

REGIONS, MINORITIES AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

A CASE STUDY ON HUNGARIANS IN THE KOŠICE REGION, SLOVAKIA

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Abstract

The report presented a case of the influence of European integration on the political and socio-economic status of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Based on the historical background and the analysis of empirical findings, we tried to test a set of hypotheses: a) the promotion of human rights and the protection of minorities emphasized in the process of EU enlargement reinforces the influence of the ethnic Hungarians political representation from two points of view: it empowers the political representation and it strengthens the negotiating position of the SMK in the promotion of minority interests; b) ethnic-based political representation reinforces divisions over regional territorial reforms and control over local government institutions along national-ethnic lines; c) regional economic and institutional resources transferred to subnational units in the context of the launch of EU cohesion policy reinforce a redefinition of minority-majority interests around economic development goals; d) there is a challenge to nationalism and for the minority the improvement of protection of its rights and the decrease of nationalism supported its better identification with Slovakia based on the citizenship principle.

Key words:

minority-majority interests, inter-communal cooperation, cross-border cooperation

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