

## **General Comment 1/2018 of the Minority Ombudsman on the Slovenian Model Farm as a good practice**

As the deputy ombudsman for the protection of the nationalities living in Hungary, I consider it a priority task, as part of the enforcement of minority rights, to monitor and to publicly disseminate good examples and practices, which contribute to preserving the culture and the mother tongue of the national minority communities living in Hungary and strengthen their identity.

On June 1, I published a general comment "On the role of nationality communities in local and regional economic development and tourism based on the example of the Slovenian Model Farm", which demonstrates the contribution of the Slovenian Model Farm program in Felsőszölnök to the preservation of the identity of the Slovenian community, the strengthening of cross-border business links as well as the preservation of the landscape and the natural environment that has been inhabited by the Slovenian community for centuries.

The Slovenian Model Farm project is the result of the joint endeavours of the Slovene nationality community. It includes 24 hectares of cultivated land, orchards and animal husbandry together with a meat processing plant and fruit warehouses. In addition, it has a restaurant and a guesthouse offering the treasures of local gastronomy. The project was funded by the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment as well as by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad, while the development of the Model Farm was funded by the European Regional Development Fund from the financial sources of the European Union.

The project contributes to the community building of Slovenes in Hungary, preserving their mother tongue and culture, and it is also a tool for keeping the local population through job creation. The Model Farm also promotes the utilization of available natural resources, the survival and renewal of the traditional functions of the local forms of farming, and the development of the region's so-called gentle tourism. The operation of the Model Farm may help the affected landscape regaining its original, special mosaic character and it contributes to the survival of future generations by preserving the environment.

The program is a good example how an ethnic community with a history of several hundred and thousands of years can not only preserve and keep its own identity but also to safeguard nationwide values and ensure sustainable development based on its historical traditions and by recognizing and utilizing local endowments.

The General Comment No. 1/2018 is available in Hungarian language on the Minority Ombudsman's website [nemzetisegijogok.hu](http://nemzetisegijogok.hu).

Prof. Elisabeth Sándor-Szalay

Deputy-Commissioner for Fundamental Rights

Ombudsman for the Rights of National Minorities