

# Slovak republic and its Hungarian Ethnic Minority: Sociological Reflections

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**Slovak Republic and its Hungarian Ethnic Minority: Sociological Reflections.** Research of Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality by ENRI-East project has brought more comprehensive description of indicators, which relate to "identity" of the Hungarian national group. We found that "nationality" is important, but by far not the only component of identity. In terms of structure citizens of Slovak republic with Hungarian nationality shall be reported to dominant identity "I am Hungarian living on Slovakia." Group is significantly less with identity "I am member of Hungarian nation" and identity group "I am citizen of Slovakia as the host country with different ethnic origin." For each group is characteristic difference in preferences of adaptation to life with the majority society. For all groups common fact is that respondents expect support for their cultural development by host country for the future. Proficiency of Slovak language is not perceived as a first step towards assimilation, but as an effective tool of social life in the host country.

**Key words:** hungarian ethnic minority, identity, citizenship, Slovakia, ENRI-East

**Slovenská republika a jej maďarská etnická menšina: Sociologické úvahy.** Výskum slovenských občanov s maďarskou národnosťou v projekte ENRI-East priniesol podrobnejší opis indikátorov týkajúcich sa maďarskej národnostnej skupiny. Zistili sme, že „národnosť“ je dôležitá, ale zďaleka nie jedinou zložkou identity. Z hľadiska štruktúry občania Slovenskej republiky s maďarskou národnosťou sa hlásia k dominantnej identite „Som Maďar žijúci na Slovensku“. Skupina je značne menej stotožnená s identitou „Som člen maďarského národa“ a „Som občanom Slovenska ako hostiteľskej krajiny s odlišným etnickým pôvodom“. Pre každú skupinu je charakteristický rozdiel v preferenciách prispôsobenia sa životu s majoritnou spoločnosťou. Pre všetky skupiny je spoločné, že respondenti očakávajú podporu pre ich kultúrny rozvoj do budúcnosti od hostiteľskej krajiny. Znalosť slovenského jazyka nie je vnímaná ako prvý krok k asimilácii, ale je účinným nástrojom sociálneho života v hostiteľskej krajine.

**Kľúčové slová:** maďarská etnická menšina, identita, občianstvo, Slovensko, ENRI-East

## Introduction

Establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993, by a peaceful dissolution of the common federation of Czechs and Slovaks have increased share of ethnic minorities, notably the Hungarian minority in the structure of its population. According to the census of 2001, Hungarians represents about 10 % of the population of the Slovak Republic. Most Hungarians live very close to the Hungarian borders in Southern Slovakia and exceed 10 % of the local population in five counties (kraj). They number 24 % of the population in Trnavsky kraj, 27 % in Nitriansky kraj, 12 % in Banskobystricky kraj, 11 % in

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Kosický kraj and 4 % in the capital Bratislava. Hungarians form majority (80 %) in two districts of Slovakia: Komárno (Komáromi járás) and Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahelyi járás). In these areas Slovaks are in a minority.

Despite turbulent time (1945 – 1951), current social and demographic data illustrate that Hungarian minority in Slovakia is not only the most numerous, but also most developed civil and cultural minority. This is a result of Slovak state policy in relation to minorities in Slovakia, which does not emphasize the concept of cultural assimilation and allows highly developed action on the part of Hungarian minority. Hungarian minority was organized politically in the SMK-MKP, which was a member of the ruling coalition of Slovak Republic (1998 – 2006). And consistently receives approximately 15 % of parliamentary seats in the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Hungarian minority also has a strong presence in regional governments. They hold crucial positions in local government in many towns and villages in southern Slovakia.

EU accession in 2004 allowed visa-free movement of people between Slovakia and Hungary for work and leisure activities under the Schengen agreement. It is generally accepted as a positive consequence of EU accession. European regional funds help to build infrastructure (especially bridges, road and rail links), which brought this possibility into reality. The classic example is the Maria Valeria Bridge in Štúrovo, which was destroyed during the World War II and was restored only in 2001. As a new phenomenon appeared to be moving and housing in neighbourhoods in Bratislava, Hungary, for ex. Rajka (Meszarosova-Lamplova, 2010).

Hungarian minority has a strong presence in regional governments. They hold crucial position in the local government in many towns and villages in southern Slovakia. Elections of self-governing regions and presidents of self-governing regions took place in November 2009. According to the results of the elections to the regional parliament in November 2009 received by political parties SMK and MOST – HÍD represented mainly in the Trnava region (12 members), Nitra region (13 members), Banská Bystrica-region (8 members) and Košice region (4 members).

In neither of these regions won the Hungarian political parties candidate for Chairman of the autonomous region.<sup>2</sup> Hungarian political parties in many

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<sup>2</sup> This is result of mergers of political parties to "Slovak coalition" (e.g. in the Nitra region) to spoiled "the Hungarian Coalition" in the election of members of the provincial council. Slovak political parties also nominated after mutual agreement only one candidate for Chairman of the Autonomous Region. (eg M. Belica is chairman from 2001 until now). This way of cooperation in the mobilization of voters has been formed as a reaction for outcome of the first historic elections to regional parliaments in 2001. During this year, Hungarian political coalition (SMK-MAC) won only 31 of 52 parliamentary seats in the Regional council of Nitra region. One term they decided about the development of the region. Currently, despite "quiet" ethnic mobilization of the electorate (Krivý, 2006, p. 30) has only 13 parliamentary seats.

towns and villages in southern Slovakia won mayoral ships and many seats of municipal councils. For example SMK-MKP candidate became mayor in Dunajska Streda and candidate from MOST – HÍD became mayor in Komarno. Major society is sensitive to cases of limiting of Slovak minority in these cities. At the same time it allows nationalist political parties (e.g. SNS) benefit by this "agenda" in the field of political rivalry. City municipality in Komarno with the majority of the members from SMK-MKP and Most-Híd has not met a solution of the requirement made by Slovak Matica (Matica slovenská) about acceptance of placing statue of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in the city centre. It became a subject of great unwillingness between the majority of the population and the argument of intolerant behaviour by the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

Issue of administrating balance between state (Slovak) and minor (Hungarian) language in public relations became the subject of fierce domestic political debate in 2009. This controversy has led to deterioration in bilateral relations between Slovakia and Hungary. Extremist political forces in Hungary began to escalate disputes over national political issue in Slovakia, particularly in pre-election period (2009) to the European Parliament (Jobbik). Elimination of border controls has allowed demonstration marches of extremist groups (such as Hungarian Guard) to the Slovak Republic (e.g. Kráľovský Chlmec). This concerns all citizens of Slovakia, including Hungarian minority.

On the other hand, there is a case of refusing entry to Hungarian president Solyom to Slovakia, as well as case of still unresolved physical attack on student H. Malinova,<sup>3</sup> which damaged the image of Slovakia abroad and

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<sup>3</sup> In one interview with the Slovak living in Hungary, we find mention of this case and interpretation of events by researcher, who did interview with respondent **SK (HU) 12 M H M**: „Of course. I hear about these things. Not very often, but the graffiti's, the scribbling on the nameplates of the villages, these things occur when there is a conflict between the two countries. So when we read in the media that they said this... and in the Hungarian media the interpretation is usually about Slovaks hurt Hungarians in Slovakia or their rights there and it's true many times. Or when they beat Hungarians. It's usually not happening in Slovakia, but the Hedviga Malinova problem... So at these occasions there are people in Hungary who think that they should revenge on us. And this is when they are doing graffiti's on our nameplates, and things like this. For example in Békéscsaba they scribbled on the House of Culture. This time people reported it. So these things can happen, of course.

Researcher, that did interview explains this case: Hedviga Malinova (English: Hedwig Raspberry) is an ethnic Hungarian student from Myto, Slovakia, who was allegedly physically assaulted in a hate crime incident. Her case represents a highly controversial and debated issue of Hungarian-Slovak relations.

H. Malinova case resonated well in interview with Slovak citizen with Hungarian ethnicity **HU(SK) 17 M M 0**: „No, the population is not threatened in Slovakia they just try to threaten them. They try to make us feel it in the elite the issue of Hedviga Malinova is a good example for this, but basically we don't have to be afraid. One of the reasons of the assimilation is the indifference of one part of the Hungarian population from here.“

continues to resonate among citizens of Slovakia and Hungary. These events in the years 2009 to 2010 were widely publicized and characterize the overall social situation and status of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Undoubtedly, all this is reflected in the answers of our respondents to the quantitative questions (November and December 2009) and qualitative research (September 2010) of ENRI-East.

Since then much has changed on the Slovakia and in Hungary as well. In the parliamentary elections in 2010, social-democratic coalition (Prime Minister Robert Fico) has been replaced by right-wing coalition (Prime Minister Iveta Radičová). Slovak government made some friendly diplomatic action against Hungary softened its rhetoric views in the case of some decisions of Hungarian Government and Parliament (especially in the case of Hungarian Act of dual citizenship and Hungarian Constitution).

New political party representing Hungarian minority in Slovakia (MOST – HÍD) has become a part of the new governmental coalition - new political party defines itself as a party that will connect Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians and will eliminate worsening tendency of Slovak-Hungarian relations by SMK.

#### **Methodological aspects of ENRI-East<sup>4</sup> research**

In the case of ENRI-East project, comprehensive research strategy that uses the advantages of qualitative and quantitative sociological methods was developed. Quantitative method is represented by a sociological questionnaire, by which reputable agency FOCUS Slovakia collected research data in Bratislava (November and December 2009). By random selection 801 interviews with respondents was carried out, which represents representative research sample of the Hungarian national minority living in Slovakia, especially with regard to regional distribution (Table 1 Sample by regions, Table 2 Sample by counties – from Bratislava to Michalovce). This research has a representative sample in terms of regional distribution of Hungarian minority in Slovakia. It has exceptionally great importance in terms of comparisons with other researches, which have been implemented in recent years in Slovakia and their results

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<sup>4</sup> Project of the EC ENRI-East: "The Interplay between European, national and regional identities: Nations between states towards the new eastern borders of the European Union" (international study of social and ethnic groups living in border areas of Europe) has a special slogan, which is aptly describes: 'People in motion, boundaries in motion.' Enria-East is an international research project dedicated to the analysis of socio-ethnic identities in Eastern Europe, issues of individual or group self-identification and ethnicity. It is a pilot study. So far none similar studies, particularly with regard to geographic scope, thematic framework and a variety of research tools and methods have been made. This research study was carried out in Russia (Kaliningrad), Belarus, Ukraine (400 respondents of Hungarian minority), Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary (400 respondents of Slovak minority) and Slovakia (800 respondents of Hungarian minority).

become part of professional discourse. (Kusá, Z., Krivý, V., Mészáros-Lamplová, Z., Homišinová, M.)

Methodological specificities of this study is a comparison of two generations, first one with experiences from period since 1945 to 1951 and the second one with its intensive perception of social changes and transformation after 1989.

In the research file, youngest generation is represented by the age group of 18-29 years old and the oldest generation by the age group over 60 years. Middle generation represents age group of 30-59 years old. Their representation is relatively reasonable, so we can make a comparative analysis. Young generation: age group 18-29 years has 116 respondents (14.5 %). Middle generation: the age group 30-59 years is 449 respondents (56.1 %). The older generation: the age group over 60 years reached 234 respondents (29.2 %).

According to the methodology developed by an international team ENRI-East we conducted in 2010 in-depth individual interviews with randomly selected respondents according to three age and gender categories. In this study, we use **qualitative methods** of sociological research not only because we have to "illustrate" the subject of the original statements made by respondents, but also thoroughly interpret some findings quantitative sociological research.

The advantage of the concept of ENRI-East international research lies in the **possibility to compare** situation of national minorities in several countries and to clarify effects of state policy on cultural development of ethnic minorities. In our analysis in some areas, we compare results of quantitative research of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia (800 respondents) files with the Hungarian minority in Ukraine (400 respondents) and the Slovak minority in Hungary (400 respondents)<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of these multilateral comparisons lies in the possibility, that political scientists and analysts, as well as public generally might perceive current situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia not only in its adequate historical contexts, but also on the field of real connections between these two EU countries. (Poláčková, 2010).

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<sup>5</sup> On this place, author of the study want to say special thanks to Ksenija Kiselova from Kharkov in Ukraine for her cooperation, having shown an exceptional willingness to provide the data file of Slovaks living in Hungary and Hungarians living in Ukraine in the required form for special treatment in SPSS for this study.

## Hungarian minority in Slovakia: interdisciplinary approach

Traditional dominance of historical science in political and scientific discourse in the case of this subject gradually recedes into the background. This is linked to the fact that relatively distant historical events such as assimilation of Slovaks and other minorities in Hungary (1874 – 1879, Apponyi Acts 1907 – 1908, occupation of eastern Slovakia by the Hungarian Red Revolutionary Guard Corps (Kuhn, 1919), Paris Convention (Trianon, 1920), as well as subsequent occupation of part of Slovakia by armies of Admiral Horthy (Vienna Arbitrage 1938) – all this recedes into the background in the historical memory of today's young generation. "Trauma" build on the basis of these historical events are clearly different in both parts of population. (Krivý, 2006, s. 36).

Older generation is still able to update their memories on the arrival of Hungarian troops on southern Slovakia after the Vienna Arbitrage.<sup>6</sup> Older people through their own experiences in childhood reflect especially exchange and withdrawal of the ethnic Hungarians after 1945 to Hungary and Bohemia.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> HU(SK) O6 M L O :...I can tell you a particular case my father remembered that cannot be erased. Hungarians came here, my father told me, I was born only in 1949, so I cannot remember that. The army came on horses, and Czechoslovak army left – by cars, motorcycles...yes, they freed the space...the difference between those who came and those who left. My father remembered that in Blatné, Slovaks – Hungarians lived here , they were legionnaires as one says. From Orava (region in the north of Slovakia – translator's note) as well they were here in Senec. They lived here, they were Slovaks, during first republic - they came after 1921, they lived together, worked together, when they closed it here, they stayed here, but traded, they used to go to Blatné, it was Slovak...because here was nothing, flour, sugar. Everything was limited...there was nothing here, in the evening they gave bread soaked in rum to the pigs, they drank and went to sleep. Here across the woods, the vineyards they went to the forest, there was sugar, flour on the carriage, they brought it, divided, and they did not steal from each other. My father used to tell me one rhyme: „ back Prague, back Bratislava, Hungarians f... you“ And Hungarians themselves were talking like that, about 1938.....it was developed here, everything was here....if we take it, everybody dreams about Great Hungary, I do not know what for what, does anybody want to rule there, or some fee, if we tak economic side, Hungarian currency never jumped over Slovak, 70 pennies was the maximum what I remember, and now in fact 16-17 pennies of Slovak crown is 100 forints, it changes a little..euro for 260 forints, those few forints up and down.

<sup>7</sup> HU(SK) 07 M L O:.. village Pitvaroš, Tothkomloš, almost near Romanian borders, close, some already from Romania, from that part they were moved here, they got big houses, big lands, after those big farmers, those were leaving were put in one wagon, some misunderstandings occurred, their relatives were not nice to those Pitvaroš people, they were not satisfied ... they did not know well, Hungarian they knew better than us Hungarians, ...yes, but they did not know Slovak, such expressions they had, we did not know, as they spoke it was funny to us ... from Senec they went to Šumava, there were no problems with them, but with those Pitvaroš were problems a bit, because relatives, that were displaced, they were doing bad things to them, because nobody likes, when you have to leave home, and somebody moves in there, so .... yes, they were coming back too then, they were bad, were setting fires and killing in Šumava ... no, nothing like it, no, from

But still should be mentioned, that political discourse is constantly updated oldest traumas from the era of common coexistence of the Slovaks and Hungarians. „When mentioning this we have forgotten one more important fact – the historical factor greatly influencing the mutual relations. Understanding the position of the Hungarian minority in the Slovak Republic, continuation of the so called ‘Trianon trauma’ but also the considerations about the ‘thousand year oppression of the Slovak nation’ seem to be very negative determinants of the mutual bilateral Slovak-Hungarian relations” (Klus, 2010, p. 346).

After 1993, political science, as well as international relations strengthens its position in the case of research of ethnic minorities in Slovakia (Poláčková, 2010, Strauss, 2010, Weis, 2010). Their attention, in the context of reforming of the concept of multiculturalism in Europe, is focused on state-defined national interests and promotes national identity through the national foreign policy.

Today, knowledge of sociological and psychological sciences (Homišínová, 2008), which reflect **everyday life** of citizens in the transforming countries are much more important and interesting. Addressing of situation of national minorities in Slovakia, as well as in every EU country, depends not only on bilateral relations ("mother" and "host" countries), but also from the supervision of European institutions.

*We can express hypothesis, that satisfaction of citizens with the quality of their lives (included democracy, rule of law, education opportunities, employment opportunities, security) in a specific country mostly creates a good basis for equality in the case of citizens with different ethnicity.*

### **Role of ethnicity in collective (social) identity**

Through the research of "identity" of young citizens from EU countries, idea that concept of identity belongs to type of concepts that should be strictly construed in the situational contexts, is developed (Yndignen, 2009). From everyday life we know that the answer to question of who we are or where we are, depends a lot on our personal expectations. For example, during the visiting of USA or China, our answer to question – “Where are you from?” - will be “I am from Europe”. When we are in Europe, we will answer that we are from Slovakia and when we are in Slovakia, answer will be that we are from Bratislava, Košice, Trnava, etc. But it should be mentioned, that this does not reflect the different identities, but only different expressions of the same contextual identity. This is useful if we interpret fact that the ordinary man sees its identity as a multi-layered, but internally similar entity (something like

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time to time somebody set a fire in the crops of the farmers that were displaced, so they set a fire there ...they were visiting here, after years they came, it was better for them here.

famous Russian toy "Matrioška"). This approach can be called like social-constructivist, because "... under smaller or bigger social pressure of communicated ideas and expectations, persons subsequently "define their situation " and select their loyalty, which they considered as most relevant". (Krivý, 2006, s. 24)

**Table 1: These factors are most important for my identity**

For my identity is most important	Hungarians in Slovakia	Hungarians in Ukraine	Slovaks in Hungary
My job	13,4	24,6	4,4
Whether I'm man or women	22,5	27,5	9,6
Whether I'm younger or older	9,4	11,6	11,5
My religion (ev. atheist)	4,6	14,5	5,9
My ethnicity (Hungarian living on Slovakia)	21,7	14,5	19,2
My social category	2,4	1,4	2,5
Place of living	10,0	3,5	30,5
Political party, movement, that I support	0,5	0,0	0,2
That I am a European	3,2	1,2	0,7
That I am state citizen	6,1	1,2	15,5
I don't know	5,6	0,0	0,0
Don't want answer	0,6	0,0	0,0
Total	100	100	100

Basis of human identity is built on universal (biosocial determined and identifiable at first sight) characteristics such as gender, age and race. Several research analyses depict them as primordial characters (Kusá, 2008). Even in our research, we surveyed whether respondent is man or woman, age group (by year of birth), what is respondent's education or profession. We pointed reference to national minority on the base of complex issues, so that we ask respondent on the level of local (municipality), regional (area) and state area in which is he/she living, how high is their confidence in state institutions, how they can see living perspective of their children in their own country and in Europe.

Citizen identity has several components and therefore nobody can compel respondent to an unequivocal decision. In our research, respondents used opportunity of three options. From 801 respondents in Slovakia, 174 respondents chose like "important thing" for the identity on first place category of "national identity". In second round of selection, 145 respondents chose this option and during the third round 107 respondents. When counting all the votes (like we present it in the Table 2 in the column "SR average") ethnic identity



level reached 17.7 %. Together with other characteristics it creates balanced core of "identities", and these identities characterize citizens of Hungarian nationality in Slovakia – these categories are represented by gender (14.9 %), age (11.4 %), community (12.3 %), employment (9 %) Slovak citizenship (7 %), being European (4.7 %). In the first place (see Table 1) are these "elements" of identity at the choice of respondents in a different order: gender (22.5 %) and identity "of ethnic Hungarian living in Slovakia" (21.7 %). Followed by employment (13.4 %), belonging to the municipality (10 %) and age (9.4 %). Slovak citizenship (6.1 %), religion (4.6 %) and Europeanism (3.2 %) is placed at the end of the optional segments of Slovak Hungarians identity. Other components of the received file have marginal position.

For Slovak citizen with Hungarian nationality is balanced selection of different "identities" relatively typical. In both cases, either by placing on the first place or by the average of all three possible options, ethnic identity placed although significant, but only complementary importance in the field other role-status identities.

### **Comparative analysis of minorities in three countries**

For our analysis, clarifying importance of "ethnic identity" in this structure, we can proceed using the comparison with the other two countries where national minorities live: Slovaks in Hungary and Hungarians in Ukraine. Very important is mainly comparison of Hungarians on Slovakia and in Ukraine, that strikes primary goal of ENRI-East research - obtain information about the situation of ethnic minorities in EU member states and in countries on the eastern border of EU. As we know, Slovakia and Hungary are members of the EU since 2004. Comparing situation of Hungarian minority in Slovakia and Ukraine with situation of Slovaks in Hungary is very important.

In Slovak political discourse is continuously present requirement of compliance with "reciprocity" in the creation of conditions (finance civic associations, schools, public media and special sessions, etc..) of cultural development of ethnic minorities (mainly by Slovak National Party – SNS).

Comparison of three countries (Table 2) allows us to demonstrate that countries and their national minorities are really different in what segments of their own identity for themselves regarded as important. With only cursory look at the results allow us to conclude that there is a sort of "dominant" or "core" identity in the case of national minorities living in these three countries. In a way they reflect same specific cultural tradition and key issues of cultural minority policies of these countries as well:

1. In the case of Slovakia, Slovak nationality is according the respondents - Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality – mainly important component of

this complex.<sup>8</sup> For comparison - in the first election 21.7 % of Hungarians in Slovakia highlighted this aspect of their identity, 19.2 % of Slovaks in Hungary and 14.5 % of Hungarians in Ukraine highlighted this aspect of their identity as. In the case of Ukraine, factor of nationality as important element of individual identity is placed only like a second 27.6 % (UA) and partly third option 19.5 % (UA).

**Table 2: Which one from these factors is most important for you personally in general?**

	HU I.	SK I.	UA I.	HU II.	SK II.	UA II.	HU III.	SK III.	UA III.	Average SR v %
Job	4,4	13,4	24,6	2,7	7,4	10,0	3,7	6,4	6,5	<b>9,0</b>
Man/Woman	9,6	22,5	27,5	4,9	12,7	16,1	7,7	9,6	10,4	<b>14,9</b>
Age	11,5	9,4	11,6	9,1	15,0	10,6	14,5	10,0	9,2	<b>11,4</b>
Religion	5,9	4,6	14,5	6,9	4,1	20,8	6,7	2,5	9,8	<b>3,7</b>
Nationality (Note)	19,2	21,7	14,5	25,6	18,1	27,6	16,0	13,4	19,5	<b>17,7</b>
Village/City	30,5	10,0	3,5	29,5	13,1	5,6	23,4	13,7	25,1	<b>12,3</b>
I am European	0,7	3,2	1,2	1,5	5,1	2,3	5,7	5,6	4,1	<b>4,7</b>
I am citizen	15,5	6,1	1,2	14,5	6,2	1,5	17,2	9,0	3,8	<b>7,1</b>
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100,0</b>

*ENRI-East, november – december 2009. Note: Fact, that person is Hungarian living on Ukraine (Slovakia), or Slovak living in Hungary*

2. In Hungary situation relates to "location". Slovak Hungarians much more than other minorities derive their identity from the place, town or city in which they live (30 % in the first place, 29.5 % for the second and 23.4 % for third place). It seems clear from the fact that their settlement in Hungary has character of relatively isolated communities and is not so geographically compact like in Slovakia<sup>9</sup>. All three countries are different on the field of accentuation of collective identity in an important element - "I am a citizen of this republic", which presents civic loyalty of a minority to the state. Demonstration of belonging to the In the case of Slovak living in Hungary, demonstration of belonging to the Hungary on the basis of citizenship is

<sup>8</sup> Although several studies of collective identities in Slovakia confirm this. Not only Hungarians in Slovakia, but also Slovaks emphasize mostly, that they belong to a particular nationality. (Krivý – Danglová, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> According to the results of long-term analysis of M. Homišinová not only population but also other factors operating at deepening of "hungarianism" of Slovak minority, for example. "Underdeveloped ethnic school system, adverse demographic variables..." (Homišinová, 2010, s. 462-463).

evident (14-17 %), whether compared with the Hungarians in Slovakia (6-9 %), but particularly with Hungarians in Ukraine (1.2 to 3.8 %).

3. In Ukraine, ethnic Hungarians recall their employment, gender, ethnic identity, but mainly their confessional identity (14.5 % in the first place, 20.8 % in second place), which is different (Orthodox) from the majority population. In Slovakia and Hungary are Christian - Catholic and Protestant religious institutions are predominant. Slovakia is traditionally for Slovak Hungarian minority reformed (Calvin) church is traditionally dominant, which is symbolized by Theological Faculty at the University of Komarno.

### **Generational considerations**

Generational aspect in the analysis of "ethnic identity" allows us to show that for older as well as for younger generation of Slovak citizens with Hungarian ethnicity is dominant identity "I am a Hungarian living on Slovakia". Younger generation of Hungarian minority in Slovakia prefer as first choice of its identity quality as "gender", i.e. they are a boy or a girl (29.3 % of young and 18.4 % of older) and age, i.e. they are young or old (15.5 % of young and 10.7 % of older). For the first election younger generation prefer their nationality as strongly as the older generation (16.4 % of younger and 22.2 % of older). In the second line, we can see convergence of opinions between the generations in the case of ethnicity (18.1 % of younger and 18.4 % of older) and only in the third round, younger generation provides "nationality" more often than the older generation (17.2 % of young and 13.2 % of older).

Younger generation of Slovak Hungarian minority respondents derives their identity primarily from the "age" and "gender", not only because these respondents are "younger" and "gender" has important role, but also on the historical and social base. During the period of modernization on Slovakia after 1989, "national" identity meets with the integration processes that changed citizens of national states to the citizens of the European Union. Current Slovak citizens has survived two decades in which process of dissolution of Czechoslovakia and establish of independent Slovak Republic (1993) was connected with the process of its integration into the European Union (2004) together with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Slovak citizens with Hungarian ethnicity always were and still are strong supporters of European integration processes, especially because these removing institutional barriers and restrictions on the field of free movement of persons.

### **"Structure" of national identity and citizenship**

Unlike other empirical studies (Kusá and Zeman, 2008, s. 232) ENRI-East research project tried to develop a specific typology ("construct") of

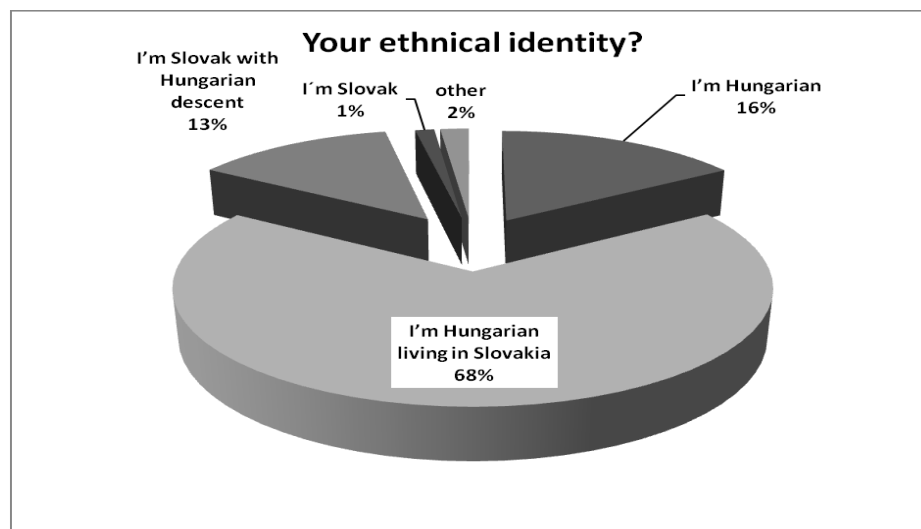
respondents' national identity. Its foundation has become a combination of indicators such as "national identity" and the indicator of "citizenship".

We offered to respondents on Slovakia 4 options of self-categorization:

- a) I am a member of the Hungarian nation (Hungarian)
- b) I am ethnic Hungarian living in the host country (Slovakia)
- c) I am a citizen of Slovakia as the host country with different ethnic origin
- d) I am a citizen of Slovakia as the host country

As results of this research shown, sociological "construct" is suitable if we want differentially express identity of minority Hungarian citizens of Slovakia (Graph 1). There is confirmation that most members of this ethnic minority have been identified with the characteristic "I am a Hungarian living in Slovakia" (68 %). Two separate groups of relatively same size chose identity "I am a Hungarian" (16 %) or "I am Slovak with Hungarian origin" (13 %). Only a few individuals indicated that they are Slovaks (1 %). It is noteworthy that the representation of age groups in different types of ethnic identity is rarely balanced. It can be concluded that each type is essentially reproduced to the future according same key. For example type "Hungarians" are equally represented in all three generations - youngest (16.4 %), medium (14 %) and oldest (19.7 %) as well.

Graph 1: **Could you please choose one option from this list that represents mostly your ethnical status?**



It is necessary respect fact that respondent's choice of each alternative has its background and rationale. It is not accidental decision. We can certify this by fact that respondent's consequent opinions and attitudes related to these decisions. In our research, we surveyed how much "correlate" orientations aiming to promote customs and traditions with alternatives of ethnic identity orientation Hungarian minority culture, but also with an attitude to its possible adaptation to the majority society (Table 3 and Table 4).

**Table 3: Could you please tell me, how much do you agree with: It is better if Hungarians living in Slovakia preserve their own customs and traditions**

		Strongly agree	Rather agree	Rather do not agree	Do not agree at all
I'm Hungarian	Count	74	42	5	2
	100 %	<b>57.4 %</b>	<b>32.6 %</b>	3.9 %	1.6 %
I'm Hungarian living in Slovakia	Count	233	247	22	5
	100 %	<b>43.0 %</b>	<b>45.6 %</b>	4.1 %	.9 %
I'm Slovak with Hungarian descent	Count	27	60	10	0
	100 %	<b>25.7 %</b>	<b>57.1 %</b>	9.5 %	.0 %

**Table 4: Could you please tell me, how much do you agree with: It is better if Hungarians living in Slovakia adapt and blend into the larger society**

		Strongly agree	Rather agree	Rather do not agree	Do not agree at all
I'm Hungarian	Count	10	21	28	62
	100 %	7.8 %	16.3 %	<b>21.7 %</b>	<b>48.1 %</b>
I'm Hungarian living in Slovakia	Count	57	140	162	135
	100 %	10.5 %	25.8 %	<b>29.9 %</b>	<b>24.9 %</b>
I'm Slovak with Hungarian descent	Count	17	30	32	17
	100 %	16.2 %	28.6 %	<b>30.5 %</b>	<b>16.2 %</b>

The choice of alternative "I am Hungarian", expresses the attitude of refusing to adapt and assimilate with the majority society (69.8 %, including 48.1 % with strongly oppose). Such a choice is associated with promoting the development of ethnic minority culture (90 %, included 57.4 % respondents with strong expression of this requirement).

Choice of alternative "I am Hungarian living on Slovakia" is associated with rejection of adaptation and assimilation with the majority society (54.8 %, of which only 24.9 % strongly oppose), but not so rigorous. In the case of support of own minority culture similar level is achieved (88.6 %) as an alternative to

"I am Hungarian" (90 %), but is characterized by a certain moderation of expressing this requirement.

Choice of alternative "I am Slovak with Hungarian ancestors" refers bigger shift on range effort refusing to adapt to mainstream society. As a whole there is only 46.7 % (strongly oppose is only 16.2 %) of respondents. Orientation to promote cultural development of ethnic minorities is same (82.8 %), although shifted in position requiring like lighter.

Results of research using only two indicators, while allowing only hypothesizes that "adaptation"<sup>10</sup> to coexistence with the major society does not entail automatically "cultural assimilation" or the loss of "ethnic identity". Reflects only the willingness of Slovak citizens belonged to ethnic minority to show some "loyalty" to the state framework, that should be compensated by adequate possibilities of cultural development.

We can show you some examples and testimonies of respondents in-depth individual interviews, which clearly shows that "citizenship" and "nationality" is perceived as two separate, but interdependent entities.

*HU(SK) 01( W,68d) For me it means that, what every nationalist feels towards his nation. In fact it means that I belong to this nation. I do not feel shame at all. I proudly claim I am a Hungarian. Of course, I feel like a citizen of Slovakia with Hungarian nationality.*

*HU(SK) 02 (W,36 )... On the one hand I am proud, on the other it is a shame, I am neither Slovak, nor Hungarian...I am proud of being what I am, but maybe we are in the wrong place...I do not know..*

*HU(SK) 06(M,61) ...I feel Hungarian, I have a Hungarian nationality, I was brought up like that, I have been living here and I worked here. I speak that language, but I am not that eager as they write in the newspapers now – all that with that Hungarian citizenship, I do not accept that, it is not good to take it into such extremes.*

*HU(SK).05 (M,50) I am a Hungarian living in Slovakia, I am not a Hungarian, but not a Slovak as well, simply I am a citizen of Slovak republic.*

*HU(SK) 08,M,52) Such a question...I am a citizen of Slovakia, I can speak Slovak and Hungarian as well...I am not a Hungarian from Hungary, I was born here and I have been living here. But I have one advantage, that I can speak English...yes, I am not like some, that are proud: I am a Hungarian! We are in the European Union, I am a European.)*

*HU(SK) (09,M 22) Yes, I do. I was born in Slovakia, my parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents have always lived on the Slovak land, and this relationship with my country of birth is very strong. I like Slovakia, even with its shortcomings that I sometimes strongly feel. I as well try to fight them many times.*

*HU(SK) 10(W 22) Maybe that I am a Slovak with Hungarian nationality.*

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<sup>10</sup> In Europe, there is discussion about different options and terminology, such a adaptation, accommodation, assimilation, integration and so. As it formulates Z. Poláčková: "In the future it will be difficult, in a further deepening of integration processes in Europe, a joint project aimed at addressing minority cohabitation" (Poláčková, 2010, s. 218).

*HU(SK) 15 MMY :I have clearly Hungarian nationality, as in East-Slovakia, in our region everybody I mean those who are afraid to declare themselves as Slovaks. However, in my Hungarian student card is written that I have Slovak citizenship which is true, but if somebody from the mother country looks at this then he thinks that I'm Slovak. It is a misleading thing in my card... It absolutely disturbs me, because as I said when I was transferred to .... then I don't know... the raising of those people is a little bit strange I think, because there I am the Slovak and when I go home I am the Hungarian. And the fact that in my student card is written the Slovak citizenship leads to the same misunderstanding. I'm obviously Hungarian.*

*HU(SK) 13 F H M: Well, of course I am Hungarian. I love my being Hungarian and I am proud of it but I live in Slovakia and nobody should tell me that Slovaks are surrounding me or Hungarians are surrounding me. It doesn't matter who is around me. They are people and everything depends on the person. There are stupid Hungarians and Slovaks too.... I feel Hungarian living in Slovakia so...*

Belonging to Hungarian minority is articulated openly on Slovakia, without any barriers. In many cases we find testimonies of pride to their own nationality in the expressions of respondents.

In many cases there is demonstrated that "Hungarian nationality" is not identical with Hungary, but is rather bound to Slovakia as a country in which respondents were born and where their ancestors lived<sup>11</sup>.

This huge presence of self-definition of national identity as "Hungarians living on Slovakia" is not result of comparison or "confrontation" of minor (Hungarians) and major (Slovaks) societies in their common country. Categories like WE and THEY are applied as a result of intensive regional contacts (family, recreation, shopping) of Hungarians living in Slovakia and Hungarians living in Hungary. It should be respected fact that when they visit Hungary, they are identified like "Hungarians from Slovakia", not like "Hungarians". It is not just a thing of state cars' signs, but mainly on the basis of their exceptional pronunciation (dialect) and specific vocabulary (some Slovak words). This is important factor or aspect of creating their specific dominant identity, with which we not count during ENRI-East project research. This is demonstrated by some statements of our respondents during individual interviews:

*HU(SK) 02 (W,36) „...we are in a very bad situation, we are not real Hungarians, not real Slovaks...here they call us Hungarians, in Hungary Slovak, it is difficult, because they do not take us as real Hungarians...when we go to Hungarian schools, to have something... yes, they do a bit, because we speak Hungarian dialect...it is not that sparkish, or how would I put it, they use very proper language, therefore it is easy for them to see we are not from Hungary, they see it immediately...difficult“*

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<sup>11</sup> To potvrdzujú aj výsledky výskumu prezentované v publikácii Š. Šutaj a kol.: Maďarská menšina na Slovensku v procesoch transformácie po roku 1989. Prešov, Universum 2006, ktorej recenziu od J. Marušiaka publikoval časopis *Studia politica Slovaca*.

*HU(SK) 07(W,71) ... of course, when a Hungarian goes to the market and wants frankfurters, and he says „he wants „horčica“ (mustard), they do not know the word, in Hungarian it is muštard, in Hungarian he asks, and he says I would like „horčica“, here in Senec we can't speak the Hungarian they speak in Hungary, it is not the language as original in Hungary, I say I am a Hungarian, but in radio or television I listen and I do not know some words, what it is, and I am a Hungarian“.*

For confirmation of this hypothesis we have results of sociological research as well, conducted by Forum Institute for Ethnic Minorities Research in Samorin in 2008 and which has also sample of 800 adult citizens of Hungarian nationality living in southern Slovakia. In this research<sup>12</sup>, researchers asked for question "How do you think people in Hungary behave for Hungarians arriving from Slovakia?"

Replies showed that they are not only kind, trying to help (29.0 %), or are acting in good faith rather than malicious (43.0, %), but in some cases also they are more malicious than in good faith (14.0 %) and even malicious (4.0 %). Responses revealed that there are also cases "more malicious than in good faith" or even "malicious" behavior of Hungarians in Hungary to Slovak Hungarians. This has influence on strengthening specific identity of Slovak Hungarians certainly.

### **„True Hungarian“ and Hungarian citizenship**

Research allowed respondents to adopt its opinion on the issue, which actually considered facts are very important according them, if somebody wants to say about himself that he/she is "true Hungarian". Results are presented in a separate graph (Graph 2) shows that according respondents, person is "true Hungarian "if speaks Hungarian language fluently" (72 %) and if he/she "to feel like Hungarian" (69.2 %). To these important factors, we can include also category "to have Hungarian ancestors" (38.5 %). Other facts, such as religion, be born or live in Hungary, are not so important.

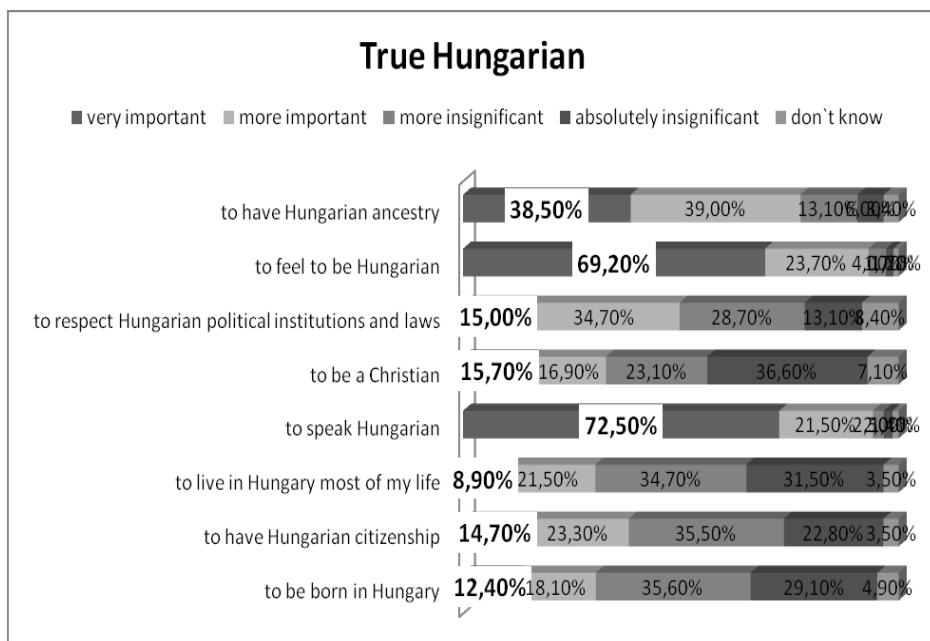
Generational differences are reflected remarkable in each group of characteristics. Older generation much more accentuated factor "Hungarian language" (77.4 % versus 69.8 %) and 'feel to be Hungarians (73.1 % vs. 69 %). "To have Hungarian citizenship" is the only characteristic of "true Hungarian", where generation gap is in different chaperone. For "real Hungarian" is "very important" to have "Hungarian citizenship" little more according younger generation (15.5 % of respondents) than by older respondents (10.3 %).

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<sup>12</sup> Results of research of political identity of Hungarians in Slovakia. Forum Institute for Ethnic Minorities Research, Samorin. Research supervisor: Zuzana Mészárosová-Lamplová. Responsible person: Károly Tóth. October 2008.



**Graph 2: According to you, how much important are these factors, if person wants to be „true Hungarian“?**



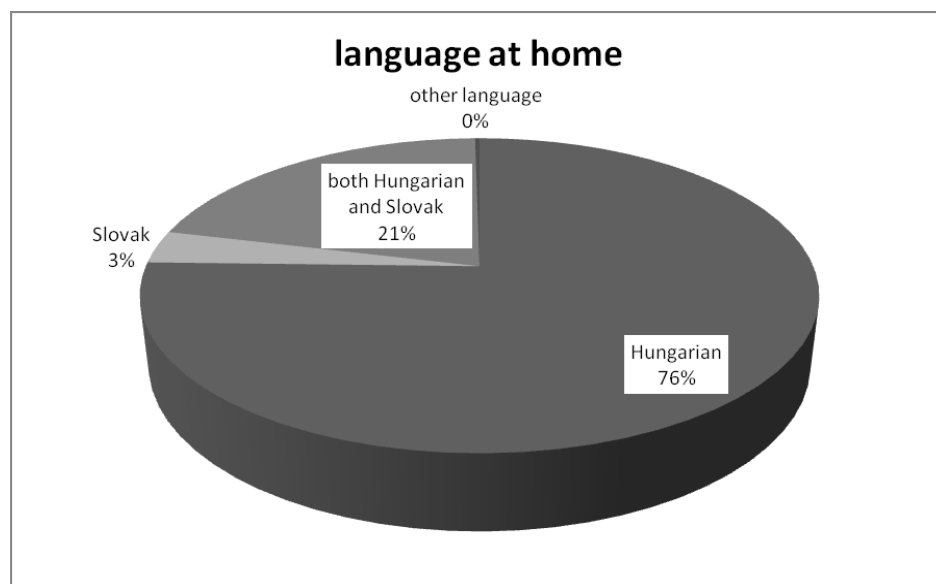
Data collection: FOCUS, November – December 2009

### Slovak language and its proficiency

Question of application of state and minority languages in public relations or in everyday parlance is in the center of political discourse in Slovakia today. Research<sup>13</sup> has produced some information that indicates relative improvement in the use of Slovak language in communication and attitude towards its use. Research confirmed tendency of lesser closeness to minority isolation and greater openness to the majority society by proficiency of both languages. (Graph 3)

More detailed analysis of specific expression of same friendliness and demonstration of competence to use Slovak language in public communications, however, shows (Table 5) that this is in direct relation to self-identification with the type of "national identity". But even people with a strong Hungarian identity (I am Hungarian) showed not only willingness to interviewer, but a decent knowledge of Slovak language (37.2 %). On the other side Slovaks of Hungarian ancestors (I am Slovak with Hungarian descent) preferred Hungarian language (23.8 %).

Graph 3: **What language or languages do you speak at home most often?**



<sup>13</sup> Surprisingly, there was founded that approximately 48.1 % of Hungarian respondents in this research chose Slovak version of sociological questionnaire.

**Table 5: Choice of Slovak or Hungarian version of sociological questionnaire (ENRI-East Research 2009)**

I'm Hungarian	Count	HU 81	SK 48
	%		62.8 %
I'm Hungarian living in Slovakia	Count	304	238
	%	56.1 %	43.9 %
I'm Slovak with Hungarian descent	Count	25	80
	%	23.8 %	76.2 %

In principle, in families (at home) members speak Hungarian. In the case of young generation, was founded that at family members speaking little less (72.4 %) only in Hungarian as in the case of the older generation (82.1 %). Bilingualism is therefore advocated in younger households more (22.4 %), especially compared with older generation (14.1 %).

Proficiency of Slovak language has different levels and causes. It can be demonstrated by stories of some our respondents, in which parents based on their own life experiences, encourage their children to learn Slovak language. But young people themselves purposefully overcome many obstacles in learning state language, for improving career prospects throughout country:

*HU(SK) 07(M, 71),,yes, because there was no Hungarian school yet, I finished 5 Slovak classes and then Hungarian school opened. My parents thus gave me there, because they were Hungarians, but I failed, because I could not speak Hungarian of course despite being Hungarian...but I was going to Slovak school for 5 years, it was like that then – there were Hungarian schools in Ács then already, but not in Senec When your children were born, you were thinking what to do...,they went to Hungarian school, my wife was Hungarian, therefore they were going to Hungarian, then one of them went to Kremnica to study for goldsmith, it was a Slovak school, she went to Kremnica to study, and she was successful, the second daughter went to study for economist, to Slovak economic school, as well with success*

*HU(SK) 10,W,22) I went to Slovak kindergarten, because my Godmother was a teacher there, therefore they sent me there, then to primary school and high school - Hungarian and a big step was when I came to Trnava and to Slovak school...Yes, I had, but the main reason I came here was that I wanted to learn Slovak, I did not want to go neither to Bratislava, nor to Nitra, because there are a lot of Hungarians, and I would not be forced to speak Slovak...I want to live in Slovakia and work here, therefore I simply need to speak Slovak. have you personally ever felt discriminated because of your Hungarian nationality? In the negative sense, I cannot say, I could rather say in positive sense, when I came to the university, I had good teachers; they knew that I have a problem with Slovak. In the first semester I had for example more time for tests, the others were writing for 20 minutes and I had 40, which was only positive. Negative – no, no, thank god, when they know you, they do not judge you on the basis of nationality.*

Younger generation, understand many issues related to the Hungarian language differently than older generation. Generational differences are noticeable at level of 15-25 %. For older respondents is very important category "to speak Hungarian with my friends' (58.6 % of younger vs. 71.8 % of older), opinions' consensus can be seen in the case of indicator generations "to read newspapers in Hungarian language "(according to 58.6 % of younger and 60.3 % of older this is very important).

### **European integration from generational aspect**

Young generation generally assesses EU as an institution much more positive than older generation (25.9 % vs. 8.1 %). Young generation is also more believes that Slovak's membership in EU membership has great benefits for country (30.2 % vs. 13.7 %). When we want to compare situation and status of "Hungarian minority" before accession and after accession to EU indicates (Table 6), we found that dominant is indicator "everything is almost identical"(48.3 % of younger and 44 % of older).

Generational aspect allows to find better, how Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality assess ongoing changes. In particular, it can be stated that younger generation has a greater sense of some changes either for better (22.4 %) or worse (18.1 %). Older generation does not feel these changes so intense, but relatively same size value that these changes were better (10.7 %) or worse (12.8 %). This situation can be shown in the case of recognition of culture of Hungarian national minority after Slovakia joined the EU.

**Table 6: After Slovakia joined the EU (2004) can you say that national minority to which you belong to.... (In %)**

	<b>Much more better</b>	<b>Rather better</b>	<b>Almost same</b>	<b>Rather worse</b>	<b>Much more worse</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Don't answered</b>
Has bigger influence in politics	2.9	15.9	<b>45.6</b>	17.6	5.5	11.5	1.1
Situation of minority culture is	1.6	14.4	<b>52.6</b>	14.5	2.1	13.4	1.5

*Data collection: FOCUS, November – December 2009*

Significant differences are also visible in the case of evaluating of future of Europe and European Union in terms of impact on some sensitive areas respondents live. As far as the "organized crime and drugs" (62.8 %) and "loss of social security" (55.1 %) fears are concentrated more explicitly with older generation. There is approximately 20 % of difference, because younger

generation has less concern about the drug (44 %) and loss of social security (37 %).

Loss of Hungarian and Slovak culture identity in integrating Europe would not cause concerns in the case of young generation (72.4 % Slovak culture and 78.4 % Hungarian culture). Older generation expresses approximately 20 % more concern in case of emergency of "Hungarian identity" (51.3 %). Young generation does not have such a high concern over the difficulties which might arise on ethnic and national minorities. "I have a fear", answered 34.5 % of respondents in 30 years, but 43.6 % of respondents over 60 years.

Mobility and migration in the European space is really important and actual issue for younger generation. In our study expressed interest for moving to another country only very few members of older generation (certainly 2.6 %, maybe 3.8 %). Young generation would "definitely" (18.1 %) and a „maybe“ (34.5 %) under very favorable condition wants to leave their country. Target destinations in the case of Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality represents not just Hungary (10.3 %), but also UK (8.6 %), Austria (3.4 %), Germany (2.6 %), Italy (2.6 %) and Czech Republic (1.7 %).

### **Conclusion**

Research of Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality by ENRI-East project has brought more comprehensive description of indicators, which relate to "identity" of the Hungarian national group. We found that "nationality" is important (17 %), but by far not the only component of identity. In terms of structure citizens of Slovak republic with Hungarian nationality shall be reported to dominant identity "I am Hungarian living on Slovakia" (65 %). Group is significantly less with identity "I am member of Hungarian nation" and identity group "I am citizen of Slovakia as the host country with different ethnic origin". For each group is characterized difference in preferences adapt to life with the majority society. For all groups common fact is that respondents expect support for their cultural development by host country for the future. Proficiency of Slovak language is not perceived as a first step towards assimilation, but as an effective tool of social life in the host country. Approximately 60 % of respondents in 2009 have managed to introduce "real Hungarian" without Hungarian citizenship. Important for them is "mother tongue" and "feeling to be" member of nation.

Generational aspect provides an opportunity to see phenomenon of "identity" of Hungarian national minority in the context of historical and cultural changes. Quantitative distribution of major types in terms of age has a significant homogeneity which implies that in the future to be reckoned that dominant group of citizens of Slovak Hungarian national minority will be the

one that accepts current national framework for their existence, their life satisfaction and cultural needs.

As far as evaluation of the status of "Hungarian minority" after Slovakia's accession to the EU outweigh majority feeling that situation in terms of possible cultural development of minorities is "almost unchanged" and even improved. In the political field situation has changed, but in better either in worse way. Young generation of Hungarian nationality is more open to European integration processes, not associated with fears of losing national identity and sees them as beneficial for people living in Slovakia. Security and social threats perceive not so sensitive as older generation.

New "European identity" in Slovakia since 2004 has been reinforced, especially by accepting of "Euro" as new currency since 2009. This is a new 'feature' for Slovak Republic, which allows for Slovak citizens regardless of nationality presentation by specific way in Hungary. Stability of the Euro currency, functioning of plural democracy and political presentation of minority interests in the National Council of Slovak Republic through new political party MOST – HID have real impact on positive influence for integration opinions and on behavior of all generations of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

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**Annex 1: Regional allocation of sample of respondents of Hungarian nationality in Slovakia**

	Region					Total
	Bratislava	Trnava	Nitra	Banská Bystrica	Košice	
No. of respondents (abs)	20	212	303	130	136	801
Proportion of respondents (%)	2.5	26.5	37.8	16.2	17.0	100.0

**Annex 2: Survey sample by counties**

Respondenti	County														Total	
	Dunajská Streda	Galanta	Komárno	Košice-okolie	Levice	Lučenec	Michalovce	Nové Zámky	Revúca	Rimavská Sobota	Rožňava	Senec	Šal'a	Trebišov		Veľký Krtíš
Number (abs)	154	58	119	30	60	36	20	89	20	54	40	20	35	46	20	801
Proportion (%)	19.2	7.2	14.9	3.7	7.5	4.5	2.5	11.1	2.5	6.7	5.0	2.5	4.4	5.7	2.5	100.0

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