

MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE POSITION OF COUNCILS, REPRESENTATIVES AND CO-ORDINATIONS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

These measures were agreed on by a consensus during the seminar on the improvement of work of councils and representatives of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia organized by the Office for National Minorities and the National Council for National Minorities of the Croatian Government, held on 17 and 18 March 2006 in Hotel Dubrovnik in Zagreb

1. We invite the Croatian Government to align terms of office of councils and representatives of national minorities with terms of office of representative bodies of local and regional self-government in such a manner that terms of office of current council members and representatives are extended, thus the elections for councils and representatives would be conducted simultaneously with the elections for representative bodies of local and regional self-government,
2. We invite the Croatian Government and the Croatian Parliament to regulate the particularities of the process of election of councils and representatives of national minorities by amending the Law on the Election of Representative Bodies of Local and Regional Self-Government or by adopting a special law,
3. We invite the Croatian Government to ensure, through the measures that fall within its competence, legal personality for co-ordinations of national minorities that were established based on Article 33 of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities,
4. We invite the Croatian Government to intensify supervisory activities over the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities,
5. We invite the Central State Administration Office to establish an organizational unit in charge of cooperation with councils, representatives and co-ordinations of national minorities,
6. We invite the Central State Administration Office to establish a final deadline (30 days at most) for aligning the Statutes and Standing Orders of local and regional self-government units with the Constitutional Law and to suspend general acts of self-governments that are not aligned with the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities,
7. We invite the Central State Administration Office to ensure, by forwarding a mandatory instruction to bodies of administration and self-government in local and regional self-government units, the obligation of obtaining opinions and proposals on the provisions regulating the right and freedoms of national minorities in compliance with Article 32, Paragraph 1, of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities,
8. We invite the Central State Administration Office to forward a mandatory instruction which would regulate in detail specific obligations of local and

regional self-government units in the implementation of provisions of Article 28 of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities,

- 9.** We invite competent bodies to provide councils and representatives of national minorities with an insight into the voters' lists of national minorities, and to ensure aligning of census results with the changes registered in the last verified voters' list of local or regional self-government unit in compliance with Article 20, Paragraph 7 of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of national Minorities,
- 10.** We invite local and regional self-government units to anticipate in their budgets special funds for the work of councils and representatives of national minorities and that funds determined in such a manner, in compliance with the dynamics of realization of budgets, are forwarded to councils and representatives of national minorities,
- 11.** We invite local and regional self-government units to ensure free of charge business premises for the seat and work of councils, a minimum of 40-50 m², or 20-25 m² for a representative, and the use of the town hall or some other official hall for the sessions of councils and co-ordinations,
- 12.** We invite local and regional self-government units to ensure remuneration for an administrative secretary of the council and representative of national minorities in the amount of an average salary paid to a college graduate in expert services of self-government for a full-time employment for councils and representatives at the level of counties and big towns, that is, a salary for a part-time employment at the level of municipalities and towns, and half of that amount for representatives of national minorities in local and regional self-government units,
- 13.** We invite local and regional self-government units to ensure adequate financial resources for the exercise of material preconditions (overhead) for the work of councils and representatives,
- 14.** We invite local and regional self-government units to ensure, in compliance with their abilities, adequate funds for the realization of programs of work of councils and representatives,
- 15.** We invite local and regional self-government units to urgently adopt, based on the Rule Book on the Compensation of Expenses and Remuneration for Work to Council Members and Representatives of National Minorities, general acts that would regulate the implementation of the Rule Book and to ensure additional funds for the realization of compensations and awards,
- 16.** We invite local and regional self-government units to regulate through the acts on internal organization, an organizational self-government unit that would be in charge of activities of national minorities, as well as the highest ranking official competent for cooperation with councils, representatives and co-ordinations of national minorities and inform the councils, representatives and

co-ordinations of national minorities in their area, as well as the National Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia about their decision,

- 17.* We invite local and regional self-government units to ensure, in cooperation with the Office for National Minorities and the National Council for National Minorities, a detailed and permanent education for civil servants and employees on the role of local and regional self-government units in cooperation with councils, representatives and co-ordinations of national minorities, and to ensure the participation of their representatives competent for minority issues in such educations,
- 18.* We invite the National Council for National Minorities and the Office for National Minorities to ensure special resources in the Budget of the Republic of Croatia to assist local or regional self-government units in the areas of special state concern in providing funds for the work of councils as per Article 28 of the Constitutional Law,
- 19.* We invite the National Council for National Minorities and the Office for National Minorities to ensure permanent expert assistance and education for councils, representatives and co-ordinations of national minorities,
- 20.* We invite councils of all national minorities to exercise their right and form co-ordinations of national minorities on local or regional self-government units' level, as well as the National Council for National Minorities and the Office for National Minorities to directly cooperate with co-ordinations,
- 21.* We invite representatives of the media to follow the role and activities of councils, representatives and co-ordinations of national minorities in a more quality and more comprehensive manner.

In Zagreb, 18 March 2006