

# HSA

## Hungarian Studies Association

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December 2010

### NEWSLETTER

The HSA Business Meeting at the *ASEEES* (Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, formerly known as the AAASS) **Convention** was held on **Friday, November 19, 2010**.

#### a. Election Results:

Katalin Kádár Lynn and Julia Bock were elected to serve on the executive board. Congratulations!

Thus, the current leadership is:

**President:** Paul Hanebrink, Rutgers U., Term: 2010-2011. Email: [hanebrin@history.rutgers.edu](mailto:hanebrin@history.rutgers.edu)

**Vice-President\***: Emese Ivan, St. John's U., Term: 2010-2011. Email: [emese.ivan@gmail.com](mailto:emese.ivan@gmail.com)

**Secretary-Treasurer:** Susan Glanz, St. John's U., Term: 2010-2011. Email: [glanzs@stjohns.edu](mailto:glanzs@stjohns.edu)

#### Executive Committee:

Steve Jobbitt, California State U.-Fullerton., Term: 2010-2011. Email: [sjobbitt@fullerton.edu](mailto:sjobbitt@fullerton.edu)

Catherine Portuges, U of Mass. -Amherst, Term: 2010-2011. Email: [portuges@complit.umass.edu](mailto:portuges@complit.umass.edu)

Julia Bock, Long Island U., Term: 2011-2012. Email: [Julia.Bock@liu.edu](mailto:Julia.Bock@liu.edu)

Katalin Kádár Lynn, ELTE, Bp., Term: 2011-2012. Email: [kbogar2@comcast.net](mailto:kbogar2@comcast.net)

\*According to our by-laws on January 1, 2012, Emese Ivan, our current VP, will automatically assume the position of the president.

- b. Members unanimously voted to rename our biennial article award for Mark Pittaway.
- c. Book Award committee's (Paul Hanebrink, Arpad von Klimo, and Mark Pittaway) decision was to give the prize to **Holly Case**, for her book **Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II** (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009). *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II*, is an impressive and truly transnational study of the power that a contested region (Transylvania) exerted on the foreign and domestic policies of two countries: Hungary and Romania. In the book, Professor Holly Case shifts focus skillfully, at times illuminating the strategic thinking of political leaders in Budapest and Bucharest, at times returning to Transylvania and its provincial capital Kolozsvár (Cluj) in order to study the effects of these policies on the lives of people in the region. As she examines each of the issues that comprised the "Transylvanian Question", in inter-war and wartime Hungary and Romania, she makes a powerful case for the overwhelming importance of diplomatic considerations for a social history of the region.

Case draws a number of important conclusions from her study. First, she argues convincingly that both the Hungarian and Romanian governments entered into military alliance with Nazi Germany and then into battle against the Soviet Union primarily to exercise a more certain claim to the

entirety of Transylvania. Throughout the war, from start to finish, political leaders in both Hungary and Romania were motivated first and foremost by a desire to extend national sovereignty over a region claimed by both states. Case shows that this understanding of what World War II was “really” about extended into the ranks of the Hungarian and Romanian armies as well. The fact that Transylvania was divided between these two states during the war created a climate in which every mistreatment of an ethnic minority became the occasion for claims of victimization on both sides. These diplomatic tensions, in such a strategically sensitive region, became issues that neither the Nazi German nor the Fascist Italian states could ignore. That the Axis powers often found themselves trying to adjudicate outrages against minority rights in Transylvania is, as Case notes, one of the most breathtaking and completely unresearched ironies of the war – proof of her main thesis that “small states matter” to the course of European history.

Throughout *Between States*, Case scrupulously avoids taking either a Romanian or a Hungarian perspective, itself no small achievement in the study of a topic that has been subject to so much politicized scholarship on either side. The result is an ambitious blend of diplomatic, social, and cultural history that should inspire a new generation of scholarship on inter-state relations in twentieth century East-Central Europe.

Paul Hanebrink  
Arpad von Klimo

Holly was not present at the meeting, but sent us a note.

“I am very sorry I was not able to come to the AAASS (ASEEES) this year. It is always one of the highlights of the year, being surrounded by colleagues and friends who are conversant in the insider language of regional expertise that so few in the ‘real world’ speak. Part of me is not sorry that it is precisely this year I am absent, however, as I know the delight of seeing so many dear friends would remind me all the more of the one who is not there, our beloved friend and colleague Mark Pittaway. It was last year in Boston that I saw Mark for the last time. We conversed at length about projects and ideas, an exchange that had become an annual tradition, stretching back to our first encounter in Salt Lake City five years ago. As a historian, it’s frustrating only to remember impressionistically rather than in detail: Mark’s kind and clever manner, his endearing trips over particular words, his incredible intellectual energy, his formidable intellect paired with a personal bearing that was quite the opposite of formidable. In the face of these too-vague memories, I must revise and resubmit my earlier regret that I am not there – I do regret it, deeply. For just as it has been a true joy to be around a colleagues and friends who know Mark and who felt and understood what it was like to be with him, and who feel and understand how painful it is to be without him. We were lucky to have him among us, and are lucky to have each other still.”

CONGRATULATIONS from all of us.

- d. In 2011, the HSA will be awarding the *Mark Pittaway Article Award*. Nominations should be forwarded directly to the Committee:  
Paul Hanebrink, [hanebrin@history.rutgers.edu](mailto:hanebrin@history.rutgers.edu), Arpad von Klimo, [klimo@pitt.edu](mailto:klimo@pitt.edu), and Robert Nemes, [rnemes@mail.colgate.edu](mailto:rnemes@mail.colgate.edu).

To be eligible for this Award, the article must be in English and be published in the last two years.

To be considered for the article prize in 2011, scholars early in their careers will be given preference.

e. ASEEEES 43rd Annual Convention will be held Nov 17-20, 2011 in Washington, DC.

**The theme of the 2011 convention is: “Authorities”**

This year’s interest in authorities, rather than authority, looks to expressly recognize the enormous variance in social formations across Slavic, East European and Eurasian areas, and the need for rich, comparative scholarly work in this context.

**Panels invited for the 2011 convention are therefore not limited to but might include work on:**

Sovereign power routed through new social forms	Specters of authoritarianism
Agencies of state: law, the military, borders, and taxation	Changing religious ideologies
Human rights, social justice, and the authority to speak	Insurgencies and rebellions
Authorship and authority across time and space	The creation of reputation
The role of new media in everyday life	Money as a moral currency
Authorizing discourses and the power to name	Authorizing truth values in visual culture
The changing status of auteurism in post-Soviet cinema	Secrecy and powerful forgeries
The officializing of sexuality and the queering of sovereign realms	
Authority and knowledge-production	
“Culture workers” new and old: from the Komsomol to celebrity reporting	

These and other related topics need not be the specific subjects of panels. They are offered as spurs to designing panels for the 2011 convention. **Please note that, individual paper submissions will not be accepted.** Individual paper submissions will resume in 2012.

Please write to Wendy Walker ([wwalker@pitt.edu](mailto:wwalker@pitt.edu)) for information on submitting proposals. Special consideration will be given to panels reporting on recent field or archival research, especially those that include presentations by advanced graduate students and/or junior faculty. The Program Committee also encourages panel proposal submissions that include both men and women. Proposals for roundtables should be submitted only when the topic clearly justifies the format. Please note that proposals can be accepted only from ASEEEES members or foreign non-members. Please be sure to include an abstract about your panel or roundtable.

**Deadline for receipt of complete panel and roundtable proposals is January 15, 2011.**

**If you have ideas for panels and would like me to share your ideas with other members, write to me ([glanzs@stjohns.edu](mailto:glanzs@stjohns.edu)) and I will email it out to members.**

- f. With the help of György Péteri we will follow and report on the funding cuts impacting the 1956 Institute in Hungary.
- g. Due to funding cuts various US universities are facing budget crisis, and are using various tactics to eliminate programs. Steve Jobbitt will report on the tactics and tools used at various universities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan

ZSUZSA NAGY  
1930-2010

After long years of failing health, an outstanding member of the historical profession in Hungary, Zsuzsa Nagy, died in October, 2010 in Budapest. She had a wide range of good friends, and I count myself very fortunate to be among them. In addition to her numerous professional accomplishments, Zsuzsa Nagy was, above all, a splendid human being. It did not take long for her to warm up to anyone she liked, and this warmth elicited the same in return. She had a sunny disposition and radiated goodness.

Her hospitality was legendary. I had, as did Istvan Deak, Peter Pastor, Deborah Cornelius, as well as countless others, many delicious home-cooked meals at her apartment in Buda. When I spent long months doing research in Budapest in the 1990s, her apartment was an oasis, where not only did I enjoy good meals and drinks, but I was also part of spirited conversations and many good laughs with Zsuzsa, her husband Janos, and the other invited guests. My wife and I could luckily reciprocate her hospitality when Zsuzsa and Janos visited New York one year. I have nothing but the best and warmest memories of her. She loved history and loved to teach at the University in Debrecen. I was in Debrecen with her twice and can attest to the fact that she was much loved there both by her colleagues and by her students. The former put together not one but two Festschriften in her honor. Fortunately, she was able to attend the publication of the second on October 1st, not long before she died.

Generally, a historian picks his or her area of expertise for one or another reason which are not mutually exclusive; the first is that the historian in question wishes to understand and analyze the period, and the second that he or she has an emotional connection to, at times a passionate involvement in the period. Zsuzsa Nagy never verbalized her relationship to history to me, but having read some of her books and articles, I do believe that she brought both motives, along with her integrity and intellectual honesty, to her scholarship about the liberal movement and political parties of interwar Hungary. She managed to do this during the decades of obligatory Marxist historiography.

Though not uncritical toward her subjects - in one of her books she called those liberals "narrow-minded" and "unrealistic" - she refrained from using Marxist jargon and reading her books and articles it is hard not to conclude that she in fact carried a great deal of sympathy for those liberals. Zsuzsa was, I believe, an unreconstructed liberal herself in the best sense of those two words. Unspoiled by and disapproving of the numerous unseemly compromises and scandals of the 1990's and 2000's, she honored a heritage which, while impure in execution, nevertheless represented the values of inclusion, tolerance, and humanity.

The liberals whom she studied and particularly esteemed were flawed, but in the mildly oppressive and hierarchical political and social environment of the Horthy-regime, they carried on the legacy of Kossuth and Mihaly Karolyi. Kossuth needs no introduction, and the more controversial Karolyi made valiant attempts at transforming Hungary into a democratic republic, but his own weaknesses and adverse circumstances after a lost war ruined his efforts in 1918/1919. The people Zsuzsa Nagy most admired were Vince Nagy and Karoly Rassay, two Gentile politicians from the countryside, who gave lie to the accusation that liberal leaders as well as their followers were almost exclusively Jews from Budapest. Rassay, and one could add the names of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky and Tibor Eckhardt, both of whom started out their political careers on the extreme Right, but in time moved to the liberal center. Like all Hungarians, they condemned Trianon. In addition, they abhorred the Communists, whose utopian experiment in 1919 turned into a fiasco. Eventually, these liberals fought against Nazism and their Hungarian allies.

Collectively and individually, they and the political parties they belonged to put up a courageous fight for social justice, for the neglected peasant masses living in poverty, for genuine democracy, and for human rights, condemning laws that discriminated against the Jews. Eckhardt emigrated to the United States in 1941; Vince Nagy followed him shortly after World War II, just one step ahead of the Communist Secret Police. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was arrested by the Gestapo after a firefight in 1944 and was executed by the Hungarian Arrow Cross in 1945, and Rassay was incarcerated in Mauthausen and then deported to a village by the Communists after the war.

Late in her career, Zsuzsa Nagy, as a testament to her curiosity and inquisitive mind, left political history behind and ventured into social history. In a very informative and excellent book, she unraveled the way of life and system of values held by petty traders and small shopkeepers in Hungary between the two world wars.

I have learned a great deal from Zsuzsa – not only about history but also about life and people – and I will be forever in debt to her. May she be remembered as a special human being and a good historian!

Gabor Vermes  
Professor Emeritus of History  
Rutgers University, Newark



#### **Publications by our members:**

**Marguerite DeHuszar Allen**, reviewed Ferenc Barna's novel, *The Ninth*, in the current issue of *World Literature Today* (November/December 2010).

**Federigo Argentireri** wrote the chapter on **Hungary** in *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*, edited by Sharon L. Wolchik and Jane L. Curry, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.; Second Edition edition. (2010)

**Béla Bodó**, "Aristocracy and the White Terror," *Journal of Contemporary History*, October 2010 (45), pp. 703-724.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Iván Héjjas: The Life of a Counterrevolutionary," *East Central Europe/L' Europe du Centre-Est*, 37 (2010), pp. 1-33.

**István Deák**, "Three Brave Officers" (Guidó Görgey, Imre Reviczky, and Jenő Thassy) in *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 2009), pp. 68-80; in Hungarian: "Tisztesség és becsület a II. világháborúban. Zsidókat mentő magyar katonatisztek," *História*, xxxii, 2010/8, pp. 12-18.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Holocaust in Hungary," in Randolph L. Braham, *The Holocaust: Essays and Documents* (The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies; Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 65-84

\_\_\_\_\_, "Hungary and the Holocaust," in Murray Baumgarten, Peter Kenez, and Bruce Thompson, eds., *Varieties of Antisemitism: History, Ideology, Discourse* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), pp. 93-104

\_\_\_\_\_, "Some Thoughts on the Question of Why Monarchies Fall" in László Borhi, ed., *Európa, nemzet, külpolitika* (Budapest: Aura Kiadó, 2010), pp. 45-52.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Antisemitism in Eastern Europe since 1848" in Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy, eds., *Antisemitism: a History* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 222-236.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Heroes from Hungary," [On Hungarian refugee scientists], *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 19, 2009; reprinted in *Hungarian Quarterly* (Budapest), 51/197 (Spring 2010), pp. 121-128. In German, "Helden aus Ungarn," *Europäische Rundschau* (Vienna), 2010/1, pp. 135-141.

\_\_\_\_\_, “Honor’s Gap” [on the German resistance], *The New Republic*, May 20, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_, “A Deal With the Devil” [[Bargaining for the Hungarian Jews in 1944], *The New Republic*, June 24, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_, “The Charnel Continent” [On Timothy Snyder’s Bloodlands], *The New Republic*, December 2, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_, was interviewed by NPR’s Guy Ruz about the peace activist and journalist Carl von Ossietzky who was not allowed to accept his Nobel prize in 1936. (Dec.9., 2010)

<http://www.npr.org/2010/12/09/131940673/China-s-Nobel-Crackdown-Echoes-1936>

**Alfonz Lengyel’s** paper on the OROQEN tribes, who live in NE China's forests under shamanic rules, was published by the Far Eastern Section of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in Vladivostok One group of the OROQEN tribes originate themselves from the White Horse, and the others from the Miraculous Stag.



### Upcoming conferences and journal looking for articles

**1. AHEA** — 36th Annual Conference of the **American Hungarian Educators Association** will be held (<http://ahea.net>) 14-17 April 2011 at John Carroll University, 20700 North Park Blvd. , University Hts. (Cleveland), Ohio 44118 .

The Program Committee invites proposals for papers, focusing on the presenters’ individual research and findings, connected with this year’s theme:

**Whither Europe? Whither Hungary?**

**The Challenges of Pluralism in the Twenty-First Century**

Proposals should consist of an abstract of not more than 250 words; a brief scholarly biography, including degrees and scholarly fields (50-100 words); a description of any audio-visual requirements; and full contact information. Proposals must be submitted online at <http://ahea.net/conferences/2011/submit-paper>, or as an email attachment (Word only) no later than **15 January 2011**, to the **Program Committee Chairs** as listed below. Please use your last name as the document title, as in “*Smith.doc.*” Only one submission per author will be considered. Individual paper presentations are limited to no more than twenty minutes to allow for ten minutes of discussion following the presentation. The primary language of the conference is English; some sessions may be conducted in Hungarian, depending on the agreement of the session attendees.

If emailing: submit proposals to in Cultural Studies to Louise Vasvári, [louise.vasvari@sunysb.edu](mailto:louise.vasvari@sunysb.edu); in Education: Judith Kesserú Némethy, [jn2@nyu.edu](mailto:jn2@nyu.edu); in History to Julia Bock, [Julia.Bock@liu.edu](mailto:Julia.Bock@liu.edu) or Peter Pastor [pastorp@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:pastorp@mail.montclair.edu); in Literature to Enikő M. Basa, [eniko.basa@verizon.net](mailto:eniko.basa@verizon.net); in Music/Folklore to Kálmán Magyar, [magyar@magyar.org](mailto:magyar@magyar.org) or Judith Olson <mailto:JudyOlson@aol.com> and in Science/Economics to Susan Glanz, [glanzs@stjohns.edu](mailto:glanzs@stjohns.edu).

**2. The Hungarian Studies Association of Canada** invites proposals for its 26th annual conference, to be held in Fredericton, on **May 28-30th, 2011**. The annual theme for the 2011 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences is "*Coasts and Continents: Exploring People and Places.*" We invite paper proposals that tie this theme into Hungarian studies, by examining issues such as migration and immigration, Hungarian explorers in Canada and around the world, as well as the diaspora and its contact with people of different cultures.

Papers may be presented in English, Hungarian, or French.

**The deadline for submitting proposals is December 15th, 2010.** Your proposal should contain the paper's title, an abstract summarizing your topic with key arguments and sources, as well as a brief

curriculum vitae. Please submit your abstract and paper title by the deadline and in the language in which you wish to present. Please send your proposals to [judyyoung@drache.ca](mailto:judyyoung@drache.ca).

**3. The 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Hungarian Studies** will be held August 22-27, 2011 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. For more info: [http://hungkongkolozsvar.ubbcluj.ro/hu\\_bevezetes.html](http://hungkongkolozsvar.ubbcluj.ro/hu_bevezetes.html).

**4. Journal of Peace, Gender and Development Studies** [www.interestjournals.org/JPGDS](http://www.interestjournals.org/JPGDS)  
The Journal of Peace, Gender and Development Studies (JPGDS) is a multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that will be published monthly by International Research Journals (<http://www.interestjournals.org/JPGDS/index.htm/>). JPGDS is dedicated to increasing the depth of the subject across disciplines with the ultimate aim of expanding knowledge of the subject.

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**5. 20th International Conference of the Global Awareness Society International** will be held in San Juan, PR on May 26-29, 2011. For more information visit; <http://orgs.bloomu.edu/gasi/call.html>.

**6. *Identity-building in the English-speaking world***  
**Siófok, Hungary – Thursday, April 28-May 1, Sunday 2011**

The staff of the English Language and Literature Department of Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences is looking forward to meeting you at the conference on the Siófok Campus in the following subthemes:

1. Remembering the origins;
2. The colonial past;
3. 'Act locally, think globally'
4. The trend in reverse – globalization;
5. Transgressing literary, cultural and linguistic boundaries
6. Artistic and cultural reflections;
7. Politics and arts / culture;
8. Transcultural communities
9. Continental aspects and regionalism;
10. Minorities;
11. Ethnicities in the English-speaking world
12. Changes in focus – from international theatre to globalized theatre.

**The deadline for proposals is: December 20, 2010.** Please submit proposals for presentation, including title, an abstract of up to 200 words, and a short bio to the conference organizers, Dr. Krisztina Kodó ([krisztina.kodo@kodolanyi.hu](mailto:krisztina.kodo@kodolanyi.hu)) and Anna Jakabfi ([anna.jakabfi@kodolanyi.hu](mailto:anna.jakabfi@kodolanyi.hu)).



## Miscellaneous news:

### 1. Interesting websites:

Full-text Digital Library offering books and corpora as lexical hypertexts on Creative Commons License Committed to accuracy, accessibility and Tablet PC oriented cognitive ergonomics.

<http://www.intratext.com/> Its Hungarian pages are accessible at: <http://www.intratext.com/Aiuto/HUN/>

The website of the [Budapest City Archives](http://bfl.archivportal.hu/index.php?lang=en): <http://bfl.archivportal.hu/index.php?lang=en>

**2. Words Without Borders** (<http://wordswithoutborders.org/>) is website, which founded in 2003, publishes books in translation online and also provides an outlet where translators can offer samples of their work in hopes of interesting commercial publishers. The August 2010 issue focused on Hungary.

**3.** <http://film.indavideo.hu/> is a site that hosts some Hungarian movies.

**4.** An interview with Ivan T. Berend on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. [http://nol.hu/kult/20101211-a\\_professzor\\_nyolcvan\\_eve](http://nol.hu/kult/20101211-a_professzor_nyolcvan_eve)

**5.** From the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation:

#### **Venice Commission Criticizes Slovak Language Law** *Changes Adopted by Slovak Parliament Need Major Revision*

On October 21, the Venice Commission (the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters, formally called the European Commission for Democracy through Law) published its official [opinion](#) on amendments adopted in June 2009 to Act No. 270/1995 on the State Language of the Slovak Republic.

The Commission determined that certain provisions in the State Language Law are incompatible with international standards<sup>[1]</sup> and though the desire to promote the official language is understandable, the state is not absolved "of the obligation to comply with the provisions of the international conventions for the protection of national minorities..." (Paragraph 47)

The 27-page report (Opinion No. 555/2009):

- concludes that the law needs to be revised and changes made in the provisions regulating education, religion, cultural activities, television broadcasting, public communication, official communication, judicial and administrative proceedings, and fines. (Paragraphs 136 and 137)<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[3]</sup>,
- questions the benefit of sanctions as the means for achieving compliance and the law's objectives (Paragraph 131)<sup>[4]</sup>,
- asserts that "no fine should be imposed for those breaches of the State Language Law which represent legitimate expressions of the right to use a minority language as guaranteed" by domestic law and international treaties (Paragraph 129);
- declares that the "protection and promotion of the state language must be balanced against protection and promotion of the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities" (Paragraph 134);
- repeatedly affirms that "the obligation to use the official language should be confined to genuine cases of public order needs and bear a reasonable relation of proportionality" (Paragraph 134); and
- would "welcome a comprehensive, holistic approach on the part of the Slovak authorities to the protection of minority rights in the Slovak Republic [...]" (Paragraph 18).

Before the Venice Commission's report was officially released, however, on October 20 the Slovak Parliament adopted newer modifications to the State Language Law, in a first round of voting (78 yeas to 66 nays out of 150 total MEPs). Consequently, the Slovak government and Parliament did not take into consideration the Commission's recommendations when deliberating these newer amendments, nor did they sufficiently remedy the concerns raised by the Commission. While the proposed changes contain noteworthy "improvements," the very discriminatory and punitive premise of the Law remains and as such are inadequate.<sup>[5]</sup>

As the Hungarian Coalition Party (HCP) of Slovakia has pointed out, with only these limited changes, the Radicova government is unfortunately assuming the prior, Fico government's legacy instead of reverting to the 2006 status quo on language rights.<sup>[6]</sup>

### **Background to the newer modifications voted by the Slovak Parliament on October 20**

The proposed changes appear to be the result of a political deal between the parties of the governing coalition formed on July 8, 2010. Despite the generally accepted norms of democratic societies and prior recommendations from the OSCE High Commissioner, these modifications were not preceded by public debate, negotiations with experts and NGOs representing minorities, nor even submitted to inter-ministerial review.

The media, the Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia and the Hungarian Coalition Party have all extensively addressed the shortcomings of these new modifications.

According to József Berényi, HCP President, these changes do not fundamentally alter the law's premise of inequality, the false distortion that somehow the dominant language needs to be protected from minority ones and that minority citizens need to be motivated by fines because they lack common sense and good judgment regarding appropriate language use. Therefore, the law would continue to promote an atmosphere of fear, self-censorship and assimilative tendencies among the Hungarian minority.

The prospect of sanctions and fines "only" applying in cases where "life, health, safety or the property of citizens are endangered," is not reassuring, since these are broad categories that can pave the way for arbitrary implementation. Moreover, the concept of "endangered" is not delineated and apparently in the government's original version the provision was even more vague with the word "endangered" missing and the term "affected" used instead.

### **Conclusion**

The overwhelming majority of concerns with the Slovak Language Law expressed by the Venice Commission remain unremedied. The report underscores the law's punitive aspects, enumerates areas in which use of the mother tongue (minority languages) is unfavorably impacted and calls attention to provisions in noncompliance with international agreements.

There will be a second round of parliamentary voting in early December--and occasion to yet again submit or revise amendments. The Slovak authorities, therefore, have immediate opportunity to correct deficiencies in the law, remove fines once already eliminated from it in 1999, and bring it into international compliance. In fact, since October 12, Slovak citizens have been signing a petition which calls upon Parliament to *"eliminat[e] fines for the use of the mother tongue and all the discriminatory provisions concerning minorities"* from the law. The authorities should do just that.

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Click on the footnote number above to access footnote text, as well as a [summary comparison](#) by HHRF of how the new "Proposed Amendments" to the Slovak Language Law adopted October 20 conform to the Venice Commission's assessment of the law.



**Please, do not forget to pay your annual dues. Make checks (\$25) payable to HSA.  
WISHING EVERYONE A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON and a VERY HAPPY,  
HEALTHY NEW YEAR!**

*Susan*