

Appendix II: Comments by the Government of Austria

Ad Item C:

For decades, as internationalization with its ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity has further expanded, this has been reason to react accordingly and to step up initiatives to intensify language learning on the level of the compulsory schools. This applies, in particular, to primary schools. Here, pupils are offered that amount of language training that enhances their skills without imposing any stress on their general development.

In these efforts, the languages of our neighboring countries, as well as the languages of those nationals who live in Austria are given special attention. Multilingual children are always given support that helps them to become integrated, which means that they attend regular school classes and are assisted by additional teachers who specifically develop their skills of the German language, i.e. their second language, as well as by teachers of their mother-tongue.

The education offered to pupils in their mother tongue has gone through a many-year development process, removing it from a marginalized position - characterized by relying on the curricula and teachers (consulting teachers) of the home countries – and integrating it into the national curricula, thus making it part of the regular education.

The possibilities offered to teachers and education experts in the broader sense by CERNET, the Language Center at the Federal Pedagogical Institute in Vienna, deserve special mentioning.

In a nutshell this means that with the CERNET project, the Vienna School Board has greatly promoted cross-border cooperation with our neighboring regions, i.e. Brno, Bratislava and Győr, since 1996. It has therefore been possible to organize more than 120 partnerships between schools, as well as a multitude of seminars, meetings and conferences. A special focus is on intensifying the communication competences of the future EU citizens in this region of CENTROPE. In this connection, one should mention the development of the common Central European language portfolio, which is made available to pupils so that they can document their language skills.

Ad Item E:

The criticism expressed in the expert report, i.e. that promoting the Slovenian language in Styria "has been neglected for decades" must be rejected vehemently.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, education in school can be offered in the Slovenian language in primary schools, both as a mandatory and/or optional exercise. It has always been possible to offer courses in Slovenian as a second foreign language at the upper-level secondary general schools (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule). Slovenian may also be offered as a first language at lower-level secondary schools (Hauptschule) und upper-level secondary general schools (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule). The regional school board may also provide for the teaching of Slovenian as a possible optional subject from its resources.

A requirement for implementing these options is that the teachers have the necessary qualifications and that pupils are interested in attending these courses. In Styria, there are teachers who can teach Slovenian at upper-level secondary general schools (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule), since the Department for Slavic Languages at the University of Graz offers a teacher-training program for Slovenian.

The bilingual school calendar for 2005, which shows the projects that have been launched and those that are planned, is currently in its preparatory phase. The calendar is a product of the EUREGIO (Styria – Slovenia) network. The newspaper "Kleine Zeitung" is integrated into this network. Since 1999, 53 school partnership projects have been supported in the framework of the Comenius Campaign 1 (multilateral school partnership projects), with one Austrian and one Slovenian school participating in each project.

EUREGIO, as the body representing the interests of the regions located along borders, accepts the following tasks: general coordination with the partner country, establishing links to the other structures, as required for the bilateral cooperation, providing a common platform for cross-border projects, as well as public relations and information.

As a result, the "INTERREG-SLO/A Project" was developed, which is a cooperation project between *Technozentrum Celje* and *Handelsakademie Graz* (upper-level commercial school).

The education authority promotes measures whereby schools develop their regional profile. In this connection, the languages of the new EU Member States are being especially promoted. The many years of cooperation between schools, such as the upper-level federal secondary schools at Bar Radkersburg and Gornja Radgona, the primary schools of Graz and Maribor, the school choir of Velenje and *Handelsakademie Deutschlandsberg* (upper-level commercial school), the celebrations along the border at Gamlitz, are examples of sustainable cooperation projects. The cooperation was also published and documented in the media.

In addition to school activities, cultural events should also be mentioned, such as the "Fest an der Grenze" (Celebrating along the Border), international encounters (dancing and performing groups), as well as musical, literary and educational events in Styria.

Reports about the aforementioned cooperation projects can be found in the print media.

Ad Item F:

Within the competences of the Regional School Board for Burgenland, the possibility to teach lessons in ethnic languages is expanded from year to year, provided that staff is available to teach the classes.

During the 2004/05 school year, Romany is taught at the primary schools of Oberwart and Unterwart, as well as the lower-level secondary school at Oberwart. A total of 28 pupils attend these courses.

Ad Item G:

The "HUNGARICUM" project: In keeping with the provisions regarding school curricula, i.e. to provide additional mother-tongue courses, the pupils with Hungarian as a first or second language can consolidate and expand their language skills or experience basic elements of their culture through play-acting, as well as to link these to their present, new cultural environment. The German-speaking pupils acquire elementary language skills, which help them with verbal communication, on account of the curriculum provisions on "Hungarian as a living foreign language".

The "HUNGARICUM" project especially takes account of the aspects of inter-cultural learning. The idea is to provide the target groups with insights into the differences but also the common features of our cultural heritage by play-acting with, and speaking to each other. The project is being offered as an additional facultative feature (as part of an optional exercise) by five primary schools at different locations, as well as two middle-level and one upper-level school in Vienna.

The EPS Project (European Primary School): Establishing the European primary school is a multi-country educational project that was developed jointly by primary-school experts from the four neighboring regions of Győr, Brno, Bratislava and Vienna. The project is being implemented in all four regions in keeping with the regional possibilities.

The goal of this school project is to particularly promote an attitude favorable to a common Europe. This is done, on the one hand, by primarily communicating those skills that promote a life together, namely an expanded supply of language courses. The European primary school offers an expanded range of foreign-language classes.

Resorting to the use of "native speakers" is the other aspect. The European primary school offers the possibility of acquiring skills in one further foreign language as of primary school level II. The languages of the neighboring regions, in particular, i.e. Czech, Hungarian and Slovak, are offered, in particular.

At the European middle-level (secondary) school, the European/inter-cultural dimension of education is supported in a project that is unique in Europe, especially by specifically promoting the languages of our eastern neighbors that have lesser diffusion and are taught to a lesser degree.

The goals of the European middle-level (secondary) school are: to communicate the global education in the mother-tongue and in English, on the basis of the curriculum for upper-level secondary schools, using the most modern teaching methods. The language skills are intensified by applying them at all times during classes, the everyday school life and during leisure times. The awareness for Europe is developed and promoted in the course of European studies. Intercultural learning is communicated, and pupils are educated to exercise tolerance and open-mindedness towards the world (cosmopolitanism).

As of the 2004/05 school year, teachers for Romany have been assigned to teaching mother-tongue courses at primary schools. Acquiring language skills at an early stage is considered to be part of the overall project, i.e. first measures are taken which, however, are then also continued on secondary school levels I and II.

At present, the school law applying to ethnic groups does not encompass the scope of responsibility of the Vienna School Board. As a result, the resources, regulations and overall conditions under that law are not available.

As far as the Burgenland Croatian language is concerned, the Vienna School Board has offered to provide two bilingual teachers to conduct bilingual classes in Burgenland Croatian and German at a primary school for a minimum of 13 mother-tongue pupils.

Ad Item H:

The report of the committee experts recognizes the bilingual education and the related methodological and didactic questions to a large extent, taking account of issues regarding quality assurance and school development.

The statement "very positive element" should be an incentive to further develop a regional education program which presents bilingual teaching and education (classes offered to preserve and strengthen membership in the Slovenian ethnic group) as an open system that is accessible to all, which contains future-oriented elements in this specifically European region. The language action plan of the European Commission 2004 to 2006 (promoting language learning and the diversity of languages) provides further stimuli in this connection.

Ad Item I:

The locations of the bilingual primary schools in Burgenland can be found in the autochthonous settlement area of the Burgenland Croats. However, the development is taking a course as a result of which increasingly fewer children with mother-tongue Croatian are attending schools in some areas, especially in the northern regions of the country. This is primarily due to the fact that a growing number of inhabitants from urban areas are settling in the mixed-language communities of the northern Burgenland.

It is therefore the rule in those schools that one will find in one class children with Burgenland-Croatian as mother tongue, children without any previous knowledge of Croatian, children with low-level language skills and children with a passive understanding of the language, who are all taught at the same time. The teachers have to make sure that they comply with their pedagogical responsibility in order to support and teach the children in the best-possible manner also in this area.

The teachers comply with their tasks in keeping with the curriculum regulations for primary schools for ethnic groups and for minority-language teaching in primary and middle-level schools in Burgenland (Federal Law Gazette No. 118/1966 in its applicable version), chapter 7: "...Educational and teaching tasks, teaching material: The provisions of the respective curriculum for primary schools, chapter seven, apply to the teaching of the technical subjects, German, reading, mathematics, music education, art education, writing, handicrafts and physical education, with the proviso that classes (except for German, reading and writing) should be taught in

the Croatian and German languages to an approximately equal degree, to the extent possible, in accordance with the previous knowledge of the children."

Ad Item K:

Regarding the training of teachers it should be mentioned that students are provided the possibility, as of their first study year, to acquire practical experience in parallel.

A textbook commission is responsible for obtaining the teaching materials. Associations that are specifically set up for the task are commissioned to produce the teaching aids. In the nineties, textbooks were also exported to Slovenia for the secondary commercial schools that were newly established in our neighboring country.

In addition to teaching aids, one should also mention that, in cooperation with the Foreign-Language Center Graz, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture has developed a full range of specific materials (series of publications "Zoom"), also for the languages of the neighboring countries.

Ad Item L:

The Federal Ministry of Justice wishes to emphasize with respect to courts and judges that in those juridical districts, where, in addition to German, the use of Hungarian, Slovenian or Croatian is admitted, presently

12 staff (including all heads of the pertinent District Courts) are proficient in Slovenian,

7 staff in Hungarian and

5 staff in Croatian, respectively.

The impression conveyed in particular by the statement that "A general lack of linguistic competence in regional or minority languages within the courts ... concerned particularly impedes the written use of the regional or minority languages" in Chapter 3.1, letter L, does not adequately reflect realities on the ground and is therefore misleading. "

Ethnic Groups and Broadcasting

On 1 January 2002 an amendment of the ORF Act entered into force which took account of one of the concerns of the ethnic groups regarding media coverage in the languages of the ethnic groups. The ORF Act now stipulates in § 5 that the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) is obliged to provide adequate program shares in the languages of the ethnic groups for which there is an ethnic group advisory board. It is up to the ORF to decide how it meets this obligation. It can comply with this obligation independently, but to some extent also in cooperation with the private radio stations of the ethnic groups. However, this does not affect its obligation to broadcast programs in the languages of the ethnic groups in a commensurate scope. Any interventions by the Federal Government are barred, already on account of the independence of broadcasting stations, as ensured in the constitution.

Programs broadcast by the ORF for the ethnic groups

In the past two years, the ORF has continued to expand the activities that it offers to the ethnic groups, and it offers a diversity of programs for the six ethnic groups in its radio and television programs, as well as on the Internet and the teletext program. On the one hand, these are programs in the respective languages of the ethnic groups and, on the other hand, these are programs offered in German which are intended to bring topics of specific relevance to an ethnic group closer to the German-speaking population. In addition, the ORF organizes activities for the ethnic groups on an ongoing basis in the course of a number of off-air events.

The following is available to the Slovenian ethnic group:

The radio programs offered by the ORF have been considerably expanded by its cooperation, begun on 21 March 2004, with "Agora & Korotan Lokalradio GmbH" (this is the name of the Slovenian private radio station).

Ever since, the ORF has been producing an eight-hour information and entertain program in the Slovenian language, which is broadcast in the course of the day on the frequency of the Slovenian private radio station in the time frames 06.00 to 10.00 hrs, 12.00 to 13.00 hrs. and 15.00 to 18.00 hrs. It is also available on the Internet and can be downloaded.

The time frames 10.00 to 12.00 hrs. and 13.00 to 15.00 hrs. are the responsibility of "Radio dva" and/or "Radio AGORA" which produce on the same private radio frequency; for the time frame from 18.00 to 06.00 hrs. "Radio AGORA" produces and broadcasts programs. As a result there is a 24-hour full program on the private radio frequency in Carinthia for the Slovenian ethnic group, which has met with a positive response from the Slovenian ethnic group. The ORF news programs in the German language are taken over from the regional studio for Carinthia at every full hour from 06.00 to 18.00 hrs. (exception: 12.00 hrs.). News programs in the Slovenian language are broadcast at 6.30 hrs., 7.30 hrs., 8.30 hrs., 9.30 hrs., 15.30 hrs. and 16.30 hrs. By the way, the information programs of the ORF broadcast on the frequency of the private radio station are also available on the Internet and can be downloaded.

"Radio Carinthia" continues to broadcast a magazine in the Slovenian language every Wednesday from 21.03 to 22.00 hrs.; every Sunday and on holidays a very popular Slovenian-German morning program is offered, always from 6.06 to 07.00 hrs. The magazine "Servus – Srecno – Ciao" in three languages (German, Slovenian, Italian), which supports the idea of the Alps-Adriatic Sea region has been extended by one hour every day, beginning on 22 March 2004, and has since been broadcast on "Radio Carinthia" from Monday to Friday from 16.03 to 19.00 hrs., with the news being broadcast in all three languages always at 18.30 hrs.

"Radio 1476" continues to take over the programs for the ethnic groups from the regional studio for Carinthia, as this has been the case ever since the summer 2003, in order to offer members of the ethnic group outside the broadcasting range the possibility of receiving these programs for the ethnic group, namely by receiving them via the "ORF digital" and the live streams on the Internet. In addition, a broadcasting slot is reserved on "Radio 1476" for programs in the Slovenian language, namely every Saturday and Sunday from 18.00 to 20.00 hrs.

Part of the ORF television programs features the television magazine "Dober dan, Koroska" of the regional studio for Carinthia in the Slovenian language every Sunday from 13.00 to 13.30 hrs., which is shown as a separate local program in Carinthia on the channel "ORF 2". This program is broadcast a second time on Mondays on the "ORF 2" night program, which can be received throughout Austria; it is also available on the Internet as a real video which can be downloaded. As a result, members of the ethnic group living outside of Carinthia also have access to these programs, in addition to receiving them via "ORF digital". (The television channels of RTV Slovenija also re-broadcast the ORF program "Dober dan, Koroska".)

In 2002, the programs available to the ethnic groups that live in Burgenland were expanded considerably. In addition to supplying the ethnic groups with programs in their mother tongues, topics of relevance to the ethnic groups are frequently program components in all broadcasting channels of "Radio Burgenland" so that audiences that are only German-speaking are also informed about topics concerning the ethnic groups. Moreover, in 2004 a Euregio magazine, integrated into the area-wide program of "Radio Burgenland", deepens the connections to and the understanding for the new regions neighboring Burgenland and tries to eliminate possible prejudices. In the off-air segment, "Radio Burgenland" frequently launches initiatives to the benefit of the ethnic groups (CD productions, events, etc.).

The following is available to the ethnic group of the Burgenland Croats:

"Radio Burgenland" offers two minutes of news in the Burgenland Croatian language from Mondays to Saturdays, always at 12.38 hrs. From Mondays to Sundays (always at 18.15 hrs.), the program features an evening magazine in the Burgenland Croatian language, followed (always at 18.25 hrs.) by a thirty-minute magazine program in the Burgenland Croatian language. Every week (always on Mondays from 20.04 to 21.00 hrs.) features in the Burgenland Croatian language are broadcast in a three-language magazine. In the four-

language program "Servus Szia Sdravo Deltuha", broadcast on four dates during a year (always on Sunday from 14.20 to 15.05 hrs.), contributions in the Burgenland Croatian language always are a regular feature.

In June 2003 the radio broadcasts in the Burgenland Croatian language were further developed in form and substance; they are now even more specifically geared to the target group, they consist of new materials and have a new layout, and they are presented by new moderators. They are very well received by the ethnic group.

Since July 2003, the programs produced by "Radio Burgenland" for the ethnic groups have been re-broadcast on medium wave on "ORF-Radio 1476". As a result, members of the ethnic group living outside the broadcasting range of "Radio Burgenland" can receive terrestrially the programs of "Radio Burgenland" for the ethnic groups, in addition to receiving them via "ORF digital" and via live stream. In the time frame from 21.00 to 21.30 hrs., always on Tuesdays and from Thursdays to Sundays, programs are broadcast for the ethnic groups in the Burgenland Croatian language; one further magazine in the Burgenland Croatian language is broadcast on Fridays from 19.30 to 20.00 hrs.

As an element of the ORF's television programs, the regional studio for Burgenland broadcasts a TV magazine "Dobar da, Hrvati" in the Burgenland Croatian language every Sunday from 13.30 to 14.00 hrs., which is shown on "ORF 2" locally in Burgenland. This program is re-broadcast on Mondays on the night program of the ORF that can be received throughout Austria; it is also available on the Internet as a real video which can be downloaded. As a result, members of the ethnic group living outside Burgenland also have access to this program, in addition to receiving it via "ORF digital", and they have the possibility to record this program.

The following is available to the ethnic Hungarian group:

"Radio Burgenland" offers five minutes of news in the Hungarian language every day at 18.55 hrs., and it broadcasts a thirty-minute magazine every Sunday at 19.30 hrs. The range of programs is supplemented by a weekly magazine in three languages which is broadcast on Mondays from 20.04 to 21.00 hrs. and also features Hungarian subjects. In addition, the four-language TV magazine "Servus Szia Zdravo Deltuha", broadcast four times per year always on a Sunday from 14.20 to 15.05 hrs., also features contributions in the Hungarian language.

Since July 2003 the programs for the ethnic groups that "Radio Burgenland" produces are re-broadcast on medium wave by "ORF-Radio 1476". As a result, members of the Hungarian ethnic group living outside the broadcasting range of "Radio Burgenland" can also receive terrestrially the program for the ethnic groups of "Radio Burgenland", in addition to the possibility of receiving them via "ORF digital" and via live stream on the Internet. In the time frame from 21.00 to 21.30 hrs., every Monday, programs for the Hungarian-speaking ethnic group are broadcast, and on Wednesdays, 15-minute programs in Hungarian are broadcast.

As part of the television program, the Hungarian magazine "Adj'isten magyarok" is broadcast six times per year on ORF 2 locally in Burgenland, on Sundays at 13.05 hrs.. On four further dates every year, the regional studio broadcasts the four-language TV magazine "Servus Szia Zdravo Deltuha", always on Sundays from 14.20 to 15.05 hrs., which also comprises Hungarian contributions. Both magazines can also be accessed via the Internet as real videos.

For the ethnic group of the Roma, a broadcasting slot was also created at the beginning of the year to provide members with radio and television programs in their mother tongue: "Radio Burgenland" broadcasts a weekly three-language magazine on Mondays from 20.04 to 21.00 hrs., in which contributions in Romany are regular features of the program. On four further dates per year, the regional studio broadcasts the four-language TV magazine "Servus Szia Zdravo Deltuha", always on Sundays from 14.20 to 15.05 hrs., which also features contributions in Romany that can also be accessed via the Internet as real videos.

Another new element is a weekly magazine that has been broadcast by "Radio 1476" since the beginning of 2004. In addition, since July 2003 programs for the ethnic groups – which also includes programs in the Romany language – from the regional studio for Burgenland are re-broadcast on "Radio 1476".

The following is available to the Czech and the Slovak ethnic groups:

“Radio 1476” introduced two new magazines in early 2003 in the Slovak and Czech languages. On account of the positive reactions by the audience, the scope of the programs was considerably expanded in early 2004, and a fixed program slot has been introduced for the magazines in the Slovak and Czech languages (Mondays to Fridays, 19.05 to 19.30 hrs.).

It is also of significance for all ethnic groups that every Sunday (from 13.30 to 14.00 hrs.) "ORF 2" broadcasts a television program in German “Heimat, fremde Heimat” which serves the goal of making subjects that are specific of an ethnic group accessible to audiences that are the only German-speaking. In line with this approach, “Radio Vienna” broadcasts a radio version of “Heimat, fremde Heimat” in German every Sunday from 19.00 to 20.00 hrs.

Since May 2004, all ethnic groups have also been addressed by the online platform of the ORF, which is presented in a modern online design at “volksgruppen.ORF.at”. All regional radio stations of the ORF, as well as “Radio 1476” – and thus all programs for ethnic groups broadcast by “Radio Burgenland”, “Radio Carinthia”, “Radio Vienna” and “Radio 1476” – are also available on the Internet via live stream. (<http://volksgruppen.orf.at>, <http://1476.orf.at>, <http://burgenland.orf.at>, <http://kaernten.orf.at>). An especially developed content-management system also makes it possible to use diacritic signs.

In addition to the radio and television programs of topical interest, which the regional studios for Burgenland and Carinthia have made available on the Internet as real audios and/or real videos for downloading since the year 2000, information programs of the regional studio for Carinthia have been broadcast since 21 March 2004 on the frequency of the Slovenian private radio station as a real audio and can be downloaded.

All programs broadcast for the ethnic groups by “Radio Burgenland”, “Radio Carinthia”, “Radio Vienna” and “ORF 2” (including the local broadcasts in Burgenland and Carinthia and the teletext program) can be received via “ORF digital” throughout Austria, which ensures that members of the ethnic groups are also provided with the programs who live outside the autochthonous settlement areas.

O page 639 RF TELETEXT provides daily information on all broadcasts for the ethnic groups of the special relevant radio and television broadcasts, as well as – since 2003 – daily topical information on events of relevance to the ethnic groups.