OF ECONOMY AND SERVICES

As regards the areas where languages of national minorities are officially used, the bodies that provide and charge citizens for their services in the fields of electrical industry, sales of natural gas, utilities, post and telegraph, shall provide for users of their services and products multilingual payment forms, miscellaneous receipts and notifications pertaining to their services, both in Serbian and the language (languages) of the national minorities that are in official use (Article 5 of the Decision).

The positive effects of those provisions are insufficiently accepted by the bodies, institutions and companies of the aforementioned fields, primarily in regards to popularization and presentation of their services, writing them in the languages that are in official use within those areas. We monitored and had some talks with a number of the service providers that had not for the time being provided for multilingual bills and receipts; consequently they were given Notice to act in accordance with the Decision and the deadline for this was set.

The situation is much better when considering miscellaneous notifications for clients, which are, as a rule, written or printed in Serbian language and the language that is in official use within the area. This primarily pertains to the situation with PTT “Srbija” post offices, “EPS” counters, where clients’ notifications have recently been put up in the languages of the national minorities.

There is an increasing number of places (Kanjiža, Senta, Subotica, Kovačica, Stara Pazova), where public companies that provide utility services, have started to deliver bills and miscellaneous notifications to the citizens in the national minority’s language officially use within their territory. There is a noticeable increase in number of applications those organizations submit for the **competitions for allocation of funds** for the aforementioned purposes, co-financing of expenditures for bills’ preparation and printing.

VII– WRITING OF PUBLIC NOTICES AND NAMES

Within the territories...names of the bodies vested with public authority, names of the local self government, inhabited settlements, squares and streets and other toponyms shall be written in the language of the national minority concerned, in accordance with its tradition and script (Article 11 Para 5 Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities).

In the areas where the national minorities’ languages are also in official use, names of the inhabited settlements, other geographical names, streets, squares, authorities..., traffic signs, public notices and warnings, and other public signs shall be written in the language and script of the national minority concerned, in accordance with its tradition (Article 6 Para 1 of the Decision).

For the purpose of publishing, a national minority council shall determine and submit the traditional names of the cities, municipalities and inhabited settlements in the language of the national minority, within three months of the date this decision comes into force (Article 7 Para 1 of the Decision).

Names of the inhabited places, streets and squares shall be written in compliance with the law that regulates official use of languages and scripts, and the law that regulates protection of national minorities’ rights and freedoms, the part which regulates official use of languages and scripts (Article 3 Para 1 of the Regulation that Establishes House Numbers, Numbering of Buildings and Marking of the Inhabited Settlement Names, Streets and Squares).

The National Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts stipulates that the names of places, streets and squares, names of authorities and organisations, traffic signs, public notices and warnings and other public signs shall be also written in the ethnic languages, whereas public signs that contain geographical and proper names shall be written in the ethnic language in accordance

with the orthography of that language, however they cannot be replaced by other titles and names. **This provision has been differently interpreted, mainly to the detriment of the proper use of minority languages.** The dilemma has been eliminated by ratification of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the Law on Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, which stipulates writing of names and titles in the national minority language, in accordance with its tradition and orthography.

In the environments where languages of the national minorities are also in official use, **signs with names of the local self government bodies** are mainly written in the languages concerned, by those who were obliged to do so, however there are still places where the signs of head offices of the authorities or organisations do not contain their traditional names written in the languages of the national minorities. Regulations pertaining to mandatory mounting of multilingual signage are mostly violated by the area units of the national bodies, organisations and institutions. With the expert and organisational assistance, and the assistance with translating of the names, which was provided by the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, the cooperation and coordination in implementation of the regulations was realised, and resulted in the mounting of the new signs. Thereby the National Bank, the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the regional public revenue offices, National Geodetic Institute and the Real Estate Cadastre Regional Services, "Srbija" PTT PC (head offices in Subotica, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin), National Employment Office, Ministry of the Interior, Prosecution Offices etc., mounted new signs in their head offices and the regional units.

Despite several interventions and 12 Notices that were granted for administrative supervision, little has been done regarding the official use of languages and scripts in "**Železnice Srbije**" **Public Company** within the territory of the AP of Vojvodina (names of the settlements in minority languages, train timetables, announcements of trains' arrivals and departures and most important notices on the platform and in the facilities are only written in Serbian language). Timely and allowed appeals, lodged by the authorised individuals, against the notices granted to the railway stations were the ones in Subotica, Senta, Bačka Topola, Vrbas and Kisač. The appeals were lodged due to serious violation of the procedure and wrongfully or incompletely determined facts, with the proposal to rescind the notice and renew the proceeding and decision regarding the case.

In the administrative proceeding of second instance **all appeals were rejected as unfounded.**

PC "Železnice Srbije" instituted administrative proceeding before the Circuit Court in Novi Sad against all final notices.

In deciding PC "Železnice Srbije's" appeals, the Circuit Court in Novi Sad passed the sentences according to which all individual **appeals were rejected as unfounded**, thereby confirming all Notices issued by the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities.

During the conversation with the authorised representatives and the executives of PC "Železnice Srbije", which followed, it was specified that acting upon the legally binding court judgement was mandatory, and the time limit for voluntary acting was set, upon which we would institute the compulsory enforcement procedure.

I

As regards **writing of streets' and squares' names, regulations pertaining to this field are not fully observed.** In order to collect the mentioned data, Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities monitored implementation of the regulations that regulate official use of languages and scripts in this field, in all cities and municipalities within the AP of Vojvodina, where in addition to Serbian language and Cyrillic script, languages and scripts of the national minorities are also in use. Apart from the cities and municipalities, some inhabited settlements were monitored as well. The selection of streets and squares that were the subject of the supervision, was made based on the random sampling principle.

Generally, it may be concluded that in most cities, municipalities and inhabited settlements, signs that show names of the cities, municipalities and inhabited settlements have been mainly correctly written in the languages that are in official use. The same does not apply to the street and square names. That is to say that rarely local self governments and inhabited settlements are found

where street and square names are correctly written. There are even inhabited settlements without one single street or square sign (e.g. Lovćenac, Bajša, Vlajkovac, Uljma, Feketić).

In some inhabited settlements **names of streets and squares are written on the house number boards** (e.g. Kucura, Žitište, Torak).

However, it **could not be observed that uniform rules were applied in writing streets' and squares' names** at the territory of the local self governments (except in some smaller inhabited settlements). Namely, in one local self government, that is, in an inhabited settlement, both older and new signs could be seen, written in completely different ways (e.g. street name sign – at the beginning of the street is written differently than the one at the end of the street).

In many local self governments and inhabited settlements, street and square names, and the names of inhabited settlements **are written in Latin script** which is not in official use in those environments (e.g. Kula, Ruski Krstur, Kikinda, Mihajlovo, Zrenjanin).

In the city of Novi Sad, there was not one single sign, showing street or square name, written in all officially used languages, even the board showing name of Novi Sad, on the entering roads, has not been written in compliance with the Statute of the City of Novi Sad.

Considering all the above, a conclusion may be drawn that situation in the field, related to the subject of the supervision, is not satisfactory.

As the competencies pertaining to posting and writing of the signs with the names of inhabited settlements and streets were established for the National Geodetic Institute, based on the Regulation on the Establishment of House Numbers, Numbering of Buildings and Marking of Inhabited Settlements' Names and Streets, the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities initiated cooperation with the directors of the regional centres of the RGI in Pančevo and Novi Sad, which cover the region of the AP of Vojvodina. Each year, Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities invites Tenders for allocation of transferable funds, and through those tenders significant funds are allotted to the city and municipal administrations and local communities at the territory of the AP of Vojvodina for the expenses pertaining to making and posting of signs which show names of inhabited settlements, on the routes; and street and square names, in the languages of the national minorities that are in official use in the inhabited settlement, municipality or a city.

As a **result, in many settlements new signs were posted** showing correctly written names of streets and inhabited settlements, the purpose of which is to observe the legal regulations and respect the rights of the people belonging to the national minorities, who live at the territory of the AP of Vojvodina.

II

Traditional names of the cities, municipalities and inhabited settlements in the languages and scripts of national minorities, are established by the National councils of Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak national minority, and published in the "Official journal of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina" (No. 12 and 13/03).

As the National Council of the Ruthenian national minority did not determine traditional names of the inhabited settlements in their language within the set deadline; at the sitting held on 10 May 2006, the Executive Council made **Decision on the establishment of traditional names of municipalities and inhabited settlements in Ruthenian language** ("Official journal of the APV" No. 6/06).

In some local self governments, those decisions were wrongfully interpreted and the implementation was conditioned by their adoption and certification by the municipal statutes. In such case, the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities intervened and provided interpretation implying that those Decisions were to be automatically implemented upon their coming into force, and the names determined by the relevant National council had to be applied whenever the language of the national minority was officially used, and no additional verification was needed. The determined names were widely accepted with rare exceptions. Opinions are divided regarding traditional names in Hungarian language and script for Novi Kneževac and Kovačica.

Procedure before the Constitutional Court of Serbia, requesting **assessment of the constitutionality of establishment of traditional names in Hungarian language and script for some inhabited settlements** was required by the municipalities of Srbobran and Novi Kneževac. At

the end of the last year, upon the performed supervision, municipality of Novi Kneževac executed the obligation pertaining to traditional names writing.

It is evident that most name boards posted previous years at the entrances of inhabited settlements were written differently (and most frequently incorrectly). Recently posted boards fully observe regulations on official use of languages and scripts of the national minorities for their areas (Subotica, Zrenjanin, Sombor, Bečej, Bačka Palanka, Novi Itebej and others), however the names in minority or Serbian language have been frequently scrawled across or painted over. In the middle of last year, traditional names were written in Hungarian language and script in all inhabited places within the municipality of Novi Bečej.

III

Websites of the municipal, city, provincial and national bodies and organisations, institutions and public companies, and their availability in the official languages and scripts have not been reviewed until now.

Territory of the AP of Vojvodina is comprised of the territories of the local self governments, as stipulated in the Article 3, Statute of the AP of Vojvodina. Based on the latest Census, in 39 local self governments the official use of national minority languages either already existed or was introduced, based on the law and other relevant regulations and the Statute of the local self government and the percentage of the national minority in the composition of the population.

During preparations for drawing up of this part of the report, overview of all municipal, city, most of the provincial and some of the national sites for the territory of the AP of Vojvodina, was developed. At this point, it is important to emphasise that **all local self governments have their own sites** for presentation of the current situation and documents for the relevant area.

City or Municipality Statutes in all environments (45) stipulate the official use of **Serbian language and Cyrillic script**. Sites of 21 local self governments were correctly written. On this occasion it is necessary to point out that it is obligatory for the names to be written in Serbian language and Cyrillic script first, and then in Latin script in case it is in official use in the area, and then in a language and script of the national minority. It is interesting that sites of the municipalities of Irig and Indija are written in Latin script, whereas there are only Serbian language and Cyrillic script in official use.

The Statute stipulates official use of **Serbian language and Latin script** in 23 local self governments. Even 30 areas have their sites written in Latin script, while the increase of the use of Serbian language and Latin script is evident.

As regards **minority languages, Hungarian language and script** are in official use in 31 local self governments. Only ten sites were created also in this language, which is in official use in those areas.

Slovak language and script are in official use in 13 local self governments. Only three sites (municipalities Alibunar, Bački Petrovac, Stara Pazova) were created in that language as well. **Romanian language and script** are in official use in ten local self governments, while only one site (Alibunar municipality) is created in that language. **Croatian language and script** are in official use in four local self governments, while only the site of the City of Subotica is also written in that language. **Ruthenian language and script** are in official use in six local self governments, while **Czech language and script** are in official use only in the municipality of Bela Crkva. None of the sites was written in those languages and scripts.

The site of the municipality of Alibunar is to be commended, for it is entirely written in compliance with the statutory obligations and updating purposes (it is written in Serbian language, in Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and Slovak and Romanian languages and scripts).

Certain sites (the City of Subotica and municipality of Senta, Novi Bečej) are nice and practical, rich with information and written in minority languages that are in official use, however they are not written in Serbian language and Cyrillic script, even though the City of Subotica established only official use of the Cyrillic script.

In 19 local self governments the sites are also available in **English language**, while in the municipality of Senta in **German language** as well, even though those local self governments are not obliged by law to do so.

As regards **the sites of the provincial authorities, institutions and public companies**, the official presentation of the Government of the AP of Vojvodina was created in Serbian language and Latin script and in English language. According to the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina, the following languages and scripts are in official use within the authorities and organisations of the AP of Vojvodina: Serbian language and Cyrillic script, Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian and Ruthenian languages and their scripts, while the official use of Latin script is implemented in compliance with the law.

Sites of most Provincial Secretariats (for Information, Culture, Health and others) are written in Serbian language and Latin script.

Some of the sites, such as the site of the Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry are written in Serbian language and Cyrillic script.

Sites of the provincial public companies and institutions, if they exist, they are differently written (Pedagogical Institute of Vojvodina, in Latin script, The Theatre Museum in Latin script), while some do not even exist – such as the site of the Institute for Culture.

Site of the Provincial Secretariat for Education is written in Serbian language and Latin script, whereas it announces the introduction of Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian, German and English languages, still in preparation phase.

As regards the languages, the site of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities **is correctly written** and updated in Serbian language, Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian and Ruthenian languages, which is in full compliance with the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina in force. This site also provides the English language option.

The sites of the **Government of the Republic of Serbia, that is, the Ministries**, are in Serbian language, in Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and in English language (Ministry of Finance and Taxation Administration in the AP of Vojvodina, Ministry of Interior and Police Administration in the AP of Vojvodina, except from the Police Administration of Novi Sad, which has a separate site).

The site of the National Employment Office is in Serbian language in Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and in English, while the site of the subsidiary office in Subotica is in Latin script. The site of the National Geodetic Institute is in Serbian language in Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and in English language, whereas the site of the Cadastre Office in Novi Sad is in Latin script.

VIII – SUPERVISION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATIONS ON OFFICIAL USE OF LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS¹

Article 18 of the Law on Establishing Specific Competences of the Autonomous Province (“Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 6/2002), **stipulates that in compliance with the Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts, the Autonomous Province, through its authorities, closely regulates official use of the languages and scripts of the national minorities at the territory of the Autonomous Province and supervises the implementation of the regulations, which regulate the issues**, and the relevant law. The province supervises, as duty conferred upon it, implementation of the relevant law.

Article 4 of the **Provincial Assembly Decision on implementation of the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina**, stipulates that: provincial administration authorities, provincial organisations and services **shall continue their work under the** present name and perform the tasks in compliance

¹ see Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities: *Report on 2008 Supervision of Implementation of Regulations on Official Use of Languages and Scripts in the AP of Vojvodina*.

with the regulations in force until they are harmonised with the law and the Statute ("Off. Journal of the APV", No. 18/09).

Before the supervision was conferred upon the autonomous province, the Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts stated that the supervision was to be performed by the Ministries authorised for Administration, Traffic, Urban Planning, Housing - Utilities Services, Education, Culture and Health, within their scope of competencies. However, since the aforementioned Law came into force in 1991, and until 2002, the supervision was not performed in practice and there were no known cases of pronounced measures for the purpose of consistent implementation of the law provisions, even though they were drastically violated on daily basis.

Based on the Provincial Assembly Decision on Provincial Administration ("Official Journal of the APV", No.21/2002-consolidated text and 18/09) **these duties fall under the scope of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities.** According to the Rulebook on Internal Organisation and Systematisation of Jobs of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, at the territory of the AP of Vojvodina, supervision **shall be performed by the Administrative Monitoring Unit, four systematised job posts,** within the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities. During the previous period, the duties were performed by two administrative staff – an advisor for administrative monitoring – Head of the Unit and an advisor for administrative monitoring, and since August 2008, one more administrative staff, an advisor for administrative monitoring.

In the territory of the AP of Vojvodina, monitoring started in the middle of May 2002. Since the monitoring had not been performed by the national authorities, we had to start from the beginning; therefore it was necessary to provide instructions, explanations, directions, and notices rather than pronounce measures and punish.

Monitoring of the local self governments, we visited and determined official use of the language and script of a national minority for, was undertaken in their Assemblies, executive and administrative bodies and public companies, through inspection of name writing, whether it was in compliance with the law; notices in the reception offices and the counter halls, communication options in the languages and scripts of the national minorities, issuance of bilingual or multilingual certificates, documents or records, writing of names of the inhabited settlements, streets and squares. We supervised subject that fall under the group of state authorities, organisations and institutions, as well as the group of subjects comprised of organisations and institutions, and similar, that communicate with citizens. We undertake regular, controlling and non-regular supervision.

The facts determined through direct inspection were described in the records of the performed monitoring. During 2008, **91 subjects were monitored and 24 notices granted,** which ordered the responsible individuals or owners to correct the faults within the set time period, and act upon the order.

At the end of 2008, the aforementioned sentence of the Circuit Court in Novi Sad, related to the administrative dispute with PC "Železnica Srbije" pertaining to the railway stations in Subotica, Senta, Bačka Topola, Vrbas and Kisač, arrived; ordering to act upon the notices issued by the Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities.

In the middle of 2009, an appeal was lodged by "DDOR – Novi Sad" from Novi Sad, Kovačica office, against the Notice of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, for wrongful application of material law, and wrongfully and incompletely determined facts. The Executive Council of the AP of Vojvodina, investigating the statements from the appeal, granted the Decision by which **appeal was rejected as unfounded.**

While monitoring centres of the municipalities, some inhabited settlements with significant population of national minorities were visited as well; there, monitoring was frequently undertaken in the local offices, local community centres, elementary schools, medical centres, cultural centres and similar; the inspection, checking whether the route signs showing names of the settlements were written in the manner prescribed by the law, was also undertaken.

Monitoring encompasses **regular inspection of mandatory writing of names in Serbian language and Cyrillic script**; it is particularly undertaken in those cities and municipalities where the use of Serbian language and Cyrillic script only, was determined by the Statute (Inđija, Irig, Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica – except from the inhabited settlement Stara Bingula). It has been observed that traditional names were written in Cyrillic script by all subjects that are legally bound to do so. Failing to write in Cyrillic or writing names only using Latin script is noticeable with newly opened facilities, shops and companies; most frequently those are trade names, notices of working hours or other announcements written at the shop or company's entrances. Eleven notices were issued ordering that faults were to be corrected. Control monitoring determined that it was acted upon the Notices in all except two cases, in which requests for the institution of offence proceedings were submitted to the Municipal authority for offences in Sremska Mitrovica. **In both cases the Decisions were issued establishing trade shop - commission shop owners' liabilities for the violations; and they were fined, in compliance with the Law on Official Use of Languages and Scripts.**

IX- BUDGET ALLOCATION TO THE BODIES AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE AP OF VOJVODINA, WHICH OFFICIALLY USE LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Necessary funds for exercising the right to official use of languages and scripts are secured by the state authorities, territorial unit authorities and public services, where rights and obligations established by this decision are exercised. (Article 12 of the Decision).

Funding issues, related to official use of languages and scripts of the national minorities in the AP of Vojvodina, have demanded a systematic solution for a long time. Partial solutions, applied in financing in the AP of Vojvodina during last several years, contributed to more positive developments, as well as understanding and resolving of those problems. On several occasions, Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities and the competent Ministries of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, initiated and proposed more complex and systematic solutions to the financing issue. At those occasions, **criteria for long term solution** to financing official use of languages and scripts of the national minorities in the AP of Vojvodina **were initiated**. The need to resolve the issue has been recognised, however in most cases this is where the matter rests now.

Funds for this purpose were planned for the first time in 2005 Budget of the AP of Vojvodina, so as to commence resolving the financing problems in more adequate manner. At that time more appropriate decisions were made with a view to enable realisation of allocation of the planned funds.

The first Competition for allocation of the budget to the bodies and organisations in the AP of Vojvodina, which officially use languages and scripts of the national minorities, was announced on 31st March 2008, in the amount of: RSD 13,800,000. The competition was announced based on the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities' new Decision on allocation of the budget funds to the bodies and organisations in the AP of Vojvodina, which officially use languages and scripts of the national minorities in the AP of Vojvodina, for the purpose of financing or participation in financing of the following:

- Training for the employees of the authorities and organisations where language of the national minority, established as the official language, is used; and particularly for the jobs which imply contacts with clients (through participation at courses, seminars and other activities organised for this purpose), and for development of electronic administration system for jobs in multicultural environment;
- Expenses for making and mounting boards with names of authorities and organisations, and inhabited settlements, on the routes; names of streets and squares written also in

languages of national minorities that are in official use in the city, municipality or inhabited settlement, and for printing bilingual or multilingual forms, as well as printing official newsletters and other publications.

The Competition was exclusively open for: the bodies of the cities and municipalities in the territory of the AP of Vojvodina where the Statute stipulates official use of languages and scripts of national minorities for the whole territory of the city, municipality or some inhabited settlements in their territory; local self governments in the territory of the cities and municipalities; other bodies, organisations, services and institutions in the territory of the cities and municipalities.

The amount of the allocated funds was determined based on the following criteria: number of languages and scripts that were in official use in the entire territory of the city, municipality or inhabited settlement; percentage participation rate of the national minorities whose languages and scripts were in official use; total material expenses necessary for implementation of the projects; other financial resources that existed at the moment; continuity in project financing by the Secretariat, or whether that was the first request for funding.

A total of **79 applications** was submitted, which met the Competition's requirements (one request did not meet the Competition's requirements), and pursuant to examination of the complete and timely applications, the transferable funds were allocated.

The second Competition for allocation of the budget to the bodies and organisations in the AP of Vojvodina, which officially use languages and scripts of the national minorities, for the first trimester of 2009, was announced on 26th December 2008, in the total amount of: RSD 3,500,000 for the same purposes and the same users.

A total of 96 applications was submitted, 12 of them were not examined due to the procedural faults. It was acted upon 84 applications for allocation of the funds.

The third Competition for allocation of the budget, for the same purpose, was announced on 20 June 2009, in the amount of RSD 5,350,000. A total of 121 applications was submitted, 18 of them did not meet the Competition's requirements, and it was acted upon 103 applications for allocation of the funds.

At the occasion, **it is important to emphasise** that the preparations and acting upon the competition realised so far, demonstrate the importance and contribution of multilingualism. That is to say, the text of the Competition and the applications were announced in Serbian language and Cyrillic script, as well as in Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian, and Ruthenian languages and scripts. The Competition documentation is available for downloading in the aforementioned languages from the official site of the Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities; while one sample of the Competition documentation is distributed to the city and municipality administrations in the AP of Vojvodina, where one or more of the minority languages is officially used (39 out of 45 administrations), and from there, the documentation is further forwarded to the local self governments within their territories.

The Competition is announced in the minority magazines issued in those languages. National Councils of Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian and Ruthenian minorities are informed on the Competition.

Applications and documentation for the Competition were mainly in Serbian language, however, in the meantime there has been made an improvement, thereby half of the applications for the last Competition that arrived from the environments where Hungarian language was officially used were in Hungarian, while few applications were in Croatian language. Similarly, there has been an increase in number of reports (albeit only in Hungarian language and script) on the used funds.

It proved to be very important that through co-financing of some projects, in this way, real issues of official use of languages and scripts have been resolved, in the environments where languages and script are in official use.

During the supervision, **allocation and the purpose of the funds used have been regularly and directly inspected.**

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

1. A significant move has been made in all segments of exercising the rights to official use of national minorities' languages and scripts in the AP of Vojvodina, and particularly in regards the obligations established by the Provincial Assembly Decision on More Specific Regulation of Particular Issues of Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities also contributed to the improvement of the situation in the field of official use of languages and scripts through co-financing of the projects directed towards improvement of multilingualism in the cities and municipalities in the AP of Vojvodina, where the languages and scripts of the national minorities are in official use, for during this period there were realised almost three times more funds as compared to the previously overviewed period.

Aiming to meet the practical requirements, translations were made to all languages that were in official use in the bodies and organisation of the AP of Vojvodina, and text of the most significant regulations were published, such as: the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the Statute of the AP of Vojvodina, the Law on Establishing Competencies of the AP of Vojvodina, the Law on National Councils and similar.

2. As regards some particular issues, there are discrepancies not only between the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts, of 1991, and the Law on Protection of Freedoms and Rights of the National Minorities, enacted in 2002, which contains more contemporary solutions that are in compliance with the provisions of the ratified international treaties, but between the procedural laws which regulate the use of languages and scripts in the judicial and administrative proceedings as well. Officially used language should not be confused with the right to use one's language in an administrative and judicial proceeding. In accordance with the previous conclusions, it is necessary to institute a change of the procedural regulations so as to consider violation of the right to use one's language and script, absolutely significant violation of the rules of proceeding.

3. Regulations in force, which regulate the field of official use of languages and scripts, provide sufficient guarantees for survival and development of official use, apart from Serbian language, of Hungarian, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Czech, Bulgarian and Macedonian languages and scripts. One or more national minorities' languages are in official use in 39 Vojvodina's cities and municipalities, however, in practice, in most of the environments, rights pertaining to the official use of languages cannot be efficiently exercised, neither before the local authorities, nor the local branches of the central authority. Despite the formal guarantees, in practice, sometimes, there is lack of satisfactory conditions which would ensure official use of minority languages due to the human resources and material issues. During the nineties, as a result of the employment policy at the time, and the entire state politics, judiciary bodies and administrative bodies were left without officials and civil servants familiar with the official languages of the national minorities, who were trained to communicate and conduct proceedings in those languages. In many instances, the clients, being aware of the situation, have not even tried to exercise their language rights. On the other hand, even when technical and human resources' conditions for official use of the national minority languages have been created, people belonging to certain national minorities have continued to use Serbian language, which have indicated significant differences in the needs of various national communities, and the general situation concerning mother tongue. The existing discrepancy between the normative and present life reality could be overcome through acceptance of the real needs and the objective abilities of state authorities.

4. In the environments where official use of minority languages has been introduced, additional funds still have not been institutionally provided to the administration and judiciary, for covering the increased expenses related to installation of appropriate computer programs, multilingual forms, professional upgrading, stimulation of the employees who speak minority languages etc. The expenses burden the authorities in charge, thus they are in unfavourable position compared to the authorities in unilingual environments. Funds that were, through competition,

allocated for this purpose by the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities have not been sufficient; the financing issue must be systematically resolved by transfer of part of the tax and other municipal revenues, for this purpose, that is, multilingualism is to be taken into consideration during planning and allotment of funds for central authority's regional units.

5. It is important to emphasise that, after a long period of time, at the end of the previous year, the Statute of the City of Pančevo introduced the official use, apart from Serbian language and Cyrillic script, of Bulgarian and Hungarian languages and scripts in Ivanovo, Romanian language and script in Banatsko Novo Selo, Macedonian language and script in Jabuka, and in the territory of the inhabited city of Pančevo (cadastre municipality of Vojlovica) Hungarian language and script. The Statute of the city of Sombor also confirms the official use of Hungarian language and script in the city territory, and in the inhabited settlements of Bački Breg and Bački Monoštor official use of Croatian language and script were introduced.

In this way, it was acted in compliance with the Provincial Assembly Decision on More Specific Regulation of Particular Issues of Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Territory of the AP of Vojvodina. Thus, they partially implemented the Conclusion No. 1, from the previous Report on Exercising the Rights to Official Use of National Minorities' Languages and Scripts in the AP of Vojvodina, which was considered and accepted at the second session of the Executive Council of the AP of Vojvodina, held 23rd July 2008.

PROPOSAL

Government of the AP of Vojvodina at the _____ session held on _____ 2010, considered and accepted the REPORT ON EXERCISING THE RIGHTS TO OFFICIAL USE OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES' LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS IN THE AP OF VOJVODINA; at the occasion the following

CONCLUSIONS were drawn

1. Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities commits to continue cooperation with other provincial bodies, bodies and organisations of the local self governments, organisational units of the state administration authorities, public companies, institutions and services in the field of exercising the rights to official use of the national minorities' languages and scripts by people belonging to the national minorities.

2. Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities commits to draw the attention of the assemblies of municipalities (Indija, Šid and Irig) to the obligation, which they have not fulfilled, to establish official use of the national minorities' languages in some settlements within their territories, in compliance with the criteria stipulated in the Provincial Assembly Decision on More Specific Regulation of Particular Issues of the Official Use of Languages and Scripts of the National Minorities in the Territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and harmonise provisions of their Statutes with the provisions of the Decision.

3. Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities commits to continue taking measures with a view to enable and upgrade knowledge of the national minorities' languages of the employees, who conduct proceedings or communicate with clients in some of the national minority languages.

4. Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities commits to request that the competent authorities make necessary amendments of regulations, due to the issues arising in practice when the national minority languages are used in the conduct of proceedings.

5. The Report on Exercising the Rights to Official Use of National Minorities' Languages and Scripts in the AP of Vojvodina shall be submitted to the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina, Government of the Republic of Serbia and particularly to the Committee on Interethnic Relations of the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina, for information purposes.