**Material to complement UN General Assembly Resolution 74/165 – Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**

The Slovak Republic highly appreciates the cultural legacy of persons of individual national minorities living in our country, and it protects and supports the cultural rights of persons belonging to national minorities. **The Minority Culture Fund** (hereinafter referred to as the “Fund”) is the principal instrument for the support and development of the cultural legacy of persons belonging to national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

The Fund was established by Act No. 138/2017 Coll. on the Fund for the Support of the Culture of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts as amended. Pursuant to Article 1 of the Act, the Fund was created as a public institution for the purpose of preserving, expressing, protecting and developing the identity and cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities, upbringing and education regarding the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and ensuring intercultural dialogue and understanding among citizens with Slovak nationality and citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.

The Fund is registered in the Register of Organizations of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. The Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic appointed Mr. Norbert Molnár as the first director of the Fund on 17 July 2017. The supervisory commission, expert councils and board of directors of the Fund were also established in 2017. Furthermore, the principal documents of the Fund were elaborated and adopted, and the necessary procedural requirements were obtained and prepared to ensure the commencement of the Fund’s main activities, in particular, the accepting and evaluating of applications and providing financial assistance.

Decisions regarding the provided subsidies are not dependent on the state, but are specifically based on rules defined by law. The relevant Act regulates the issues related to the Fund’s activities and bodies, the functioning of expert commissions assessing applications, the provision of funds, applicants and the submission of applications, funding and the management of the Fund.

The Fund’s principal activities include the provision of funds for the support of cultural and scientific activities of persons belonging to national minorities, the implementation of public cultural events, the creation, dissemination and presentation of the outcomes of such activities, the provision of financial means to natural persons and legal entities which creatively or academically participate in the development of the culture of persons belonging to national minorities, the monitoring of the activities of supported entities, maintaining publicly accessible records of applications, applicants, financial means, cooperation with state administration bodies, bodies of territorial self-administration, public institutions and other persons, participation in activities and cooperation with partnership organizations active abroad in the field of the support of culture, the supervision of the implementation of contractual commitments and recovery of claims from contracts concluded with recipients of financial means.

The Fund’s main financial resource is the contribution from the state budget. According to the Act on the State Budget, the Ministry of Culture provides contributions to the Fund of at least EUR 8,000,000 from the state budget within the approved limits for the relevant budget period.

**Support for the Culture of Disadvantaged Groups**

**The Culture of Disadvantaged Groups subsidy programme, through which € 980,000 is distributed annually in support of projects in the field of live culture, informal education and periodical and non-periodical publications,** is a systematic and sustainable tool of the Ministry of Culture for supporting and accessing culture and information from culture.

It serves for the support of cultural activities of disabled persons and disadvantaged groups in relation to the cultural activities of these persons and groups, and includes support of equality of opportunities, integration in society, the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and extremism, support for education regarding tolerance, the strengthening of social and family cohesion and the development of intercultural dialogue. As a whole, the subsidy programme, serves as tool of state cultural policy regarding the prevention and elimination of all forms of intolerance, discrimination, violence and xenophobia and the support of equality of opportunities, tolerance and the development of intercultural dialogue (prevention of prejudice, stereotypes and myths in the relationships between majority society and minorities and marginalized groups).

The system of specialized museums under the umbrella of the Slovak National Museum (organizations in the founder’s competence of the Ministry) is an important instrument for the protection of the cultural rights of persons belonging to national minorities. They create collections oriented on the history and culture of persons belonging to national minorities living in Slovakia (the Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia in Martin, the Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava, the Museum of Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava, the Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava, the Museum of Romani Culture in Slovakia in Martin, the Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov, the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník, and the Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava).

These museums are specialized documentation, research and methodological workplaces which systematically search for, acquire, preserve and professionally process material and spiritual documents about the history, culture, traditions and persons belonging to ethnic groups in the territory of present-day Slovakia. They showcase the results of their activities in the form of publication activities, educational activities, exhibitions and cultural events in accordance with their goal of presenting the country’s rich cultural heritage to the general public.

The Holocaust Museum, which is part of the Slovak National Museum-Museum of Jewish Culture, was opened in 2016 in Sereď. This institution participates in educational activities and programmes, the aim of which is to prevent expressions of anti-Semitism, racism, extremism and radicalization in society. In 2019, the museum also trained members of the National Criminal Agency on the topic of anti-Semitism in Slovakia.

The Ministry of Culture ensures the implementation of the tasks arising from our membership in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Every six months it administratively ensures and organizes all of the requirements necessary for the implementation of business trips abroad for PhDr. Martin Korčok, PhD., an expert of the Ministry of Culture, and the head of the Holocaust Museum in Sereď. In 2020, during the German presidency, Mr. Korčok served as the chairman of the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of Roma – CGR. He is also a member of the Memorials and Museums Working Group (MMWG), which had online meetings on 18 November 2020 and 30 November 2020. A significant part of the agenda of these meetings dealt with the impacts of Covid-19 on museums, memorials and holy sites and included discussions on a recent wave of thefts from Holocaust institutions and on the possible implementation of safety measures to prevent future robberies. The participation of heads of individual delegations in IHRA discussions is considered a great benefit, particularly regarding the combination of expert, diplomatic and political levels. The CGR held online meetings headed by Mr. Korčok on 25 November 2020 and 1 December 2020. The main topic of these meetings was the implementation of methods of defining anti-gypsism/anti-Roma discrimination at the national and international levels. According to the commission, the heads of delegations should ensure the acknowledgement of this definition at the national levels. Governments and other involved parties should be informed and if necessary, explanatory meetings should be organized. A report on the progress in member states should be submitted. At the international level, the document proposes to contact responsible persons in governments regarding the acknowledgement of this working definition. Since the last plenary session, which was held from 29 June to 2 July 2020, the commission adopted the definition of anti-gypsism/anti-Roma discrimination, and the general public in Slovakia was informed of this on 12 October 2020 in the form of a press release.

The *Ifjú Szivek* dance theatre, which presents traditional Hungarian musical and dance culture in the wider cultural and social context of Central Europe, also contributes to the protection and development of cultural rights of persons belonging to national minorities. A significant part of their work focuses on theatre adaptations of traditional Hungarian folk dance and folk music in Slovakia. The presentation of music, dance and traditional clothing also overlaps with productions that inspire audiences to think about and understand more complex social phenomena. In addition to staging and performances, the dance theatre actively participates in organizing and implementing many national events. Their activities include archiving and processing field folklore research from the 20th century, which makes it accessible for parties interested in traditional culture. The members of the dance ensemble are also active mediators and teachers of folk dance. The seat of the dance ensemble is the only Hungarian “brick-and-mortar” theatre in the capital and thus fulfils the role of the important centre of Hungarian culture in Bratislava.

The national project entitled *The Documentation-Information Centre of the Romani Culture* (http://www.portalsvk.sk/sk/) at the State Scientific Library in Prešov significantly contributes to raising the awareness of the majority population about the Romani culture, and thus helps to eliminate prejudice and stereotypes. The goal of this project is to build a digital database of the Romani culture. The task of the Centre is to accumulate information about Romani culture, history, language, traditions and other areas of Romani life in one place and to provide unique access to information about everything related to Romani issues.

The National Centre of Culture in Bratislava systematically deals with the issues related to the human rights of vulnerable groups, gender equality and equal opportunities, the participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in cultural and social life, particularly in the context of the prevention of xenophobia, radicalization, extremism and all forms of violence, through the informal education of employees in the field of cultural and educational activities and the specialized magazine entitled *Sociálna prevencia* (Social Prevention). The activities of this organization focus on enhancing the awareness of employees in the field of culture at the regional and local levels who work with various target groups and thus have the potential to contribute to the support and development of the rights of vulnerable groups directly in their place of work.

The Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banská Bystrica organises training sessions within accredited educational programmes entitled Ethnic Cleansing, Genocides, Racial Intolerance in History for teachers of history, ethics and civics. They bring new findings related to the solution of the Jewish question in Slovakia from 1939 to 1945, the solution to the Jewish question in Europe during WWII, and the persecution of the Roma people in Slovakia. It also touches on modern expressions of racism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia.

**Religious Minorities**

The principal task of the Ministry of Culture in the field of cooperation in the prevention of violence against persons belonging to religious minorities is the strengthening of inter-religious dialogue. It has resulted in the establishment of cooperation between the state and churches in educational, social and cultural fields. Inter-religious dialogue supports understanding of and respect for different as well as shared values. It is an important contribution to the prevention of the radicalization and growth of extremist groups.

In order to prevent radicalization and religious extremism, the Ministry of Culture carries out analytical activities regarding communities showing signs of religious radicalization and extremism. As part of its inter-ministerial information exchanges and cooperation, the Ministry provides consultations about various forms of religiousness, religious terrorism and issues related to extremism, xenophobia, racial intolerance and anti-Semitism. It elaborates standpoints and materials for state administration bodies and other institutions. For example, we cooperate with the Ministry of the Interior on assessing applications for the registration of civic associations, and we analyse their possible religious character.

In the interest of protecting children from manipulative worldviews such as radical spiritual groups, an inter-ministerial working group was formed under the authority of the Ministry of Culture; its role is to ensure cooperation and information exchanges among experts from individual sectors and to unify their approaches leading towards the creation of necessary instruments and measures.

Raising awareness about the issues of radicalization and religious extremism, which can be achieved by carrying out educational and publication activities focusing on professional groups, churches and religious communities and the general public, is another method of prevention. The staff of the Department of Church Affairs of the Ministry of Culture organises lectures at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava through the course entitled Religious Extremism; and at the Pedagogical Faculty of Trnava University.

The Ministry of Culture also conducts educational seminars for churches and religious communities related to the prevention and handling of extremism in the context of human rights. As part of the systematic life-long education of the workers of registered churches and religious communities, who, through their jobs, have an impact on preventing extremism, the Ministry of Culture organised the following international conferences in cooperation with the Pedagogical Faculty of Trnava University:

*Religiofóbia: realita, prevencia a edukácia* (Religiophobia: Reality, Prevention and Education, 10 September 2016 in Trnava) – this conference aimed at inspiring expert discussion on the topic of religious-motivated extremism and forms of xenophobia related to religion (Islamophobia, anti-Judaism, etc),

*Migrácia: náboženstvá bez hraníc, európska perspektíva* (Migration: Religions without Borders, European Perspective, 2 May 2016 in Trnava) – this conference aimed at inspiring an inter-disciplinary expert discussion on the current migration crisis, primarily as an (inter)religious and (inter)cultural problem, to reflect European historical experience with migration and European approaches to migration on the basis of wide platform of various academic disciplines, state institutions and NGOs.

*Migrácia: náboženstvá bez hraníc, európska a americká perspektíva* (Migration: Religions without Borders, European and American Perspectives, 5 May 2017 in Trnava), *Medzináboženský dialóg a migračná kríza* (Inter-religious Dialogue and Migration Crisis, 2 April 2018 in Trnava) *Alternatívna religiozita v stredoeurópskom priestore* (Alternative Religiousness in the Central European Space, 21 February 2019) – the goal of these conferences was to inspire expert discussion on the current migration crisis in Europe from an interdisciplinary perspective and on the basis of a broad platform of academic disciplines, state institutions and NGOs. In connection with these conferences, Trnava University published conference proceedings entitled: *Religiofóbia: Realita, prevencia a edukácia* (Religiophobia: Reality, Prevention and Education, 2016), Migration: Religions without Boarders (2017) and *Medzináboženský dialóg a migračná kríza* (Inter-religious Dialogue and Migration Crisis, 2018).

The international conference entitled *Alternatívna religiozita a vzdelávanie* (Alternative Religiousness and Education) could not be held due to anti-pandemic restrictions. However, the conference proceedings were published in late 2020 and are available for all interested parties in electronic and physical form.

In connection with the prevention of extremism and radicalization, the National Centre of Culture in Bratislava organized the seminar entitled *Prevencia vybraných sociálno-patologických javov* (Prevention of Selected Socio-Pathological Phenomena) for workers in the field of educational and cultural activities in cooperation with cultural and educational facilities: 28 – 29 May 2015, Galanta; 22 – 23 October 2015, Teplý Vrch; 10 – 1 March 2016, Roztoky; 13 – 14 October 2016, Banská Štiavnica; 16 – 17 March 2017, Zámutov; 12 – 13 October 2017, Trenčín; 15 – 16 March 2018, Michalovce; 4 – 5 October 2018, Považská Bystrica; 11 -12 April 2019, Banská Bystrica. A seminar with participants and a second online seminar due to pandemic restrictions were held in 2020. The programmes of these seminars focus on a range of topics related to the prevention of negative social phenomena, including the prevention of all forms of intolerance, violence, xenophobia and extremism, while also pointing out threats related to the use and abuse of new communication technologies.

In 2016, the National Centre of Culture organized the seminar entitled *Ochrana a podpora ľudských práv v oblasti kultúry* (Protection and Support of Human Rights in Culture), where the following contributions were presented:

*Verejný priestor, kultúra, ľudské práva a ľudská dôstojnosť – dilemy a konflikty* (Public Space, Culture, Human Rights and Human Dignity – Dilemmas and Conflicts, Mgr. Miroslav Tížik, PhD., Sociological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences);

*Vzdelávanie detí a mládeže o holokauste – výzva a nevyhnutnosť* (Educating Children and Youth about the Holocaust – the Challenge and the Necessity, PhDr. Monika Vrzgulová, CSc., Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Documentation Centre of Holocaust);

*Aktivity Slovenského národného strediska pre ľudské práva* (Activities of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, Mgr. Tomáš Földes, Slovak National Centre for Human Rights).

From 2016 to 2019, the National Centre of Culture carried out several educational activities for students of selected schools in Bratislava and in cooperation with regional cultural and educational facilities in Bratislava and other regions (2016: five events in Trenčín, Galanta, Nové Zámky and Bratislava; 2017: ten activities in Bratislava; 2018 and 2019: three activities each year in Trnava and Bratislava). These were interactive experience events oriented on various topics from the field of social prevention, including the prevention of violence, bullying and harassment and substance and other addictions, prevention of criminality, intolerance and religious and political extremism.