

## **HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON THE ADOPTION OF THE ACT ON MINORITIES IN YUGOSLAVIA (MARCH 1, 2002)**

The Hungarian community in Yugoslavia considers it a milestone that the Federal Parliament adopted, practically unanimously, the Act on the Minorities. The Foreign Ministry shares the satisfaction of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, and welcomes the decision of the Yugoslav Parliament.

In Hungary's view, an act of groundbreaking significance has been adopted, which lays down fundamental principles of precedent value in Yugoslavia. Hungary hopes that the law will enable the Hungarians in Vojvodina to enjoy opportunities that they have not been provided with till now. It will, among other things, expand the areas of education in the mother tongue and those of the use of the mother tongue in public life, it declares the prohibition of altering the ethnic composition of the population in areas inhabited by the minorities; it introduces the obligation for state bodies, such as the police force, to employ personnel in a proportion that reflects the ethnic composition of the population; and it allows for the establishment and operation of private schools. Permitting the functioning of national councils, the Act also opens the way towards the evolution of minority autonomy.

It is the responsibility of the Republic of Serbia to elaborate the specific form of implementing the framework law that has just been adopted. The Hungarian side hopes that the detailed regulation, too, will consolidate the foundations of minority protection that have now been laid. The entering into force of the law - which was framed in conformity with the European norms - will bring Yugoslavia closer to the institutions of European integration.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers that the Act also constitutes a good starting point for making progress in the field of establishing the Hungarian-Yugoslav bilateral frameworks of minority protection. The Foreign Ministry is confident that the implementation of the law will justify the expectations of both the minorities in Yugoslavia and the European public at large.

Budapest, March 1, 2002

[Quelle: <http://www.kum.hu>]