

Pursuant to Article 28 of the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act* (Zakon o javni rabi slovenščine, Uradni list RS [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia], Nos 86/04 and 8/10) and Article 109 of the *Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly* (Poslovnik državnega zbora, Uradni list RS, Nos 92/07 – official consolidated text and 105/10), the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia at its session of 15 July 2013 adopted the

RESOLUTION

ON THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR LANGUAGE POLICY 2014–18 (ReNPJP14–18)

1. Introduction

1.1 Premises and assessment of the situation

No comprehensive language policy analysis had been made in advance of the preparation of this *National Programme for Language Policy*. The most recent analysis remains the assessment of the language situation annexed to the *National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11*.

It is, however, possible to follow what changes have occurred in terms of language policy since the analysis was published through a number of individual language studies commissioned by the Slovenian Language Service [Služba za slovenski jezik] – in particular the study "*Analysis of the Implementation of Planned Measures and Tasks to Achieve Resolution Goals (Socio-Cultural Breakdown of Implementation) by Responsible Bodies, Deadlines and Available Budget Framework, and Determination of Applicable Indicators*" [Pregled uresničevanja predvidenih ukrepov in nalog za doseganje resolucijskih ciljev (s socio-kulturološko razčlemba učinkov uresničevanja) glede na nosilce, roke in proračunske možnosti, z določitvijo danih in za merilo uporabnih kazalnikov] and other shorter studies published recently in various academic publications.

In the light of the fact that a fresh and comprehensive review of the language policy situation in Slovenia will be necessary before the next national programme for language policy is adopted, the present document provides for a number of measures that will enable the preparation of adequate analyses. At the same time, the Slovenian Language Service will prepare a new comprehensive assessment of the language situation in Slovenia. This assessment will be ready and available at least one year before drafting begins for the new national programme for language policy.

The relevant legislation has also been modified. Two modifications are of particular significance:

- In 2008 the *Decree on Required Knowledge of the Slovenian Language for Certain Professions or Jobs in Government Bodies, Bodies of Self-Governing Local Communities, Public Sector Entities and Bearers of Public Authority* [Uredba o potrebnem znanju slovenščine za posamezne poklice oziroma delovna mesta v

državnih organih in organih samoupravnih lokalnih skupnosti ter pri izvajalcih javnih služb in nosilcih javnih pooblastil] was adopted;

- In 2010 the Slovenian Language Service prepared the bases for amending the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*. Amendments were necessary in order to take into consideration the case law of the European Union courts of law and the principle of free movement of people, goods and services in those provisions which expressly required the use of the Slovene language in marking products and advertising goods and services. The modified act replaced the wording in those provisions by a more loosely formulated provision of "easily understandable language". Article 2 of the Act was also modified and the languages of art and of religious services ceased to be the subject of legal regulation.

All legislation on the public use of the Slovene language, the *Constitution*, the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act* and all sector-specific acts are published by the Slovenian Language Service on the website of the Ministry of Culture.

As far as the use of funds earmarked for the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–2011* is concerned, we were able to comprehensively monitor only the funds earmarked for this purpose in the budget of the Ministry of Culture and those in the budget of the Government Office for European Affairs, which later became the Government Office for Development and European Affairs. Actions carried out by the Slovenian Language Service and by other units of the Ministry of Culture were financed from funds earmarked in the Ministry's regular budget. Some activities that neither the Ministry nor the Service were able to implement through its own means were carried out by external providers; these were paid for from funds allocated under a separate budget heading. However, their (limited) amount did not allow the carrying out of all the activities envisaged in the Resolution in any of the programme years. On the basis of the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*, acts on the implementation of Slovenia's budget, and decisions of the competent minister on (co)financing activities aimed at fulfilling the tasks listed in the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11*, in the period indicated the Service (formerly Division) carried out procedures to select providers of the planned activities, in compliance, of course, with public procurement regulations. In the period 2007–11 the Ministry spent EUR 364,109 on the implementation of the Resolution and the former Government Office for European Affairs spent EUR 32,400.

In recent years, despite the fact that a comprehensive analysis of the situation was missing, the academic and the professional spheres, as well as policymakers when preparing strategic plans for other fields, identified a number of challenges that the present programme will try to exhaustively address. We will focus on two fields, language education and language infrastructure, where the goals and measures have been most precisely defined.

Language education is a very complex field of language policy. The aim of the present Resolution is to create from several individual measures (for example in the field of foreign languages, where results may be compared internationally: see "*First European Survey on Language Competences*", Final Report, European Commission, June 2012) a synergistic whole by pooling endeavours to create conditions for access to knowledge of languages¹ both within the same culture and in an intercultural context. The first responsibility of the language policy, as far as language education is concerned, is the Slovene language in the Republic of Slovenia. The teaching of Slovene as a first language has long been considered as something that is adequately planned, directed

¹ In the text, as far as sensible and adequate, basic nouns in the Slovenian original are written in both feminine and masculine grammatical gender. Where such denotation is less adequate, nouns in the masculine form shall be understood as applying to both men and women.

and evaluated by representatives of the teaching profession and competent institutions. In recent years, however, numerous other representatives of the larger field of Slovene studies have voiced the need for a larger inclusion of different stakeholders (see "*Considerations on Slovenian Language Syllabi*" [Za premislek o učnih načrtih za pouk slovenščine], Delo, 4 December 2010, 25 signatures); they point out the absence of adequate research, independent monitoring of syllabuses, harmonisation of the terminology and methodology of teaching Slovene and foreign languages, and the need for integration both within and among subjects. The results of the PISA international educational survey, published in 2010, showed that the reading literacy, in particular with regard to the highest level of proficiency, of Slovene 15-year-old students was below the average of 66 OECD countries. In the survey reading literacy is defined as an individual's capacity of understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to fully participate in society. The national expert group for the preparation of the *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia* pointed out the necessity of comparability in terms of criteria as well as contents: "If we wish to achieve the goal that the education of our students is internationally comparable, we must also set up, besides internationally comparable and harmonised syllabi and knowledge standards, internationally comparable criteria of assessment of knowledge in line with those applied in the countries we want to be compared with. This subject has already become the topic of a public discussion (see *Jezik in slovstvo*, Nos. 1–2, 2012, which is completely dedicated to the question of external assessment of proficiency in Slovene as a first language in primary and secondary schools); this discussion must, in our view, be encouraged, just as research to identify the weaknesses, advantages and challenges of the present system of language education, with an accent on literacy, must be promoted. A low level of literacy is a social problem which has a huge impact on actions and strategies in the fields of public health, employment, digital participation, e-administration, citizens' participation, poverty and social inclusion: this was the conclusion of the EU High-Level Group of Experts on Literacy, whose recommendations are included in the Council conclusions on literacy of 26 November 2012. In this context it is necessary to develop all aspects of literacy, with a particular focus on developing the language skills of members of minorities and the inclusion of pupils with specific needs and pupils from migrant backgrounds. The lack of linguistic integration of the latter has been highlighted in strategic documents by both experts and policymakers for quite some time (e.g. Knez, *Language Inclusion and Exclusion of Migrant Children* [Zbornik Obdobja 28, Ljubljana, 2009]; Medvešek and Bešter, *Migrant children and teaching of Slovene in Slovenia's educational system* [Uporabno jezikoslovje 9–10, Ljubljana, 2011]; the *Strategy of Including Migrants' Children, Pupils and Students into Education System of the Republic of Slovenia* [Strategija vključevanja otrok, učencev in dijakov migrantov v sistem vzgoje in izobraževanja v RS], Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007; *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia* [Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v RS], Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana, 2011). In the language education system the whole vertical line needs to be comprehensively planned and modified, including language policy in higher education; here discussion has been particularly fierce for some time now, focusing on how to balance the desire for excellence (one method is certainly a well-thought-out internationalisation) on the one hand and the desire to develop the Slovene language on the other (see Starc (ed.), *Academic Languages in the Age of Globalisation* [Akademski jeziki v času globalizacije], University of Primorska, Koper, 2012. Language policy in Slovenia should also devote special consideration to the teaching of Slovene as a neighbour language (for Italians, Austrians, Hungarians and Croats). This would also be of importance for helping to overcome the difficulties and misunderstandings with which members of the autochthonous Slovene national minorities in certain border regions of (all four) neighbouring countries are confronted. The Schengen openness of state borders could thus be put to use for better implementing the cultural and political idea of a common Slovene cultural space. It is true that since the integration of Slovenia into the European Union the situation has been

gradually improving (Slovene has gained weight as an official EU language), but in certain cases advances have been slow to come, for example concerning the as-yet-unresolved problem of continued irregular financing of Slovene educational and cultural institutions in Italy or the language situation in schools in Porabje (an area of Hungary with a sizeable Slovene national minority).

Issues that need to be quickly and effectively addressed also exist in the area of language infrastructure. Already in 2009, in the introduction to the *Proceedings of the Symposium on the New Dictionary of Standard Slovene* (Založba ZRC, 2009), jointly prepared by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU) and the Scientific Research Centre of SAZU (ZRC SAZU), the need for a completely new edition of the dictionary of the Slovene language was pointed out: "Slovene language experts and the lay public agree that our language is in urgent need of a new dictionary, considering that 17 years have passed since the publication of the most recent dictionary of Slovene and more than half a century since the conceptual work for this dictionary was done; in addition, there is a huge difference between the present and the time when the dictionary was prepared, both in terms of societal and economic conditions, which have had an impact on the national system of values, and because of the rapid development of modern technologies." In the previous Resolution, the preparation of a new dictionary of standard Slovene, adapted to new social and technological circumstances, was thus recognised as a priority. In the context of language standardisation tasks, the need to adapt grammars and orthography reference books to the new reality was highlighted: "The nature of the issues that concern the contemporary public, as can be observed on internet forums and websites providing answers, point to concrete inadequacies of existing rules, as fewer and fewer questions concern interpretations of the existing codification, while difficulties linked to the new situations of use become apparent" (*Modern orthography guide between the standard and the rule* [Sodobni pravopisni priročnik med normo in predpisom], Založba ZRC, 2011). Further, experts in the field pointed out the inadequate organisation of the linguistic sphere and the lack of institutional support which would enable a wider consensus on standardisation issues: "A comprehensive reshuffling and revamping of spelling rules would necessitate the taking into consideration of the widest circle of language users, the organising of a global Slovene scientific consultation on modifications to the language standard and, in this context, the setting up of a working body which would take part in the project of publishing updated grammar and spelling rules" (*ibid.*).

In the field of language technologies, a comparative analysis of the development of language resources and technologies of Slovene in relation to other European languages was carried out in the framework of the EU META-NET research project (Simon Krek, *The Slovene Language in the Digital Age* [Slovenski jezik v digitalni dobi], META-NET White Paper Series: Europe's Languages in the Digital Age, Springer, Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht and London, September 2012). The study showed that the Slovene language "lacked all resources and tools for advanced processing, such as automatic word sense disambiguation, identification of argument structure or semantic roles, coreference resolution, identification of text structure, rhetorical structure, argumentative zoning, text patterns or types, multimedia information retrieval and crosslingual information retrieval. In the field of language technologies, the "speech synthesis is currently the best developed technology. Speech recognition is limited to basic applications and tools. Availability of tools and resources in speech technologies is relatively poor." The study points out that the "quantity of all resources" is a serious issue and in particular highlights the lack of a common infrastructure for the storing, maintaining and distribution of existing resources and tools and of a common organisational umbrella for all active players in the field.

The need for the setting up of an infrastructure for language resources and technologies is also indicated in the *Research Infrastructure Development Plan 2011–20* adopted by

the Government in 2011. In the section on social sciences and humanities disciplines, the CLARIN infrastructure is pointed out as "the ideal environment for the development of Slovene language resources and tools, which will be, because of international cooperation, more standardised and interoperable, while cooperation with experts for technically better supported languages and training of researchers in this field allows for exchange of knowledge on these technologies".

1.2 The framework of the National Programme for Language Policy

The current language situation in Slovenia demands a well-thought-out and active language policy, one which will both take into consideration the historical background and traditions and take on new tasks and achieve new goals in today's conditions. A development-oriented language policy is based on the conviction that the Slovene state, the Slovene language and the Slovene language community are vital and dynamic realities which must continue to evolve and generate new energy. In those areas which need special attention in order to maintain the extent, vitality and dynamics of the Slovene language, it is imperative to put in place measures that will, if necessary, help to improve the existing situation.

An essential element in the realisation of fundamental human rights is the right of individuals to use their own language and to join together as language communities. Slovene language policy must put in place adequate measures in order to achieve two things: that the Slovene language remains the prevalent choice for native speakers to the largest possible extent in both private and public use, where evidence suggests that some Slovene native speakers are willing to put their mother tongue in second place; and that the option to prescribe the legally binding use of Slovene in certain language situations is not *a priori* relinquished. What is even more important for boosting the vitality of the Slovene language and strengthening its position is to enhance the awareness of Slovene native speakers of its multifunctionality, and through systematic development of skills, capacities and a knowledge of the possibilities for expression offered by the Slovene language educate and form sovereign, confident and motivated speakers of Slovene while better equipping them with all the tools required by any modern language and its users.

Slovene language policymakers are also aware of the particular responsibility of such policy to Slovenes who live outside the national borders and take into consideration all speakers whose mother tongue is not Slovene: members of the Hungarian and Italian national minorities, the Roma community, immigrants, and all other people who are or who wish to be in contact with Slovene whether within the borders of the Republic of Slovenia or beyond. The policy encourages learning and use of Slovene at all levels and by all target groups and in parallel provides systematically for the best possible system of teaching foreign languages and for adequate diffusion of languages in relation to Slovenia's cultural, civilisation and economic needs. With particular sensibility it provides for speakers with special needs. In this context, special care is devoted to the deaf (the Slovene sign language as the first language for most hard-of-hearing people), but attention is also paid to all other groups of persons with special needs: the blind and partially sighted (texts in Braille, and IT technology for the blind and partially sighted), persons with specific disorders (such as dyslexia, poor reading and learning skills, and speech and language disorders), and persons with developmental disorders.

An important aspect of the realisation of language rights is the creation of conditions for tolerant and respectful communication. In all spheres of public life (education, media, business, etc.) Slovenia provides, through various encouragements or normative mechanisms, for a modus of communication that ensures all social groups equal

participation in society (e.g. non-sexist use of language and respect for cultural diversity as reflected by language). It also pays particular attention to the advantages and challenges brought about by the fact that Slovene is now one of the official languages of the European Union.

In the upcoming programming period, Slovene policymakers must put in place an adequate institutional and programming framework for the planning of steps that will implement the set fundamental goals in a consensual, professional and efficient manner. Consequently, the first implementation phase of the programme for language policy will be the drafting of two complementary, independent and comprehensive national language policy documents:

- 1) The Action Plan for Language Education;
- 2) The Action Plan for Language Infrastructure.

The action plan for language education is already envisaged in Article 13 of the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*, while the second action plan is a response to the situation and is based on professional experience in monitoring and shaping the Slovene language situation.

The action plans will be prepared by working groups. Two months at the latest after the Resolution is adopted by the National Assembly, the Minister responsible for culture, in cooperation with the Minister responsible for education and science, will appoint two working groups consisting of representatives of public research and professional institutions, civil society and other bodies that operate in the relevant fields and of representatives of government bodies responsible for the implementation of the planned measures. The two groups will draft, at the latest within one year of their appointment, the two action plans; these will then be submitted to the Government and adopted in compliance with the relevant procedures. The coordination of the drafting of the two action plans will be ensured by the Slovenian Language Service of the Ministry of Culture; in order to carry out the new tasks described in the present and the following chapter, the service will be enlarged with additional staff. The two action plans must take into consideration guidance as defined in this document; when appropriate, they should also envisage long-term solutions for the next 5 to 10 years. In parallel to the drafting of the *Action Plan for Language Education*, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, in cooperation with other relevant ministries, will update the *National Strategy for Literacy Advancement*, in particular from the point of view of reading literacy, given that international surveys show that Slovenia's 15-year-old students perform below average in this area.

1.3 Language policy vision

The National Programme for Language Policy is a response to the overall language policy situation. Although its primary concern is the Slovene language and measures relating thereto (i.e. regulation of its status and corpus), it also addresses all other languages covered by the Slovene language policy. Today Slovene is an internally whole, socially and structurally integral and developmentally open language and it should remain so in the future. Slovenia therefore intends to ensure that Slovene is used and further developed in all areas of public life within its territorial borders and also in the relevant European and international forums. It is mindful that its citizens and inhabitants should have the opportunity to enter into communication processes which enable them to participate on an equal basis in the national and international community, to acquire and share knowledge, and to satisfy personal, professional and cultural needs. The central goal of Slovenia's language policy is to build a community of autonomous

speakers with advanced language competence in Slovene, with sufficient knowledge of other languages, and with a high degree of language self-confidence and an adequate degree of motivation to accept language and cultural diversity. For this purpose, the Government organises the collection and analysis and ensures permanent accessibility of authoritative grammatical, lexical and stylistic information on all manifestations of Slovene, in particular on the language in its standardised and cohesive form. It also maintains language resources needed by the speakers of Slovene to learn and use foreign languages and those needed by the speakers of other languages to learn and use standard Slovene (including a responsibility for developing Slovene sign language and Slovene Braille).

Slovenia guarantees to the Slovene language the dominant role in official and public life within its territory, but in parallel guarantees communication and information in other languages in compliance with the legal and democratically legitimate communication needs of its citizens, other inhabitants and visitors. Slovenia also champions the strengthening and consistent realisation of the language rights of the Slovene language community in neighbouring countries and the rights of speakers of Slovene in the European Union and other international institutions in which Slovene is an official language.

Even in the past, Slovene was not always the only language choice for Slovenes for communication in many areas; today, with increased globalised movement of knowledge, goods, services and people and with ever more effective learning of foreign languages, the possibilities for choosing the language in which to satisfy one's communication needs will only increase. This is the reason why Slovene policymakers must, through a variety of measures, ensure that Slovene remains for native speakers the dominant voluntary (and obvious) choice in the widest possible range of private and public use, that more and more foreigners are motivated to learn and use Slovene, and that Slovene is compulsory for all professionals in the sphere of public communication and in language-sensitive jobs, while respecting the constitutional provisions on the status and rights of the Hungarian and Italian national minorities.

Slovenia also guarantees the strengthening and consistent realisation of the language rights of certain minorities protected by its constitution and facilitates the preservation and revitalisation of the languages of other communities and of immigrants.

1.4 Bodies responsible for an active language policy

The bodies responsible for implementing the language policy of the Republic of Slovenia are state authorities. At the national level, the language policy must be reorganised; it must be designed in such a way that individual authorities are responsible for both the contents of the policy and for its implementation and financing. The analysis of the implementation of the first *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy* shows that very few state institutions or bodies had actually participated in the setting of the resolution's goals and tasks, much less that they would allocate adequate budget funds and provide for its implementation.

On the other hand, the Slovenian Language Division (now Service) had carried out several activities before the drafting of the first national programme for language policy proposal in order to achieve a more efficient and coordinated conception and implementation of the Slovenian language policy. As a result, on 9 February 2006 the Government adopted the *Decision on the Establishment, Organisation and Field of Work of the Slovene Government Commission to Examine Compliance of Legislative Proposals with the Public Use of the Slovene Language Act and Language Policy and*

Planning Goals [Sklep o ustanovitvi, organizaciji in delovnem področju komisije Vlade Republike Slovenije za obravnavanje predlogov predpisov z vidika določb Zakona o javni rabi slovenščine ter ciljev jezikovne politike in jezikovnega načrtovanja]. The members of the Commission, which is chaired by the Minister responsible for culture, are representatives of the Government Office for Legislation, the Government Secretariat-General and ministries responsible for education, the economy, science and technology, and public administration. The Secretary of the Commission is the Head of the Slovenian Language Division at the Ministry of Culture. In the seven years since its establishment, however, the Commission has not met even once. Ensuring harmonisation of regulations on Slovene (and other languages within the territory of Slovenia) is certainly necessary – and the proposal of the new programme for language policy also addresses this issue – but an active language policy, to which Slovene has committed itself in the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*, presupposes measures reaching out to a variety of other fields and thus involving other executive power mechanisms.

Today the Slovenian Language Service of the Ministry of Culture is the principal body coordinating the Slovene language policy. Given the central role of the Slovene language in this policy, it would seem sensible for the Service to continue to carry out this task, while being provided with additional staff and financing in order to respond to the broader understanding of the language policy. In other words, the scope of the Slovene language policy reaches far beyond the mere planning of the status and image of the Slovene language. Therefore for carrying out of the new programme for language policy, a new inter-ministerial working group will have to be established to monitor the implementation of Slovenia's language policy (understood in its broadest sense); this new working group would replace the existing commission to examine compliance with the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*. The tasks of the working group will be redefined, and it will be required to act responsibly and efficiently. This refers both to the responsibility of high officials of ministries and government bodies for establishing the working group and to the concrete and operative responsibility of individual public employees as permanent members of the working group. The working group will be appointed by a government decision and will consist of representatives (public employees) of those executive and public authorities whose activity is most closely linked to language issues, i.e.:

- The Government Secretariat-General (GSV)
- The Ministry of Culture (MK)
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ), Education Development Office
- The Ministry of Justice (MP)
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MZZ)
- The Ministry of the Interior (MNZ)
- The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ)
- The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT)
- The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad
- The Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Legislation (SVZ)
- The Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) and
- The Slovenian Book Agency (JAK)

The working group is coordinated by the Slovenian Language Service, whose head is the chairman of the working group. The tasks and the measures to be carried out by individual responsible bodies are indicated by individual objectives.

The analysis of the implementation of the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11* further suggests that Slovene public employees are generally not well acquainted with the basic principles of language policy considerations and activities and did not participate actively in the drafting of the document. This resulted in

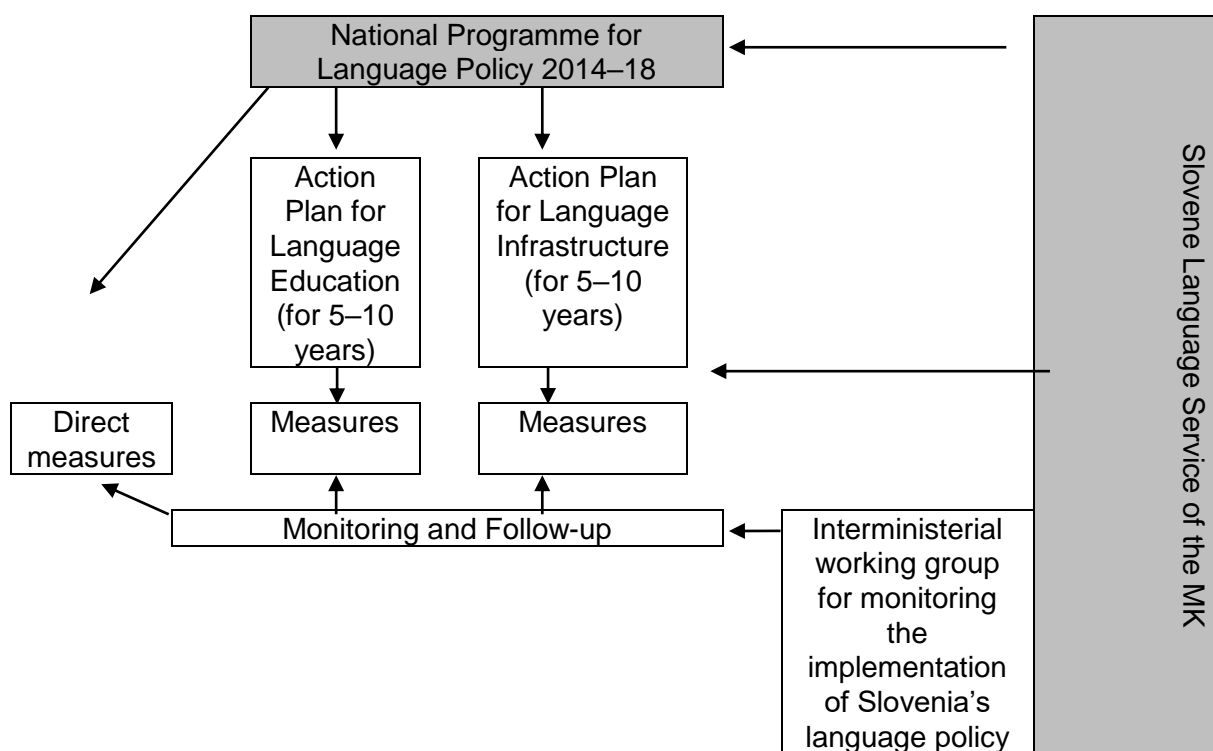
an absence of action and reporting, which has been a major impediment to the advancement of active language policy in Slovenia. The Slovenian Language Service will thus prepare a document with understandable and clear instructions, guidelines and questions, which will also be an effective tool for practical and targeted reflections on language and language policy for those public employees who have never before tackled this subject. It would also be sensible to organise special training for the members of the working group before it becomes operational, where experienced public employees and external experts could introduce them to the basic characteristics of the Slovene language situation, the parameters of language policy action, and the guidelines and objectives of the new programme for language policy. This would create solid foundations for further language policy action on the part of the executive authorities, as individuals will be motivated and qualified not only for proposing language policy solutions but also for implementing and monitoring them within their work fields; at the same time, their actions would be supported by and coordinated with the necessary expertise.

This is the reason why only some state bodies and public authorities are indicated as the responsible bodies for the implementation of the objectives and measures of the national programme for language policy for the next five years, and not other public and private institutions which, in compliance with their charters and work programmes, perform various language planning tasks. These state bodies have the responsibility for selection, for each objective and measure of the programme for language policy, the most qualified provider under the applicable rules and ensure that the measure is realised.

Language policy is an integral part of other policies, from educational to economic and also to cultural policies. Various institutions and public systems, such as public libraries and cultural and art institutions, may, through their actions, greatly contribute to the attainment of the general objectives of this programme for language policy. However, the basic task of the programme is to establish basic language objectives and measures for the next five-year period, rather than to define the language role and mission of such institutions and systems.

The budget funds indicated in the Resolution are additional funds that should be earmarked for the implementation of each individual measure. Not included are funds for the carrying out of the regular programmes of those institutions that will implement individual measures.

Note that the numbers of individual objectives or measures do not indicate prioritisation.



2. Outline of Slovenia's language policy for 2014–18, with objectives and measures

2.1 Language education

2.1.1 Introduction

The knowledge of languages is both a symbolic and a practical asset which must be accessible to all, regardless of cultural and educational background or financial situation. For this reason Slovenia guarantees language education at various levels to all its citizens and inhabitants and also to all Slovenes living outside its borders and to foreigners who come into contact with the Slovene language space.

Within its educational system it provides for the best possible teaching of Slovene as a first language within Slovenia and for the largest possible accessibility of Slovene classes for Slovenes abroad. Slovenia's education system also takes into consideration the specific needs of children and adolescents for whom Slovene is a second or foreign language, promotes learning of Slovene by adults for whom Slovene is a second or foreign language, and carries out activities for the promotion of the teaching of Slovene abroad. It provides high-quality education in Italian and Hungarian in municipalities with Italian and Hungarian minority populations, pays attention to the use and development of the Roma community language, and grants to all other minorities, immigration communities and others the right to use, maintain and develop their own language and culture. The education system also takes into consideration the rights of speakers with special needs.

In line with the traditional positive assessment of knowledge of foreign languages and considering the need for Slovenia to be competitive, open and democratic, one of the priorities of its language policy is the respect of linguistic diversity and promotion of

functional multilingualism. The objective is to provide all speakers of Slovene as a first language with linguistic competence and awareness and empower them to develop efficient, confident and high-quality communication in Slovene and, if possible, in two other languages, in both everyday and professional contexts. At the same time, it is necessary to deepen the awareness that Slovene is the official language in the Republic of Slovenia, that Slovene is the mother tongue of the majority of its population, that it is the second language for numerous speakers of other languages, and that all languages are equally important.

Slovenia respects fundamental human rights and, in line with the principles of the European Union, is committed to encouraging mutual understanding, solidarity and social cohesion. Members of the general public must understand that everybody has the right to participate in public life, that diversity must be accepted with tolerance and sympathy, and that different groups of speakers of Slovene and of other languages have different communication needs and different levels of language competence. In this context it is also important to inform speakers of the necessity of using language with adequate sensibility when entering into social contacts (for example non-sexist use of language and the use of adequate expressions for potentially vulnerable groups). Language education plays the key role in the implementation of the above-mentioned orientation. In this context it is necessary to extend the basic understanding of the role of teachers of both Slovene and other languages. They are communicators not only of language, but also of culture and civilisation, and are a link between different languages, cultures and identities. But teachers, in order to carry out this role, must receive additional training and be given the largest autonomy possible, which presupposes flexibility in the use and application of syllabuses according to the needs of those they teach. Only in this way will teachers become more confident in their use of language.

Article 13 of the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act* binds Slovenia's government to adopt a special programme of language learning that, in addition to the regular educational programmes, will be aimed at language improvement among both young and adult citizens, along with a programme aimed at foreign nationals in Slovenia. The two programmes have, however, neither been prepared nor adopted. Under this document, the overall issue of language education in the Republic of Slovenia will be addressed in the *Action Plan for Language Education*, which will also contain the two programmes provided for by the Act. The starting points of the Action Plan are listed below.

2.1.2 General objectives and measures

Certain objectives and measures of language education must be planned in a coordinated and unified way, regardless of the fact that they may address different languages and different target groups. Planning and providing language education must be based on reliable data on the language norm, language use, communication needs, expert opinions on language development and so on; preparation and collection of such data is provided for by this document.

Objective 1: Harmonisation of language education activities at all levels.

Measure:

- the *Action Plan for Language Education* will define the necessary activities to be carried out in all relevant areas, these taking into account the category of speakers, levels of education, languages and social needs, according to priority ranking and within the given time span (5 to 10 years)

Indicator:

- drawing up of the *Action Plan for Language Education*

Planned funds: EUR 25,000.

Expected effects: coordinated and efficient planning and implementation of the language policy in the field of language education, resulting in a higher level of functional literacy for all categories of speakers.

Institution responsible: Ministry of Culture.

Objective 2: Develop the skills of speakers of Slovene to use language reference works and language technologies.

Measure:

- training speakers and learners for efficient communication in Slovene, communication that is based on adequate knowledge and a positive attitude towards the Slovene language
- training (of both teachers² and learners) to work with language reference works and resources

Indicator:

- number of implemented forms of education and training

Planned funds: EUR 100,000.

Expected effects: increased number of teachers and learners with the competence to use reference works and other language resources; increased number of people skilled in language technologies; widespread use of language technologies; more efficient educational processes.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 3: Develop awareness of the diversity of communications needs and communications methods (forms of communication).

Measure:

- raising awareness of the diverse communication needs and competence of different groups of speakers and promoting acceptance of different forms of communication

Indicator:

- number of events and quantity of materials that contribute to the realisation of the objective

Planned funds: EUR 60,000.

Expected effects: better and more tolerant communication among different groups of speakers.

² The term "teacher" is mostly used in its narrow sense, but also in the widest possible sense, covering all professionals in the education sphere, such as teachers of individual subjects, teachers in kindergartens, librarians and consultants.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Objective 4: Develop multilingual and intercultural awareness.

Measure:

- preparing supplementary teaching content and materials for multilingual and intercultural communication

Teachers:

- promoting the intercultural literacy of teachers

Learners:

- education aimed at understanding multilingualism and interculturality

Indicator:

- amount of new materials and new teaching contents in this field

Planned funds: EUR 100,000.

Expected effects: enhancing the level of communication among different groups; rising tolerance threshold in multilingual and multicultural environments; better communication among different participants (actors) in educational processes.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 5: Monitoring of the language situation.

Measures:

- systematic monitoring of reading and functional literacy and promoting analyses on the weaknesses, advantages and challenges of the language policy and education, with an emphasis on literacy
- promoting applied research on contemporary Slovene language, its history, its speakers (Slovene as a first language, Slovene as a second or foreign language, speakers with special needs) and their language competence, communication needs and positions, and promoting contrastive, socio-linguistic and other research, including research on regionally marked spoken standard of Slovene and on Slovene spoken outside the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, to be used as support to the *Action Plan for Language Education*
- promoting applied research on minority languages and foreign languages, which will serve as a basis for the preparation of a comprehensive language policy in the field of education and as support to the *Action Plan for Language Education*

Indicator:

- number of research projects

Planned funds: EUR 500,000.

Expected effects: coordinated and more efficient planning, developing and implementing of the language education policy.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Slovene Research Agency; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

2.1.3 Slovene as a first language

2.1.3.1 In the Republic of Slovenia

Slovene, as the official language and, for the majority of the population, the mother tongue, is naturally given the most attention in the planning of language policy. In the context of language education in the coming programming period, the language policy will devote special care to the teaching of Slovene within the educational system, to promoting research on the Slovene language, and to evaluating and analysing language education in Slovene. It will help extending awareness of the importance of a clear and understandable language of public communication and provide for lifelong language training of public employees that will provide them with the skills to contribute responsibly to the written and spoken image of Slovene in public contexts and to enable them to speak clearly and understandably and use straightforward language in public communication.

The basic objective, as currently conceived, of teaching Slovene as a first language in Slovenia's educational system is to achieve functional communication competences; the basic method involves work with, for the most part, idealised non-literary texts. However, considering the substantially changed social circumstances (globalisation, interculturality, multilingualism), good functional literacy is no longer sufficient. A person must assume different language roles in his or her personal, professional or social life. The need to understand the social dimensions of the language and of the culture in which we communicate is growing ever more important. The educational system should enable both young and adult speakers of Slovene to realise their language potential, to develop their language competences and to become, in accordance with each person's needs, equipped for efficient, clear and effective public communication and for any other form of specialised communication.

The *Action Plan for Language Education*, provided for by this Resolution, will propose a new concept of teaching Slovene on the basis of analyses and evaluations of the teaching of Slovene, which must be carried out independently of other activities linked to the teaching of Slovene, and on the basis of reading literacy researches (PISA) to date, findings of teaching specialists, results of national language tests and matura exams, and opinions formulated by higher education institutions and of interested sectors of the public. Besides established and tested methods of teaching Slovene, the new concept will consider the following:

- The teaching of Slovene must take into consideration the wider cultural (extra-linguistic) context and enable learners to be able to think about understanding, interpreting, evaluating and creating texts and to be able to analyse the knowledge received through the comprehension and creation of a variety of texts. The teaching of Slovene must appreciate the text-type-theory as an idealised description of possibilities of linguistic realisation which in real life are implemented in an extremely flexible way, depending on the circumstances. Planning of syllabuses must start from pupils' actual communication needs.
- One of the basic objectives of teaching Slovene must be to enhance the language confidence of Slovene speakers.
- As the responsibility for developing communication competences may not be delegated only to the sphere of teaching of Slovene as a first language, so it is

necessary to establish a system of different cross-curricular connections. In particular, special attention must be given to the fusing of the teaching of literature and language and to correlate and interconnect the teaching of all languages in the curriculum (see section 2.1.6 on foreign languages below).

- The teaching of Slovene is also the first point of contact for many people with general linguistic meta-concepts; such knowledge is an essential part of critical communication competence and a prerequisite for successful highest-level problem-solving. Consequently, much more care than in the past must be given to the coherent teaching of grammar, orthography and pronunciation rules. The teaching of these contents must continue to be linked to practical text-type aspects and the current restriction to the directly applicable – "functional" – knowledge must be overcome. Preparation of Slovene grammars for elementary and secondary school students must be encouraged.

In addition to objectives and measures from the *Action Plan for Language Education*, the following will be implemented:

Objective 1: Developing and improving the language competences of speakers of Slovene as a first language and enhancing their skills of efficient communication.

Measures:

- informing head teachers and teachers of the national language policy on Slovene as a first language
- maintaining activities aimed at improving syllabuses, teaching materials and teaching methods
- preparation of evaluation methods with regard to the teaching of Slovene that will be carried out independently of the institution that is in charge of syllabuses, implementation of evaluations and monitoring of teaching Slovene
- updating of and, if applicable, preparation of additional paper and online teaching materials
- preparation of a glossary of language education terms for language teaching (both Slovene and foreign languages) in elementary and secondary schools
- updating language teaching methods and promoting projects introducing the interdisciplinary model of teaching, linking teaching of foreign languages and other subjects with the teaching of Slovene
- encouraging innovative approaches to learning and teaching Slovene as a first language
- encouraging constant training of teachers of Slovene in both language and teaching methods
- training of teachers of foreign languages in Slovene and teachers of Slovene in other languages
- organising and implementing appropriate language teaching which is adapted to the communication needs of various target groups at all educational levels
- encouraging literary creation and other motivation activities in Slovene throughout the educational system

Indicators:

- number of measures carried out
- number of training courses for head teachers and teachers carried out
- number of external evaluations of teaching of Slovene carried out
- number of updated paper and online teaching materials
- number of motivating projects
- number of projects to encourage innovative methods
- publication of glossary of language education terms

Planned funds: EUR 700,000.

Expected effects: coordinated and more efficient planning, developing and implementing of language and education policies.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 2: Understandable language of public communication and enhanced language skills of public employees.

Measures:

- updating and extending the manual *Language and Stationery Compliant with the Visual Identity of the Public Administration* [Jezik in oblika dopisa v skladu s celotno grafično podobo državne uprave], published by the Management and Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, following the example of the European Commission (*How to Write Clearly*)
- providing language training to public employees and raising their awareness on the social role of Slovene and its use in specific areas, such as non-sexist and gender-sensitive language use
- introducing targeted language training for public employees as a compulsory part of their traineeship (in the Administration Academy)
- preparation of indicators for clear and efficient public communication to meet the needs of various target groups

Indicators:

- updating and extending the manual
- number of language learning courses and targeted training for public employees

Planned funds: EUR 100,000.

Expected effects: improved clarity of language of public communication and its harmonisation with adopted language standards; increased number of public employees possessing adequate language skills; wider and easier access to services by users of administrative procedures.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of the Interior and its Administration Academy; Government Secretariat-General.

2.1.3.2 Outside the territory of the Republic of Slovenia

2.1.3.2.1 Temporary mobility – expatriates

Some speakers of Slovene as a first language emigrate (in particular to European countries) for a limited period of time, mostly because of work. They are often accompanied by their families and thus their children grow up and are schooled in environments with two or more languages outside their home country.

Slovenia's language policy must ensure to all emigrants, in particular children, possibilities for widening and advancing their Slovene language competences. Although these children may primarily acquire and maintain their knowledge of Slovene in the family circle, it is imperative that they be provided with systematic teaching of Slovene

as a first language in all its functional diversity as provided to children living in Slovenia by the national educational system. Therefore it is necessary that part of their schooling in some non-language subjects is also carried out in Slovene, bearing in mind the fact that perhaps later they will continue their education in Slovenia. The possibilities available for organising such systematic education are of course limited, and often it is only possible to provide distance learning, but more may be done in environments where there is more demand because of the large number of schoolchildren (as in the case of children of Slovenes employed in EU institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg).

Objective 1: Widening and improving competences in Slovene as a first language for emigrant children.

Measures:

- preparation of online materials for independent learning of Slovene as a first language and of other subjects in Slovene and for blended learning
- establishment of a system of verification and certification of knowledge of Slovene as a first language for students who are attending or have already finished schools abroad
- increase in the number of teachers of Slovene at European schools in Brussels and Luxembourg
- continued organisation of summer schools/camps in Slovenia for children who are speakers of Slovene as a first language and are growing up and being educated in multilingual environments

Indicators:

- number of new online materials
- number of educational events organised
- establishment of a system of verification and certification
- number of new posts for teachers of Slovene at European schools

Planned funds: EUR 350,000.

Expected effects: increased number of participants in language education processes for emigrant children; greater accessibility of adequate teaching materials; increased level of knowledge of Slovene by children in emigrant communities.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

Objective 2: Training of teachers working in multilingual environments (two or more languages).

Measure:

- systematic training of teachers of Slovene to enable them to help learners in multilingual environments to realise their language potential and to develop functionally diverse communication skills in Slovene as a first language

Indicator:

- number of different training programmes for teachers.

Planned funds: EUR 40,000.

Expected effects: increased number of participants in targeted educational programmes; implementation of adequate teaching methods abroad.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

2.1.3.2.2 Slovene national minorities and emigrants

The use of Slovene in Slovene national minority communities in neighbouring countries, in particular in Porabje in Hungary, in Carinthia and Styria in Austria, in Venezia–Giulia, Val Canale and Resia in Italy, and in Croatia, is rapidly decreasing and needs to be urgently addressed and analysed with particular attention, professionalism and support.

The Slovene language policy promotes the principle that the right to know and to use Slovene in neighbouring countries must be realised in all situations and environments where the use of Slovene is granted by law and where speakers of Slovene desire that the Slovene language be used. The particular situation of living outside the territory of the home country creates specific needs in terms of language policy and development; to fulfil these needs requires complex and continuous research into the national and socio-linguistic situation of Slovene national minorities, of their use of the standard language and dialects, as well as constant work on raising the understanding of Slovenes living in Slovenia on the language situation and language needs of Slovene national minorities.

In the expatriate community, where the position of Slovene is even frailer than in the minority communities, it is imperative that the language policy promotes the use and learning of Slovene in all circles and in all situations where an interest exists.

The language policy must create the conditions for speakers of Slovene – both those for whom Slovene is the first language and those for whom it is a foreign language – to acquire and upgrade their language skills in the best possible way, so as to have the basis for confident and effective communication in Slovene in diverse communication situations. At the same time it is necessary to give learners and teachers the opportunity to constantly upgrade and expand their Slovene language proficiency.

Objective 1: Expanding and upgrading language proficiency and areas of use of Slovene as a first language.

Measures:

- expanding the financing of scholarship funds which enable Slovenes from national minority and expatriate communities to reside and study in Slovenia and to enhance the transparency of the granting of scholarships
- organising of seminars on Slovenia and Slovene culture and on multilingualism in society, in the family and at the personal level
- promoting the use of Slovene in information and presentation materials (paper and online)
- monitoring the public use of Slovene in neighbouring countries in terms of realisation of language policy plans
- providing support for the preparation of specific teaching materials and textbooks of Slovene for target groups in bilingual areas beyond Slovenia's borders
- providing support for Slovene national minorities' written media
- providing support to Slovene national minorities' theatres
- providing support for creativity in local variations of standard Slovene (the Natisone and Torre Valleys dialects and the dialect of Porabje)

- promoting cultural and educational ties with the homeland
- supporting Slovene media in their coverage of the life and problems of Slovene national minorities
- providing for telecommunications coverage to the outer borders of Slovene-speaking areas and ensuring the availability of national radio and TV therein

Indicators:

- amount of resources for scholarship funds
- amount of resources for the media
- amount of resources for cultural creativity
- number of seminars organised
- number of research projects carried out on the public use of Slovene abroad (among members of minorities and expatriates)
- amount of resources and number of materials and textbooks for teaching Slovene
- telecommunications coverage of Slovene-speaking areas

Planned funds: EUR 1,000,000.

Expected effects: increased number of participants in teaching processes in Slovenia for children, adolescents and professionals from abroad (from minorities and expatriate communities); coordinated support for the development and accessibility of all forms of media presence of Slovene in minority and expatriate environments; promotion of the development of cultural creativity; provision of adequate tools and infrastructure.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

Objective 2: Optimisation of teaching and learning Slovene.

Measures:

Teachers:

- systematic training of teachers and other education staff in schools providing instruction in Slovene and in bilingual schools – teachers of Slovene, of other languages and of other subjects – through specialised courses that will teach them how to help learners in bilingual and multilingual environments to realise their language/expressive potential and to develop functionally diverse communication skills in Slovene as a first language or as a second/foreign language
- preparation of a comprehensive educational methodology for teaching Slovene in multilingual environments

Learners:

- organisation of courses in general Slovene or professional Slovene (tailored to the needs of individual professional spheres, including public administration) and translation courses for speakers of Slovene as a first language and others
- organisation of longer stays and courses in Slovenia for students at elementary and secondary schools providing instruction in Slovene and bilingual schools abroad
- establishment and adaptation of Slovenia's system of assessment and certification in line with European guidelines

In order to maintain and improve the condition of Slovene in the expatriate community, with speakers who wish to maintain and develop their Slovene language skills and speakers who wish to revitalise their Slovene language and culture skills, Slovenia's language policy is also promoting optimisation of teaching and learning Slovene.

Teachers:

- training of teachers of Slovene to be able to provide expert assistance to learners in the expatriate community to realise their language potential and to develop functionally diverse communication skills in Slovene
- providing specialised training courses, adapted to particular needs, for teachers of Slovene

Learners:

- preparation of online materials for independent learning of Slovene for the expatriate community

Indicators:

- number of courses and other forms of training for teachers and learners
- preparation of educational methodology
- implementation of the Slovene system of verification and certification of Slovene language proficiency levels
- number of cross-border cooperation events with a language awareness-raising component carried out

Planned funds: EUR 200,000.

Expected effects: improving educational processes and harmonising their planning and development; increasing the availability of processes and materials; higher quality and better results of educational processes in minority and expatriate communities.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

2.1.4 Slovene as a second or foreign language

Extensive migrations both in Slovenia and outside its borders increase the number of persons interested in learning Slovene as a second or foreign language. For members of minorities and immigrants and all other foreigners who come to Slovenia for longer periods, the availability of classes of Slovene is paramount, as knowing the language facilitates their inclusion into society and offers them equality of opportunity for personal development, employment, access to information and so on comparable to that which the majority population enjoys. At the same time, their right to use their own languages and practise their own cultures must be provided for by the law within the budget framework.

Immigrant children and adolescents who are enrolled in Slovenia's educational system are provided with courses in Slovene, though these currently have no defined form or content. In practice, such children have two classes of Slovene per week in addition to the normal school time. Guidelines for efficient language integration are provided by the *Strategy on Successful Integration of Migrant Children, Elementary and Secondary School Students in Slovenia's Education and Training System* [Strategija vključevanja otrok, učencev in dijakov migrantov v sistem vzgoje in izobraževanja v RS] (MŠŠ, 2007). These guidelines should be taken into consideration when amending norms and

standards with a view to better integration of these groups of speakers, in particular when preparing intensive introductory courses of Slovene.

Free access to learning Slovene as a second language for adults is granted by the *Decree on the Means and Scope of Providing Programmes of Support for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals* [Uredba o načinih in obsegu zagotavljanja programov pomoči pri vključevanju tujcev, ki niso državljani Evropske unije], but this does not include citizens from other EU Member States. Such access must also be provided in the future to immigrants from elsewhere within the EU. When an immigrant child is learning Slovene within the regular educational system, opportunities for learning the language must also be presented and offered to the parents.

Students coming to Slovenia under the Erasmus Programme may attend one course of Slovene without charge, while other students do not have this option.

Slovenia promotes learning and studying Slovene and research into the Slovene language abroad through a network of lectureships at foreign universities; in Slovenia, this is done by providing scholarships to persons who study Slovene outside Slovenia and who come to Slovenia for short- or long-term courses. However, such scholarships, with the exception of the *Seminar of Slovene Language, Literature and Culture* at the University of Ljubljana, are currently limited to ethnic Slovenes, and the system of granting these scholarships is not completely transparent. Considering the diverse target groups and communication needs, the priority objective is as below.

Objective: Enhancing and upgrading language skills in Slovene as a second or foreign language.

Measures:

- amending norms and standards with a view to establishing intensive introductory courses of Slovene for immigrant children
- preparation of a syllabus for Slovene as a second language for elementary schools on the basis of a defined number and concept of classes of Slovene as a second/foreign language
- preparation of online materials (including grammars and dictionaries) for individual and blended learning for a range of target groups
- providing expert assistance for the development of new courses of Slovene as a second/foreign language in Slovenia and abroad
- providing legal, financial and organisational conditions for maintaining and developing the network of Slovene lectureships at foreign universities

Teachers:

- informing head teachers and teachers of the national language policy on Slovene as a second language
- systematic training of teachers for teaching pre-school children and elementary and secondary school pupils for whom Slovene is not their first language but who are included in Slovenia's educational system (teachers of Slovene and other subjects)
- training of teachers teaching adults on courses organised in compliance with the *Decree on Ways and Scope of Providing Programmes of Support for Integration of Third-Country Nationals*
- training of teachers for teaching reading and writing in Slovene to illiterate immigrants
- training of teachers to teach in bilingual and multilingual environments
- training of teachers to teach Slovene at foreign universities

Learners:

- preparation of specific literacy programmes for illiterate immigrants (foreign speakers)
- organisation of courses of Slovene for immigrants from other Member States
- systemic provision of scholarships for participation in courses of Slovene in Slovenia for persons who are not Slovene nationals but who may significantly contribute to the promotion of the Slovene language, cultural exchange, etc. (e.g. translators, cultural workers and researchers)
- training of public employees to work with foreign speakers of Slovene;
- promoting Slovene language skills among speakers of the majority language in minority and expatriate communities

Indicators:

- amended norms and standards with a view to establishing intensive introductory courses of Slovene for immigrant children
- prepared syllabus for Slovene as a second language in elementary schools
- number of new online materials
- number of courses of Slovene
- number of different training programmes for teachers
- number of specific literary courses and programmes
- number of scholarships available for participation in courses of Slovene for non-Slovenes who may contribute to the promotion of the Slovene language
- number of training courses for public employees to help them to work with foreign speakers of Slovene
- number of training courses for speakers of the majority language in minority and expatriate communities
- regulated legal and employment status of teachers of Slovene at foreign universities

Planned funds: EUR 500,000.

Expected effects: harmonised planning and development of teaching; improvement of teaching quality and greater availability (including materials) for different groups of speakers, both teachers and learners.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Culture; Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad.

2.1.5 Languages of minorities and immigrants in Slovenia

Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities enjoy the right to public and private use of their languages (in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice) in the municipalities in which they live. Slovene language policy is based on the assumption that well-developed language ability in one's first language, which for members of minority or immigrant communities is not Slovene, is a prerequisite for the development of language skills in Slovene.

Slovenia guarantees the right to use and develop their first languages and culture to both autochthonous national communities; these two languages enjoy the status of official languages in the municipalities where the Italian and Hungarian communities reside. In these areas all legal entities governed by public law have an obligation both to do business and to communicate in the language of the autochthonous national community.

Furthermore, the maintenance and development of the Roma language and culture is promoted in compliance with the *Roma Community Act* [Zakon o romski skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji].

The opportunity to learn their mother tongue is also ensured by bilateral agreements to members of certain other language communities in compliance with the *Primary School Act* [Zakon o osnovni šoli]. However, the realisation of these rights is not integrated in the system, and in elementary and secondary schools they are implemented only in the form of additional or optional classes, where the language is not taught as the first language but as a foreign one. The starting-point of the language policy in this area for the next period is the following: all speakers whose first language is not Slovene have the right, in compliance with human rights and the principles of the European Union, to maintain and revitalise their language and culture, in compliance with the principles governing the rights of language communities defined by the *Declaration on the Situation in Slovenia of National Communities of Members of Nations of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* [Deklaracija RS o položaju narodnih skupnosti pripadnikov narodov nekdanje SFRJ v RS]. Consequently, it is necessary that the *Action Plan for Language Education* systemically provides for better conditions for learning their mother tongue for other immigrants and minority groups in those areas where such a requirement is detected either by state or local authorities. Systematically, such options must be complemented by learning or upgrading Slovene as a second or foreign language.

Objective: Providing conditions for effective integration – both in terms of language and in general – of speakers of minority languages.

In addition to objectives and measures from the *Action Plan for Language Education*, the following will be implemented:

- language training of public employees and officials for communication in languages of autochthonous national communities and in languages of other language communities covered by Slovenia's language policy
- education of translators and interpreters for potentially poorly covered languages (to respond to the needs of interpreting for the relevant community)
- promoting the languages of autochthonous national communities, the Roma community, other minorities and immigrants in education and teaching, information and media activities, cultural activities, and scientific research
- ensuring public media programmes in the languages of speakers whose mother tongue is not Slovene and who wish to be covered by public media but are currently not represented through such programmes

Indicators:

- number of training courses for public service employees and officials carried out
- number of training programmes (courses) for translators and interpreters
- provision of adequate space within public media programmes
- number of promotional events and number of contributions in languages of autochthonous national communities, the Roma community and other minorities and immigrants published in the media

Planned funds: EUR 300,000.

Expected effects: harmonised planning, developing and implementing of language teaching policies; increased number of public employees and officials with language competences in the languages of autochthonous national communities; adequate presence in the media of the languages of autochthonous national communities, of the Roma community, and of other minorities and immigrants; increased awareness of the

existence of languages of autochthonous national communities, of the Roma community, and of other minorities and immigrants among other Slovene citizens in the areas of education and learning, information and media activities, cultural activities, and scientific research.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture, other relevant ministries.

2.1.6 Foreign languages

Planning of foreign language teaching is becoming an ever more important part of national language policies within the European Union. Currently in Slovenia this area is not harmonised and lacks uniform guidelines at both national and local levels. This is reflected particularly dramatically in the scope of the teaching of individual foreign languages, where there are imbalances between the cultural-civilisation and the economic-political role of individual languages and the opportunities available for their continuous learning. Presently the decision on which foreign languages to offer (within compulsory and optional programmes) is left to individual school boards and often caters to short-term interests.

The *Action Plan for Language Education* will, therefore, examine this aspect with particular care and provide for the creation of a single policy for the teaching of foreign languages in the educational system. On the basis of an analysis of the situation in learning and teaching foreign languages at all educational levels, the Action Plan will provide starting points and guidelines for the following: adequate introduction of a second foreign language in elementary and secondary schools; provision of suitable and augmented distribution of the teaching of foreign languages throughout the country and within regions, and establishing among them a balance based on their cultural-civilisation and economic-political roles and their place within both the broader European and global context and the narrower local context; motivating and training head teachers and providing counselling services to schools and their management boards to enable them to provide a suitable and consistent offer of language teaching which will be included in education at all levels in such a way as to encourage students to continue their learning (strictly non-compulsory) and achieving the highest possible level of competence in at least two foreign languages; establishing a system of verification and certification of knowledge obtained both at and outside school; and introducing modern approaches to planning and practising teaching of foreign languages within school curricula.

In elementary and secondary schools, teaching of languages must be planned and practised in a way that enables integrated learning, so that languages refer to and complement not only each other (regardless of their role in the curriculum, i.e. as first, second or foreign language) but also other subjects. This correlation and interconnection must encourage positive transfers among subjects and harmonisation and upgrading of language and other (cultural and civilisation) knowledge (for instance by developing recognition skills for common or distinguishing features in individual languages, by introducing adequate teaching strategies and activities, and through the organisational forms of classes).

Article 72 of the *Fiscal Balance Act* [Zakon o uravnoteženju javnih financ] provides for phased-in introduction of early learning of the first foreign language; this will enable students to perceive learning of foreign languages as something natural and to gradually develop their awareness of language and cultural diversity, and will have a positive impact on their overall cognitive development. In parallel, such introduction demands a highly professional approach to teaching which will prevent inadequate practices and

enhance the understanding of the crucial role of Slovene in Slovenia (and of Italian and Hungarian in the areas of the respective minorities). The range of foreign languages taught in elementary and secondary schools should be broad, but no more than three (and not only English) should be offered as the first foreign language, while there should be more options for the second foreign language. The transition from elementary to secondary school should be flexible enough to enable students either to continue learning their second foreign language, to choose another second foreign language or even to restart learning the same second foreign language from the beginning. Students must also be taught to use language technologies appropriate to their cognitive skills and communication needs. An adequate place must also be ensured for classical languages (Latin and Ancient Greek) at all levels. In regions where Italian and Hungarian are not official languages, they must be given an adequate place as foreign languages. Details on all of the above will be provided in the *Action Plan for Language Education*.

Objective: Quality assurance and optimisation of teaching and learning foreign languages.

Measures:

Teachers:

- informing head teachers and teachers of the national policy for foreign languages
- training head teachers and teachers for adequate decision-making on planning and providing foreign language education
- promoting innovative approaches in learning and teaching languages (content and language integrated learning – CLIL, language portfolio, etc.);
- promoting cooperation among teachers of foreign languages and teachers of the mother tongue within schools – by designing a common language curriculum
- encouraging constant training of teachers in the language they teach and in teaching methods
- training of teachers of Slovene in other languages and teachers of foreign languages in Slovene
- providing competence certificates for teachers

Learners:

- informing and counselling learners and their parents when are they deciding which foreign language to choose
- drafting of adequate materials for the teaching of foreign languages at different levels
- inclusion of content in textbooks of Slovene that will enhance the understanding that the knowledge of foreign languages is important for good communication and will promote understanding language diversity as a value
- certifying the acquired knowledge of foreign languages (within or outside a formal education system) in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages after elementary and secondary school education

Measures to promote quality teaching and the use of foreign languages among the adult population outside formal education institutions:

- encouraging foreign language courses on-the-job and elsewhere (including educational TV programmes)
- encouraging training of translators and interpreters for potentially poorly covered languages
- providing ongoing language and professional training to members of translation and revision services

Indicators:

- number of measures carried out
- number of different training programmes for head teachers and teachers
- amount of teaching materials prepared
- number of subjects addressing language diversity
- number of language courses for adults
- number of different training programmes for translators and interpreters
- number of different training programmes for members of translation and revision services

Planned funds: EUR 300,000.

Expected effects: harmonised planning and development of the overall language platform for the teaching of foreign languages; increasing the level of teaching and knowledge/use of foreign languages; widening the offer of foreign languages within and outside formal educational processes and increasing the opportunities for choosing from them.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (in cooperation with relevant expert institutions); Ministry of Culture.

2.1.7 Speakers with special needs

Persons with special needs must fulfil their communication needs in other ways: for example, the deaf through sign language and the blind through Braille.

Providing the possibility of using such other forms of communication is essential for preventing the isolation of people with special needs and enabling them to realise their fundamental rights on an equal footing with other people and to actively participate in social life. Slovenia is bound to provide equal opportunities to all its citizens by various documents (*Slovenia's Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, the European Parliament Resolution on Sign Languages, etc.*); however, their implementation is often left to non-government organisations and volunteers. The priority objective of the language policy is to empower those speakers with special needs, such as the deaf/hard of hearing, blind/partially sighted, deafblind, persons with specific disorders (dyslexia, poor reading and learning ability, speech and language disorders, etc.), and persons with developmental disorders to fully develop skills that will enable them to use alternative ways of communication. This presupposes providing basic language resources and technologies and teaching material for speakers with special needs. In this context an important goal of the language policy is to give these alternative ways of communication the same status as Slovene (for the deaf, for instance, Slovene is not the first but the second language). The majority population must be made aware of the specific communication needs of these groups and of the fact that such alternative (and different) ways of communication are perfectly acceptable. In compliance with the principle of inclusion, the majority population must be taught how to establish contacts and communicate with people with special needs. To realise this objective, concrete measures, as defined in this document, will be necessary; and will have to be included in the *Action Plan for Language Education*.

Because of the specificity of language education for the deaf, the Action Plan must define the role of the existing Council for the Slovene Sign Language in the drafting and the implementation of the *Action Plan for Language Education*. Following the adoption of the *Use of the Slovene Sign Language Act* [Zakon o uporabi slovenskega znakovnega

jezika], which grants the deaf the right to use sign language in all spheres of work and life (with the assistance of interpreters for the Slovene sign language), the scope of work and workload of interpreters have greatly increased, as have the expectations of deaf people themselves. In turn, the increased and diversified tasks of interpreters require better knowledge and standardisation of the Slovene sign language, as the current development level of this language does not cover the communication needs of a modern and knowledge-based society.

Slovene sign language is an autonomous language and differs from Slovene – its highly developed signs and facial expressions have different syntactic and word-formation rules, so it is not compatible with spoken standard Slovene. Sign language is the mode of communication of the majority of deaf adults: when communicating with other deaf or hearing persons that understand sign language, they use the same code. Slovene sign language is the first natural language of the deaf and is, therefore, considered a minority language.

Objective 1: Developing communication skills in Slovene sign language.

Measures:

- analysis of the status of Slovene sign language
- systematic training of teachers and educational staff for teaching in Slovene sign language in Slovenia's institutes for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
- establishment of a system of verification and certification of knowledge of Slovene sign language for teachers and educational staff in Slovenia's institutes for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing
- providing ongoing training for interpreters of Slovene sign language
- education in Slovene sign language at all school levels
- drafting and adopting of syllabuses for Slovene sign language as a first language
- introduction of Slovene sign language as an optional subject into schools
- training of interpreters for Slovene sign language

Indicators:

- number of measures carried out
- number of research papers, articles and other scientific texts on Slovene sign language
- number of different training programmes for teachers and educational staff
- adoption of adequate syllabuses
- number of different training programmes for interpreters

Planned funds: EUR 300,000.

Expected effects: harmonised planning and developing of language education; increase in the number of research projects and results which will be the basis for the development of language education; improving the overall attitude of the population to the needs of speakers with special needs and enhancing their possibilities for communication.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 2: Enabling the use of alternative modes of communication for the blind and partially sighted, for the deafblind, for persons with specific disorders (e.g. dyslexia, poor reading and learning skills, and speech and language disorders), and for persons with developmental disorders.

Measures:

- printing of texts in Braille and other adapted forms (teaching materials, textbooks, official documents, product labels, public signs and inscriptions, literary works)
- updating of Slovene Braille (raised-dot writing system)
- designing forms and documents provided by administrative units and model ballot papers for groups with special needs (enabling understanding the contents of forms by electronic means or other adaptations)
- equipping public spaces with audio information systems (indicating direction in space) for the blind and partially sighted
- providing audio versions of modern Slovene literary works (for instance award-winning works) and audio guides or devices for "easy reading" for permanent exhibitions in museums and galleries
- audio description of TV programmes and films
- equipping cultural heritage items with signs for the blind and partially sighted
- drafting guidelines for the adjustment of examination requirements for speakers with special needs (e.g. the possibility of passing written examinations orally or oral examinations in writing and adjustments in terms of deadlines and exam times) in areas not yet regulated
- ensuring that literary, scientific and other texts, adapted to the needs of the blind, the partially sighted and people with reading disabilities, are accessible in digitalised form in libraries and online, and providing for their dissemination to users with special needs
- equipping museums, galleries, castles, churches and other landmarks and cultural and historical monuments and historic city centres with audio description systems

Indicators:

- number of teaching and other materials in Braille
- number of administrative units equipped with documents adapted for the partially sighted and for persons with other specific disabilities
- number of public spaces equipped with audio information systems
- number of modern literary works and other cultural goods in audio form
- number of TV programmes and films with audio description
- number of cultural heritage items equipped with signs for the blind and partially sighted
- guidelines for adjustment of examination requirements
- number of digitalised materials and number of public and cultural institutions for the blind and partially sighted and for people with reading disabilities equipped with systems for audio description

Planned funds: EUR 400,000.

Expected effects: harmonising planning and developing of communications options for speakers with special needs.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 3: Encouraging other speakers to acquire competences in alternative modes of communication.

Measure:

- organisation of courses on sign language and Braille; preparation of texts that are easy to read and understand for groups of persons with special needs

Indicator:

- number of courses on sign language, Braille and easy-to-read text preparation

Planned funds: EUR 70,000.

Expected effects: increased number of persons with competences for such communication among majority speakers, resulting in better communication between them and groups of people with special needs.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 4: Enhancing the Slovene language competences of speakers with special needs.

Measures:

- developing methods and teaching materials for groups of people with special needs
- training of teachers/educators to work with these materials

Indicators:

- number of new teaching materials
- number of different training programmes for teachers

Planned funds: EUR 200,000.

Expected effects: harmonisation and increased availability of tools and requirements for such training; easier and more effective acquisition of Slovene language skills for these groups of speakers.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Culture.

Objective 5: Inclusion of people with special needs in society.

Measure:

- training of teachers and educational staff to work with groups of people with special needs educated in regular schools.

Indicator:

- number of different training programmes for teachers and other educational staff

Planned funds: EUR 70,000.

Expected effects: increase in the number of people with special needs included in society subsystems; more space for such people in regular schools.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Culture.

2.1.8 Legal framework governing language in higher education and science³

In its fundamental development documents, Slovenia's higher education sphere indicates a further internationalisation as one of the key factors for the next decade, based on involvement in international networks and cooperation with partners of excellence from European and other universities.

Among priorities concerning the use of language in higher education and science are measures that will provide for efficient language arrangements and improve the position of Slovene in both areas. Language issues tackled by discussions and documents on excellence and internationalisation are primarily associated with the following strategic development requirements:

- exchanging students and inviting foreign students to balance the reduction in the Slovene student population by 2020
- exchanging teaching staff, and providing the possibility of long-term employment of foreign university teachers at Slovene universities
- ensuring adequate quality of research work by requiring citation indexing in Web of Science databases⁴

Measures envisaged by the Resolution are based on the premise that Slovenia's universities and Government wish to preserve and further develop Slovene as the teaching language in higher education and in science but also desire to maintain the international dimension of their activities and competitiveness.

Objective 1: Facilitating mobility of students and teachers.

The use of Slovene in higher education in Slovenia need not be a barrier for Slovenia's higher education institutions to become international, though an appropriate language policy is necessary. It is necessary to establish a clear differentiation between shorter forms of study periods of students and teaching staff and longer forms of inclusion of students and teaching staff in Slovenia's higher education system. Experiences in teaching Slovene as a foreign language show that Slovene may be mastered in a relatively short time (both receptive and productive vocabulary) and that learning Slovene alongside their study or teaching obligations does not represent an excessive burden for foreigners. Providing courses of Slovene to foreigners who are integrated in Slovenia's higher education system is also considerably less expensive than organising additional training in English for Slovene teachers and those foreign teachers whose first language is not English and conducting parallel classes for foreign students in all instances where the demand exists. A foreign student is capable of following lectures in Slovene after one year in Slovenia and one year of learning Slovene, while teachers are capable of lecturing in Slovene after four years in Slovenia and four years of learning Slovene. After the above one-year or four-year period, the students and teachers should be required to acquire the Slovene Language Certificate at the appropriate level and the teachers should then use Slovene when lecturing in regular higher education courses. However, students may prepare their final papers (graduate and master's theses and dissertations) in a foreign language (with summary in Slovene) in all higher education programmes.

³ The term science refers to both natural sciences and humanities (translator's note).

⁴ Web of Science (WoS) gives access to multiple databases with citation indexing: Science Citation Index Expanded® (SCI-EXPANDED), Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI) and Arts & Humanities Citation Index® (A&HCI). These cover more than 10,000 of the most influential academic journals from around the world from 1970 to the present day.

Measure:

- establishment/maintenance of the system of efficient learning of Slovene for foreign students and teaching staff within individual universities

Indicators:

- system of teaching of Slovene for foreign students and teaching staff
- number of Slovene language courses for Erasmus students, regular foreign students and foreign teachers
- number of appropriate level Slovene Language Certificates for students and teachers

Planned funds: EUR 2,500,000.

Expected effects: successful language integration of foreign students and teachers into Slovenia's higher education sphere; efficient and equivalent exchange of academic ideas and achievements.

Institution responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Objective 2: Preservation of the status of Slovene as the official and teaching language of higher education.

Measures planned will ensure that Slovene keeps its status of official and teaching language in higher education and science. At the same time the measures provide for the systematic regulating of teaching in other languages, recognising the importance of the mobility of students and teaching staff, of the exchange of scientific results, and of the free movement of knowledge.

Measures:

- the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the universities must, within the framework of the higher education act that is currently being drafted, of the *Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme* and of relative strategies, set up transparent models for inclusion of foreign students and teaching staff: (1) through high-quality parallel programmes and elective modules created especially for exchange students but which could also be taken by Slovene students (under special conditions, see below); (2) by introducing the concept of differentiated multilingualism, following examples from abroad. According to this concept, the higher education teaching language is the majority language, while students who are not familiar enough with this language are provided with simultaneous (machine) translation into their language with tools adapted to individual disciplines; overlays and other study materials are, as a rule, bilingual (i.e. in the majority language and the foreign language), and communication between foreign student and teacher during office hours may be conducted in the foreign language; (3) by promoting solidarity, tutorial assistance and close partnership between home and visiting students
- the compulsory volume of higher education programmes to be provided in Slovene must be defined by law and not left to the discretion of universities. As the strategic orientations of the universities concerning the increase of exchanges match those of the Government, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and higher education institutions shall agree on the funding of such exchanges
- at the level of doctoral studies, universities shall be left to autonomously adopt their language policy, in line, of course, with the Constitution and the law and respecting the general principle that Slovene teachers do not lecture to Slovene students in a foreign language

Indicators:

- establishing a model for integrating foreigners into Slovenia's higher education system (legislation)
- determining the compulsory volume of higher education programmes to be provided in Slovene (legislation)
- number of parallel programmes and elective modules in a foreign language

Planned funds: EUR 1,200,000.

Expected effects: parallel programmes, elective modules and simultaneous machine translation for short-term visiting students will provide for an effective transfer of Slovene knowledge to foreign students.

Institution responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Objective 3: Developing communication capacities in the language of academic disciplines.

Active multilingualism in Europe is foreseen in numerous documents to which Slovenia has committed itself. It is, therefore, paramount to enable, at the higher education level, the learning of professional Slovene, contrastive terminology, and contrastive academic and scientific writing, while providing an adequate level of mastering professional communication in other languages for students and teachers alike.

Measures:

- a syllabus covering the above language contents, based on results of a thorough research and analysis of academic and technical articles at the tertiary level, on examples from abroad, and considering the specificities of individual programmes, will be drafted and recommended to the universities as an introductory class in the first year of all first-degree study programmes
- a plan for training teachers to be able to adequately communicate in Slovene and in foreign languages and a plan of verification of language competences in other languages for those teachers who teach elective modules and programmes in other languages will be prepared
- publishing quality tertiary-level textbooks in Slovene and translating quality textbooks from foreign languages will be promoted
- a master's study programme will be created, culminating in a lawyer linguist degree, for those who wish to pursue a career in EU institutions

Indicators:

- syllabus for academic writing course/programme
- prepared plan of training and verifying teachers' proficiency in communicating in Slovene and English
- prepared syllabus for the lawyer linguist programme

Planned funds: EUR 10,000.

Expected effects: harmonised and more efficient planning and developing of teachers' language proficiency in Slovene and English; development of the academic and technical language of individual disciplines, including development of contrastive terminology.

Institution responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Objective 4: Improving the status of Slovene as a language of science⁵.

Currently, the criteria for electing higher education teachers to titles of distinction, and provisions for accreditation of tertiary education programmes and institutions (the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – NAKVIS) are the result of the recognition of the importance of internationally confirmed quality of Slovenia's scientific achievements. The same criteria are applied by the Slovenian Research Agency for evaluating the excellence of Slovene scientists when awarding project funds.

From the development point of view, publishing in foreign journals and in foreign languages is logical, considering that the university habilitation policy aims to overcome the confinement of research achievements of Slovene researchers to the national territory and set it against work done abroad, and in this way increase the excellence of research work. When publishing abroad was more the exception than the rule, it was logical for the universities to stress the importance of such publishing in foreign languages. However, such a policy resulted in neglecting and in certain cases completely abandoning scientific publishing in Slovene as a prerequisite for appointment to academic titles, for supervising doctoral students and for heading research projects and programmes. This is thus a harmful policy from at least two aspects, i.e. poor development of Slovene terminology and Slovene as an academic teaching language and the decline of good scientific journals published in Slovene. The result of the current policy of academic career development in certain disciplines is that Slovene is becoming a marginal language. Academic and professional publishing in Slovene is a prerequisite if we want the academic sphere to effectively inform the Slovene public of its achievements, to contribute to the establishment of a knowledge society, and to return the society the invested public resources. For instance, criteria for the lowest teaching title of higher education teacher do not include "mastering of Slovene as the academic and technical language of the discipline", while research excellence criteria as a rule only consider publishing in foreign languages, or evaluate publications in foreign languages disproportionately higher than publications in Slovene, even in cases where excellent Slovene scientific journals exist.

If in the past it was necessary to promote publishing in foreign languages, today the situation is reversed: in order to encourage the development of Slovene as academic language, it is necessary to promote quality publishing in Slovene. This is why Slovenia's universities, the Slovenian Research Agency and the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education must create a balance between international and national visibility and encourage academic publishing in Slovene as well.

Measure:

- Universities provide, within their habilitation policies, incentives for publishing academic and scientific articles in Slovene. Universities, the Slovenian Research Agency and the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education must, for appointment to academic titles and for funding of programme groups, introduce the requirement of compulsory publishing of textbooks, terminology materials, academic articles and books in Slovene (exceptions for specific fields, where this would not be feasible, are to be determined by the Slovenian Research Agency), as these are the pool for the creation of terminology and language databases and other resources (see following section).

Indicator:

⁵ See footnote 3.

- adoption and implementation of a system of habilitation rules and a system of funding programme groups, where special emphasis is put on academic publishing in Slovene.

Planned funds: /

Expected effects: increased number of published academic articles in Slovene; development of Slovene technical language and terminology; informing the Slovene public of the development of Slovenian scientific achievements.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (in cooperation with universities).

2.2 Language infrastructure

2.2.1 Introduction

The extent to which Slovene and the Slovene language community are provided with language resources, reference works, tools and (advisory) services is among the key factors that will determine how a large number of the objectives of the language policy will be realised. Analyses of past language planning activities show that the basic problem of language infrastructure is the absence of an overall synthesis of needs of the community of speakers of Slovene, and the related controlled planning of language infrastructure by the government bodies which fund the relevant activities. The common objective of all sections below is to provide basic guidelines for the development of modern language reference works, resources, tools and services in the form of a specific *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*.

Coverage of language infrastructure is limited primarily to essential language reference works, resources, tools and services enabling Slovenes and foreign speakers of Slovene to efficiently communicate in the language, to learn and teach the language, to exercise their constitutional right to use their language, and to exercise rights granted to persons with special needs. In the broader context of language infrastructure there have been evident developments since the adoption of the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11*, in particular in the areas of digitisation and of information and communication technologies. These two processes create the framework for further development of the infrastructure, which, considering the pace of change and the fact that European and world trends will be predominantly digital, online and mobile. The language policy of the European Union, which is the framework for our own policy, follows world trends and invests in the development of digital resources for EU official languages and other European languages; Slovenia must embrace this trend and join initiatives that will make it possible for reference works, resources, tools and services for Slovene to be in line with the EU policy goals.

Objective: Coordinated planning and implementing of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*.

Measures:

- promoting research on Slovene and other languages addressed by Slovene language policy as support to the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure* (5 to 10 years) provides for the compilation of language reference works and the development of language technology resources, tools and software applications for Slovene, which will

offer stakeholders participation on an equal footing in pre-established, internationally comparable development. The *Action Plan* provides that the funding authority establishes a special organ tasked with the preparation and monitoring of the Plan and coordination of different sources of financing; the *Action Plan* must be adopted within one year at the latest of the adoption of this Resolution and must be implemented consistently and must respect the planned road map

- establishment of an institution or consortium for the integration, collection, development and distribution of language resources and technologies; the institution or the consortium must be established within one year of the adoption of this Resolution, and funds must be allocated for its long-term operation

Indicators:

- number of research projects on Slovene to provide support to the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- the drawing up of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- efficient operation of the institution or consortium for integrating language resources and technologies

Planned funds: EUR 850,000.

Expected effects: harmonised planning and development of language reference works and language infrastructure.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Culture.

2.2.2 Language description

Prevailing linguistic theories hold that language is composed of two parts: words and rules enabling the words to be manifested, inflected, and used in texts. Language description thus comprises a dictionary, which describes words and phrases, and a grammar, which is a description of rules governing the creation, inflection and use of words.

Every cultivated language has at least one comprehensive and authoritative monolingual dictionary and one grammar of the contemporary standard language. These two descriptive tools represent a solid basis for all further, more or less application-oriented dictionaries and grammar works either containing selected lexical material or rules, or presenting lexis and rules in alternative ways. As language changes over time, each comprehensive work is utilisable only for a limited period, which today is much shorter than it was in the 20th century. Because of the rapid development of extra-linguistic reality today language evolves much faster than in the past, in particular in its lexical part, while decades are still necessary for any significant changes to occur in its grammar.

Both in the recent past and also today *The Dictionary of Standard Slovene* and the *Slovene Grammar* by Jože Toporišič are considered to be the comprehensive and authoritative dictionary and grammar of standard Slovene. Both are well grounded and useful reference works; however, because of changes that have occurred in recent decades, they no longer respond to the needs of the current language reality. A shortcoming of both works is also the fact that they were conceptualized as printed books; and that only the dictionary was later digitalized, without, however, being fully adapted to the new digital environment because of its original print-based design.

Considering the fact that Slovene is spoken by a relatively small number of speakers it would be sensible to prepare only one comprehensive and authoritative (descriptive) dictionary and grammar. The *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure* must provide for a description of modern standard Slovene that will be adapted to be used in web and other digital environments, and will provide, in one or more databases, all the necessary information on the Slovene language, such as definitions, valency, collocations, phraseology, idiomatic expressions, etymology, etc. The basis for language description is the collected empirical data on language use that includes different language modalities. The future *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure* must provide for a constant and controlled development of basic corpora that will enable an ongoing analysis of the Slovene language, and which will be used for Slovene language description. These are the reference corpus of Slovene, the extended and upgraded spoken corpus of Slovene, the corpus of texts from the web, multimodal corpora (text + picture + sound), corpora of school essays of elementary and secondary school students, and other corpora.

In the period covered by the current Resolution it is necessary to commence planning the new Slovene authoritative academic grammar which will reflect the current grammatical system of the standard Slovene as the cohesive language variety for all Slovene speakers.

In order to improve language infrastructure dictionaries whose preparation is under way will have to be completed, compiled or adapted to the digital environment, such as a dictionary of synonyms, a dictionary of inflected forms of standard vocabulary (without proper names) including information on dynamic and pitch accent, a dictionary of geographical names of Slovene national space and exonyms, and a dictionary of Slovene names (personal names and family names). To preserve Slovene as an academic and technical language it will be necessary to continuously produce terminological dictionaries for specific disciplines. All of this must be effected in such a way as to allow mutual compatibility as well compatibility with the comprehensive and authoritative digital dictionary (and in the future with the authoritative academic grammar) and their availability online.

On the basis of these authoritative works other reference works must be compiled for different target users, such as dictionaries and grammars for various educational levels of native speakers, for foreign language speakers, for speakers with special needs. Moreover, it should be remembered that Slovene does not consist only of the contemporary standard variety, but also of dialects, and possesses a history that reaches far into the past. Special attention must, therefore, be given to research on dialects, and to the compilation of language atlases, dictionaries of dialects, books on individual (moribund) dialects, and to historical and comparative research, in particular to the compilation of the historical dictionary and historical grammar of the Slovene language, as well as to revising the current etymological dictionary, etc.

Objective: Preparing a comprehensive and authoritative description of contemporary standard Slovene, specialised language descriptions, and dialectological, historical and comparative linguistic descriptions.

Measures:

- adoption of guidelines for the compilation of authoritative and specialised reference works for contemporary standard Slovene and authoritative specialised reference works on dialects, history and comparative linguistics (5–10 years) at the national level – as part of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*

- adoption of a system of bibliometric evaluation of dictionaries and other lexicographical works that will encourage researchers to work together in compiling authoritative and specialised reference works for Slovene
- setting up a freely accessible web portal, both for the general public and for professionals, with as much language data on Slovene as possible; the portal must be established within one year of the adoption of this Resolution, and funds must be allocated for its long-term curation

Indicators:

- adoption of basic guidelines
- preparation of authoritative and specialised reference works for Slovene
- adoption of an adequate system of bibliometric evaluation of dictionaries and other lexicographical works
- establishment and maintenance of a web portal

Planned funds: EUR 6,300,000.

Expected effects: harmonised production of authoritative and specialised language reference works and ensuring their availability on the web (single entry point); gathering as much information as possible on the Slovene language.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture (all in cooperation with the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, universities and research institutions).

2.2.3 Standardisation

The identification of the linguistic norm starts with the identification of the actual use of words and with the assessment of such use in relation to the current language standard. Standardisation is closely connected with systematic description of language. Standardisation tools for Slovene exist, but up-to-date descriptions do not. To enable ongoing monitoring of the gap between the current language standard and the actual use, the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure* must provide for the availability of language resources and tools. Such language technology enables the generation of a (partially) automatic and (even more important) objective language database which may be used, with adequate linguistic interpretation, in all phases of the standardisation process.

Preparation of normative language reference works, able to provide rapid and unequivocal answers to linguistic problems for the largest circle of users, is possible only on the basis of prior extensive research that will define how such reference works are to be compiled and what issues they should address. The process of recording the norm in reference works must take into consideration the latest changes in the language in order to meet users' expectations and be in line with the concept of minimum intervention.

In compliance with tradition, good practice and relevant legislation authoritative Slovene orthography and grammar reference works are approved, after consultation with all institutions competent for language planning, by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, whose responsibility it is also to cooperate in the compilation of all authoritative normative reference works on Slovene.

The idea of setting up a web language helpdesk, already contained in the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11*, shows that one of the priorities of the language policy is to enhance the linguistic self-confidence and the respect of

Slovene among Slovene speakers: this may be achieved by broadening their knowledge of standard Slovene. During the period covered by the preceding Resolution, research on the efficiency of language helpdesks showed the urgent need for the establishment of an advisory body that would provide rapid and clear answers to linguistic issues. It is thus of paramount importance to establish an advisory body that will operate via a freely accessible web portal – containing maximum language data on Slovene – in order to reach the widest possible circle of lay and professional users.

Today most people write using computers and word-processing software with incorporated spelling checkers to detect typing and orthography errors. Similar tools "correct" mistakes when a person is browsing the web (for instance, Google's algorithm "did you mean" suggests alternative search terms). A recent survey carried out on a large population of language users showed that only a small number of users check the suggestion provided by the spellchecker in other reference works, and that most users trust the tool. Answers also suggest that this share would be even larger if users could be sure that they could trust the expertise behind the tool. The digital age thus highlights the issue of the predominance of tools that are being designed and created outside the reach of Slovene linguistics and Slovene language policy. The indirect impact of such tools on language use is rapidly increasing; the question thus arises of how to present language data in user-friendly applications, integrated into word-processors and web browsers. An important task of the language policy in the immediate future is to prepare strategies that will allow, through access to resources and tools, the competent institutions to exert influence over providers of these services.

Objective: Carrying out activities to provide conditions for speakers of Slovene and foreign speakers who desire to learn Slovene, to learn standard Slovene and communicate in this standard.

Measures:

- adopting basic guidelines for the development of modern standard language reference works and services in line with new media and changed habits of users of such tools – as part of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- establishing an advisory body that will operate via a freely accessible web portal providing maximum language data on Slovene
- updating the codification system in compliance with the updated language description

Indicators:

- adoption of basic guidelines
- establishment of an advisory body
- publishing of an orthography reference work

Planned funds: EUR 600,000.

Expected effects: harmonised development and accessibility of modern reference works on standard Slovene and of language advisory services.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture (all in cooperation with the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, universities and research institutions).

2.2.4 Terminology and multilingualism

When planning multilingual resources for the future, we may no longer consider only classical bilingual or terminology dictionaries, but must envisage also linguistic databases or cross-lingual knowledge bases that may be used either directly for checking information in an adequate web or other software program (or in printed form) or incorporated in tools that assist in the learning of languages, translating or interpreting, such as machine-translation systems, computer-aided translation systems, and computer-aided interpretation systems. It is possible to make the most of the above resources only if an adequate (web) infrastructure is in place. The primary condition for compiling authoritative language reference works and providing technological solutions which may solve contrastive difficulties between two or more languages is the existence of modern resources and tools for Slovene and the description of Slovene language.

Until now it has been agreed that monolingual language resources and tools for Slovene should be financed from public funds, while producing bilingual and multilingual resources and tools should be left either to the enthusiastic individual or to the commercial sphere. This concept has become insufficient as we enter the digital age. The development of information and communication technologies has brought about a situation in which, after their transition to the digital environment, traditional bilingual and multilingual reference works have become much less interesting commercially (or of no interest at all), not only in Slovenia but also in Europe and indeed globally. On the other hand, in the digital environment it is much easier to exploit data from one database to compile new databases with similar contents; this is true for bilingual and multilingual databases, for terminology databases and so on. Adequate infrastructure also facilitates the creation of multilingual resources for those languages or for specialised thematic areas that have not yet been covered because of the small number of potential users.

Technical and scientific terminology in Slovene is essential for the comprehensive development of Slovenia. Consequently, it is imperative that activities under the national language policy be aimed at creating language resources and promoting language training of experts in all fields. Languages with a large number of speakers are advantaged because they have a larger market and are strongly backed by the language industry (more and more accessible up-to-date databases, thesauruses, language corpora, machine translation systems, etc.); this is the reason why the role of the government is so important for languages with fewer speakers. The *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure* must consider this aspect and provide for the setting up of a terminology portal within a freely accessible web portal with maximum available data on Slovene, which will also offer a web forum for the rapid exchange of knowledge and opinions on terminology solutions among professionals and linguists.

Objective: Setting up of infrastructure and preparation of freely accessible multilingual and terminology resources and tools to assist in learning and teaching foreign languages and in terminology work.

Measures:

- adoption of fundamental guidance on the preparation of contemporary bilingual and multilingual general and terminology language reference works (5–10 years) at the national level and actual preparation of such reference works – as part of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- setting up of a general multilingual web portal within a freely accessible web portal with maximum available language data on Slovene; available will be multilingual contents retrieved through digitisation or other means from existing bilingual and multilingual sources; the portal must enable the use of crowdsourcing in upgrading the contents and must act as a multilingual aggregator of contrastive data from other web sectors

- setting up of a general multilingual web portal within a freely accessible web portal with maximum available language data on Slovene, containing existing terminology dictionaries and databases and those in progress and an efficient language counselling service, and which will put to good use options for the rapid exchange of knowledge among professionals and linguists; the portal must also host the national mechanism for verification of EU terminology
- promoting projects for the preparation of terminology and multilingual databases and multilingual (parallel, comparable, etc.) and terminology corpora based on monolingual definitions in Slovene

Indicators:

- adoption of basic guidelines
- setting up of a general multilingual portal
- setting up of a terminology portal
- number of supported projects for the preparation of terminology and multilingual databases and reference works

Planned funds: EUR 600,000.

Expected effects: increased availability of multilingual and terminology databases, harmonisation of terminology.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture (all in cooperation with the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, universities and research institutions).

2.2.5 Language technologies

The term language technologies covers various computer tools and applications that use existing language (meta)data for solving users' practical dilemmas connected to language (systems for speech recognition and synthesis systems, machine translation systems, machine-aided human translation systems, spelling correction, grammar correction, automatic question-answering systems, text mining, etc.) and for computer analysis of natural languages for the production of digital language reference works and resources (tokenisation, morphosyntactic tagging, syntactic parsing, automatic word sense-disambiguation, automatic coreference resolution, named-entity recognition, etc.).

In the past ten years the development of information and communication technologies has been creating a "digital divide" which will make languages that do not share in this development less attractive and competitive in the present globalised world. The digital divide separates languages that are sufficiently present on the Internet, for which modern digital resources exist and which are developed in terms of language technologies from those languages for which the delay in catching up with the rapid development of information and communication technologies is only increasing. In the last ten years plans for developing digital resources and language-processing applications have been prepared for most official language of the European Union, whereby some Members States and language communities systematically and in a planned way provide for their languages to enter the digital environment. The objectives of such plans are generally the following: (1) identification of factors concerning language description, language technology and resources; (2) systematic analysis of language use and the needs of the language community linked to such use; (3) making a list of existing digital language products and services for the research community and the general public and of what is still missing; (4) setting up of regulated storage, maintenance and distribution of existing

reference works, resources and tools; (5) setting up of a long-term programme of preparing and developing digital language reference works, resources and tools; (6) cooperating with European initiatives for exchange of digital resources and tools.

Comparability of such programmes is ensured by taking into consideration European initiatives such as CLARIN and DARIAH research infrastructures and infrastructure networks such as META-NET.

The technological development of any language is typically evaluated according to the following indicators:

language technology resources (corpora and knowledge bases), which include: (1) reference corpora, specialised corpora; (2) morphosyntactically and syntactically annotated text corpora (dependency treebanks); (3) semantically and discourse annotated corpora; (4) parallel corpora, translation memories, multilingual comparable corpora; (5) speech corpora (speech audio files, annotated audio corpora, dialogic corpora); (6) multimedia and multimodal databases (combining text and video/audio data); (7) semantic lexicons, synonym dictionaries, ontologies; (8) language models (statistical models for probability distribution at different language levels) and (formal) grammars; (9) lexicons of word forms and multiword units; (10) terminology databases; language technology tools and applications (software systems), which include: (1) spellcheckers and modules for checking grammar; (2) machine translation, machine-aided translation in different languages; (3) speech recognition and synthesis (audio systems, aids for learning standard spoken Slovene, portable and embedded user interfaces, voice enabled management of technical systems); (4) tokenisation, morphosyntactic tagging, morphological analysis and synthesis; (5) syntactic parsing (surface or deep syntactic analysis of sentence structure, valency); (6) sentence semantics (automatic word sense-disambiguation, semantic roles); (7) text semantics (automatic coreference resolution, context analysis, pragmatic information extraction, deduction via context); (8) discourse processing (formal structure analysis of texts, rhetorical structure analysis of texts, argumentative analysis, word-pattern analysis, genre-recognition, etc.); (9) information extraction (automatic indexing, multimedia information extraction, multilingual information extraction); (10) information retrieval (named-entity recognition, event-relation information retrieval, automatic opinion/relation recognition, text analytics and text mining); (11) speech synthesis, dialogue systems.

For the forthcoming period it would be realistic to plan at least the following: (a) setting up, upgrading and maintaining the (standard) annotated reference and specialised corpora of Slovene, including formulation of language models for statistically supported probability analysis of language use at different language levels, and tools and software programs for their computer analysis and visualisation, and (b) work on all the tasks listed in the section on language technology tools and software applications. Terminology databases will be incorporated in the planned terminology portal.

The *Action Plan for the Production of Language Reference Works and Resources* must provide for common elements which will make possible connecting such corpora and thus contribute to more effective use of resources in the preparation of language reference works.

A significant drawback in the current system for the development of tools and resources financed by budget funds is the fact that after the termination of the project concerned, i.e. the relevant period of financing, such tools and resources are either not accessible for general use or impossible to find, access or use. Another problem in the same line is the unclear copyright status of existing resources and software applications. To overcome these difficulties it is necessary to establish an institution or a consortium of institutions tasked with connecting, collecting, developing and distributing those

language technology resources which are financed by public funds and providing for their continuous and, as far as possible, free accessibility for all users. For languages with a limited number of users, such as Slovene, it is necessary that such resources be available also for commercial exploitation, where such use is admissible and possible, as this is one of the effective methods to promote the use of a specific language in the digital environment.

Objective: Promoting the development of language technologies for Slovene, including setting up the necessary infrastructure for the preparation of freely accessible resources and tools.

Measure:

- adoption of basic guidelines for the development of language technologies at the national level (5–10 years) and preparation of such technologies – as part of the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

Indicators:

- adoption of basic guidelines
- number of new technological tools, software applications and resources created

Planned funds: EUR 2,200,000.

Expected effects: harmonised plan for the development of language technologies, based on agreed priorities after a thorough assessment of the current status of these technologies.

Institutions responsible: Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture.

2.2.6 Digitisation

Transition to the digital age means that all text and other materials (audio, video, etc.) representing Slovenian cultural and scientific heritage will be (freely) accessible in digital form. The free accessibility of such language resources promotes their use via digital media, including mutual connectivity, and provides the empirical basis for the development of language technology support for Slovene. Free access is provided through licences such as Creative Commons, where authors surrender a part of their copyright to the digital original, whereby they allow not only consulting, but also downloading and dissemination of their language resources.

Digitisation of existing texts that are traditionally perceived as books and their free access over the Internet are essential. Under the *2008–11 Resolution*, free online access was provided to *The Dictionary of Standard Slovene*, the *Slovene Orthography (2001)* and to several other reference works; in the future, online access will have to be provided, in compliance with Slovenia's legislation and internationally comparable rules, to the largest possible number of key authoritative and specialist language descriptions and databases, both existing and in development, for their incorporation into software applications and for promoting further development of language technologies for Slovene. Openness also means adequate technology, so language reference works and resources must be compiled in compliance with appropriate international standards and guidelines, such as XML and ISO, in particular those prepared by the ISO/TC 37 –

Terminology and Other Language and Content Resources, and by other relevant bodies, such as the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). Existing terminology reference works must be published on the planned terminology portal.

In Slovenia there already exists a series of digital libraries providing access to full texts. The central database is dLib, the Digital Library of Slovenia. But for older materials this provides only scans and automatic OCR text, which contain (because of the age of the originals) many mistakes. Correcting such texts is a time-consuming, albeit necessary, part of the preparation of high-quality fair copies that may later be used by language technologies. The preparation of fair copies of older language production must also be promoted by using crowdsourcing for entering and correcting language resources – a case of good practice here is the collection of Slovene classical literature on Wikisource.

The Government must promote academic publications in the Slovene language; this is also a valuable source of Slovene science terminology and language. Until now, possibilities for the capture, processing and distribution of such texts have not been fully exploited. If texts published in scientific journals and proceedings are accessible, they may be processed using language technologies and may be made available to research communities for terminology management. This would take place within the context of a comprehensive terminology portal which is part of a freely accessible online portal giving access to extensive digital linguistic data on the Slovene language.

Objective: Promoting the digitisation of and providing free access to all existing language resources and reference works representing Slovenian cultural heritage and scientific text production in the Slovene language.

Measures:

- the mechanism for the selection of projects on the production of language resources and reference works financed by public funds must include the requirement that such resources and reference works should – to the greatest extent possible – be standardised and accessible online
- awarding infrastructure research funds to programmes which include the digitisation of written cultural heritage (this includes, besides scans, fair copies and critical editions of important documents) and the digitisation or adaptation to the digital environment of Slovene language reference works and to those which provide online access to scientific texts in Slovene

Indicators:

- planned measures carried out
- number of digitalised items of written cultural heritage
- number of Slovene language reference works in digital form
- access to scientific texts in digital form

Planned funds: EUR 300,000.

Expected effects: increased number of items of written cultural heritage, Slovene language reference works and scientific texts in digital form.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Culture.

2.2.7 Speakers with special needs

Specific areas where language infrastructure does not meet the requirements of persons with special needs are, in particular, the Slovene sign language, aids for the blind and partially sighted, aids for people with speech and language impairments, and technical aids for people with dyslexia (reading and writing difficulties). Slovene sign language is developed in compliance with the provisions of the *Slovene Sign Language Act*. The present Resolution encourages all activities that constitute the regular application of the provisions of this act. But the Resolution goes further than this and looks at new opportunities offered by new technologies and promotes the development of an infrastructure enabling the deaf to realise their right to use sign language in all proceedings before state authorities, public authorities and public service providers and also in any other context where deafness would pose an obstacle to fulfilling their needs. The infrastructure designed to fulfil these needs includes, in particular, the establishment of a multimedia glossary of sign language and any assistive technologies that cover sign language (for instance services for remote interpretation by video into sign language and automatic sign language recognition systems).

The infrastructure designed for the blind and partially sighted includes most assistive technologies designed for all speakers. Most important here are automatic speech recognition and speech synthesis systems and language resources necessary for the setting up of such systems. This Resolution promotes, besides the development of basic systems, the development of language-specific technologies included in aids for the blind and partially sighted, such as devices for reading electronic files or listening to digital audio books, computer or mobile device screen readers and portable text readers. Another important field is software localisation designed for the blind and partially sighted and assistive technologies to support language-specific requirements involved in working with Braille.

People with dyslexia (reading and writing difficulties) need specific technical aids such as e-book readers, devices for reading electronic files or listening to digital audio books, computer or mobile device screen readers, portable text readers and smart pens.

For people with developmental disorders and other people with difficulties with reading and understanding what they have read (for instance persons with head injuries), it is important to develop advanced assistive technologies which simplify reading (also through simplification of contents).

Objective: Equipping persons with special needs with language-specific assistive technologies and aids.

Measures:

- establishment of a central institution in charge of establishing links between, collecting, developing and distributing language resources and technologies for Slovene sign language: the institution must be established within one year of the adoption of this Resolution, and funds must be allocated for its long-term operation
- inclusion of specific resources and tools for persons with specific needs in the *Action Plan for Language Infrastructure*
- fixing of the norm, standardisation and promotion of research of Slovene sign language
- production of tools for communicating with the blind and partially sighted, the deaf and hard-of-hearing, the deafblind, and persons with dyslexia or developmental disorders which will enhance their communication skills

Indicators:

- establishment of the institution in charge of coordination

- inclusion of resources and tools in the Action Plan
- number of research projects carried out on Slovene sign language
- number of communication tools produced for speakers with special needs.

Expected effects: increased number of scientific research works on Slovene sign language that will serve as a basis for considering further measures, in particular production of communication tools for speakers with specific needs, with the objective of increasing their communication skills.

Planned funds: EUR 400,000.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Slovenian Research Agency; Ministry of Culture.

2.3 Legal aspects of Slovenia's language policy

Further legislative and regulatory action concerning Slovenia's language policy is necessary; the question is whether it is more appropriate to adopt framework laws or regulations or include "language" provisions in other laws and regulations touching upon the issue of language use.

The task of evaluating and preparing proposals for revising or upgrading the legal framework of Slovenia's language policy belongs primarily to the Slovenian Language Service of the Ministry of Culture. This Service must act in compliance with the following general principles:

- Legal provisions concerning the status, mandatory use and mandatory knowledge of Slovene and other languages must be clear, binding, generally accepted by the public, coordinated and realistically feasible, must provide precisely planned phases of implementation, and must be, of course, in compliance with Slovenia's constitution and the EU legal order
- The currently applicable laws and regulations which in principle regulate language matters, either by providing for priority status of Slovene or by granting rights to speakers of Slovene and of other languages, but which, since adoption, have either not been implemented or have been systematically disregarded or otherwise overlooked will have to be either abolished or amended in accordance with the preceding point
- Legal provisions on the status, mandatory use and knowledge of languages must correspond to the legal and democratically legitimate communication needs of Slovenia's citizens and other speakers of Slovene
- Legislation must bind Slovenia's language sphere decision-makers to such behaviour in terms of language and language policy planning as is in line with the objectives of this Programme

The *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act* was adopted in 2004 and amended in 2010. Since its adoption the circumstances in certain spheres of public life have changed so much that a comprehensive amendment of the Act seems a plausible option. However, any decision on changing the law must be based on a thorough review of its implementation (analyses of the language situation to be carried out), taking into account certain fields that have already been identified as needing reorganising.

The fields that are seen as problematic in terms of content and implementation include the following: (1) *The Instructions on Establishing Linguistic Conformity of the Business Name of Any Legal Person Governed by Private Law or of Any Natural Person Engaged*

in a Registered Business Activity upon Entry in the Court Register or Any Other Official Records [Navodilo o ugotavljanju jezikovne ustreznosti firme pravne osebe zasebnega prava oziroma imena fizične osebe, ki opravlja registrirano dejavnost, pri vpisu v sodni register ali drugo uradno evidenco] (Uradni list RS, No. 53/2006), based on Article 19. of the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*, is not objective enough in terms of the procedure for establishing linguistic conformity, as it indicates as adequate both representative corpora and certain etymologically dubious criteria. This looseness gives room for arbitrariness in deciding the conformity of a name; it is, therefore, necessary to improve the instructions. (2) Provisions concerning the necessary level of knowledge of Slovene and of other languages for individual professions and for other uses (the *Public Use of the Slovene Language Act*, the *Decree on Required Knowledge of the Slovene Language for Certain Professions or Jobs in Government Bodies, Bodies of Self-Governing Local Communities, Public Sector Entities and Bearers of Public Authority*, sectoral acts): presently, in compliance with the current certification system, it is possible to require a proficiency in Slovene at different levels only from foreign speakers of Slovene; for native speakers of Slovene, it would be necessary to develop either an additional system of certification of the level of proficiency in Slovene or certify the level of knowledge indirectly, by means of requiring the appropriate level of education, as in practice is done now. At the same time, it would be necessary, at least for jobs in the public sector, to harmonise, in terms of regulations and contents, the requirements for certified proficiency in Slovene and other languages and make them comparable to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The certification system for Slovene as a foreign language currently in force, which is internationally recognised, must be provided for by law. (3) Provisions on Slovene as the language of tuition in Slovenia's public higher education institutions: the legal framework must provide for further strengthening of Slovene as the language of tuition for higher education in Slovenia and as Slovenia's language of science; at the same time it must provide for a language system that will be flexible enough to enable further enhancing of high-quality international cooperation at higher education and scientific levels.

Objective 1: Provide research and empirical bases for an efficient language policy.

Measures:

- analyses of selected aspects of the language situation with a view to assessing the efficiency of the current language legal framework in Slovenia
- systematic preparation and evaluation of proposals for revising and upgrading the legal framework of Slovenia's language arrangement, coordinated by the Slovenian Language Service
- drafting of a comprehensive review and assessment of Slovenia's language situation, to be used as the basis for the preparation of the next national programme for language policy

Indicators:

- number of targeted research projects on aspects of Slovenia's language situation carried out
- number of evaluations carried out and proposals prepared for revision of the current legal framework
- review and assessment of Slovenia's language situation prepared

Planned funds: EUR 250,000.

Expected effects: more efficient legal framework for Slovenia's language policy; a comprehensive assessment of the language situation in terms of various parameters (vitality of public-domain language, needs of different categories of speakers: minority

communities, expatriates, emigrants) that will be used as the basis for the preparation of the new national programme of language policy.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of the Interior.

Objective 2: Providing conditions for the equal public use and development of Italian or Hungarian in areas of municipalities where there are Italian or Hungarian communities.

Measures:

- systemic enhancing of conducting business and other activities in two languages
- preparation of necessary regulations for implementing minority languages policy
- putting up visible signs of multilingualism in municipalities where the Italian and Hungarian national communities live
- implementation of consumer protection in Italian and Hungarian languages in these areas
- introduction and implementation of appropriate supervision of the implementation of legislative provisions, of the programme for language policy and of financing

Indicators:

- preparation of laws and regulations for the implementation of constitutional provisions and of nationally adopted language policies
- stopping violations by public employees of the principle of communicating and conducting proceedings in Italian or Hungarian and of the principle that in the relevant areas documents must also be produced in Italian or Hungarian
- stopping violations concerning the use of bilingual forms, bilingual printed materials, a bilingual e-administration environment and the non-use of multilingualism and other activities on the part of legal persons of public law in the relevant areas;
- eradication of violations of visible bilingualism in the relevant areas
- eradication of violations concerning the use of Italian or Hungarian in the area of consumer protection and advertising in the above areas

Planned funds: EUR 200,000.

Expected effects: coordinated planning, developing and realisation of language policies; monitoring of the implementation of these policies; consistent operation of legal entities of public law in Italian and Hungarian in the areas concerned; greater compliance with the rules on visual bilingualism; providing consumer protection and advertising in Italian and Hungarian in the areas concerned; supervision of the implementation of legislative provisions, of the programme for language policy and of financing; the setting up of all other measures to promote the realisation and development of bilingualism in the areas concerned.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of the Interior.

2.4 Slovene as an official language of the European Union

By entering the circle of official languages of the European Union, Slovene has gained greater symbolic weight at the international level and, further, numerous operative opportunities to participate in research and use of language within a community of 24 languages.

Multilingualism is a principle enshrined in the legal foundations of the European Union. Its basic traits are defined in the founding treaties, Regulation No. 1 of 1958 and the accession acts of each new Member State which decided to establish its national language as an official language of the European supra-national community. It is based on the need for democracy, transparency and legal security for all citizens of the European Union. For this reason all legal acts of the European Union are available in all official languages, interpretation is provided at all sessions of the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council of the European Union and at sessions of certain working groups; most websites of the EU are in multiple languages, and citizens and legal entities may communicate with EU institutions in their own language. This arrangement does not seem under threat, as it has enough supporters within the EU – it is actually difficult to imagine that the community would renounce it, as by doing so it would cease to be the community to which 28 countries have signed up.

The principles of multilingualism are well defined, while the strategy prepared by the Commission in this field in recent years has focused on the following three aspects: promoting multilingualism in education; use of multilingualism to give the European economy a competitive advantage, and enabling multilingual communication of EU bodies with citizens and institutions. This means ensuring daily translation and interpretation in all EU official languages by means of an organised institutional system, with well-organised units for each language.

The multilingual system of the European Union and Slovenia's integration in this system have established a system of development within which in Slovenia in the last ten years we have seen advancements in the domains of technical vocabulary and linguistic studies, in particular in terms of translation, interpretation and systematic terminology work. Because of the extensive project of translating and legal revision of the *acquis* into Slovene, it was necessary to set up well-organised work procedures and systematic interdisciplinary cooperation and to create a harmonised terminology.

Terminology is essential for enabling Slovene to be active on various levels. Consequently, it is imperative that activities under the national language policy be aimed at expanding the language infrastructure and promoting the linguistic training of experts in all fields. The role of the state and public administration is to ensure systematic and harmonised actions among key ministries and actors in terms of care for language development.

Tasks with respect to the Slovene language in the EU, as defined in the *Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2007–11*, were carried out during the whole period of the implementation of the Resolution; their objective was to equip Slovenia's representatives participating in institutions and bodies of the EU with instructions on how to realise their right to use Slovene as an official language of the EU, to enhance their comprehension of the use of languages in EU institutions, and in particular to provide translators and interpreters of Slovene in EU institutions with adequate professional linguistic and terminological assistance to enable them to produce a reliable version of EU legislation in Slovene.

However, cooperation is still insufficient despite all the recommendations and the established network of experts. Better terminology work is necessary not only to enhance our functioning in the EU, but also, and most importantly, to enhance the operation of Slovenia's public administration, education system, and scientific community.

Further, in relation to EU institutions we continue to advocate the principle that the free movement of people, goods, services and capital must never undermine the domicile

status of the official language of a Member State, and that a Member State has the right to legal safeguards and other mechanisms to neutralise any negative impact of free movement in terms of language use and policy.

Objective 1: Support of the Government for the use of Slovene as an official language of the European Union.

As in the past, in the period covered by the current Resolution it is necessary to provide translators and interpreters of Slovene in EU institutions, and also translators and interpreters in Slovenia who represent us in international forums, with adequate expert, linguistic and terminological assistance to enable them in producing a reliable Slovene version of EU legislation.

Measures:

- carry on with the implementation of tasks with respect to terminology, as already defined in the previous Resolution, and with measures aimed at setting up a national mechanism for the verification of EU terminology
- providing intensive support to training programmes with the objective of increasing the number of Slovene interpreters in EU institutions, and organising of intensive training programmes for Slovene interpreters to enable them to successfully pass the selection procedures of EU institutions

Indicators:

- establishment of a mechanism for the verification of EU terminology
- increasing the number of interpreters in EU institutions
- number of training programmes for interpreters carried out

Planned funds: EUR 500,000.

Expected effects: harmonised translating and verifying of terminology at the EU level; improving the position of Slovene within the EU.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Government Secretariat-General.

Objective 2: Promotion of Slovene language and culture in the European Union.

Measure:

- enhancing existing mechanisms for the systematic translation, promotion and distribution within the European Union of translations of Slovene literary works into European languages, and devising new approaches for greater effectiveness in this area

Indicators:

- evaluation of current measures and preparation of new ones (expert report)
- number of promotional events carried out
- number of promotional materials prepared and disseminated

Planned funds: EUR 250,000.

Expected effects: increased visibility of Slovene literary creativity within the European Union.

Institutions responsible: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Culture; Slovenian Book Agency.

Ref. No.: 001-08/13-2/

Date: 15 July 2013

EPA 1208-VI

National Assembly
Janko Veber
President