

Resolution on the Slovakian State Language Law

Taking into account that

- The strength of the European integration lies within the respect of cultural diversity and democratic pluralism;
- The government led by Mr. Mikulas Dzurinda from 1998 to 2006 won wide-range praise from the international community. Due to the efforts of the EPP member parties in Slovakia the country could become a prominent economic driving force among new EU member states;
- After the 2006 elections Robert Fico's populist Smer party formed a governing coalition with Jan Slota's extremist Slovakian National Party as well as with Vladimir Meciar's HZDS;
- The amended Slovakian State Language Law entering into force on 1 September contains serious restrictions in the use of minority languages.
- According to the new amendments adopted by the ruling coalition parties the use of minority languages becomes punishable in many cases. In municipalities where the rate of minority inhabitants is below 20% civil servants (f. ex.: doctors, nurses) can speak only in Slovakian language;
- During cultural events a Slovakian introduction is compulsory even if no participant speaks Slovakian. In addition to this, the amendments demand minority schools to have all their internal documentation in state language which places and additional bureaucratic burden on these institutions;
- The new amendments allow to impose financial penalties (up to 5000 euros) by unclear decision mechanisms that create room for subjective sentencing;
- According to the recent report of the OSCE that some amendments might contradict international standards and the basic principles of the constitution of the Slovakian Republic. According to the report the amendments might create a controversial situation in the field of minority protection in Slovakia;

The Youth of the European People's Party

- Expresses its belief that the State Language Law in its amended form contradicts basic European principles, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe as well as OSCE documents;
- Calls on the Slovakian government to withdraw the amendments adopted on 30 June without delay. Repression against minorities shall not be made official by any legal act;
- Calls on the European Commission, the European Parliament and EU Member States to closely monitor the situation regarding the amended State Language Law. The European Union must not be neutral when it comes to its core values;
- Shares the view that legal acts like the amended State Language Law might enhance nationalism and instability in Eastern Europe and beyond;
- Is convinced that the human disasters of the XX. century showed that peaceful cooperation based on the respect of the rule of law and the protection of minorities

including the use of language in schools and public life has no alternative. Time passed by of narrow-minded nationalism.

Adopted by the YEPP Council in The Hague, 5 September 2009