

# ITALIAN NATIONAL COMMUNITY IN SLOVENE ISTRIA AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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## **Abstract**

The article aims to explicate the potential effects of European integration and cross-border cooperation initiatives on the Italian national community in Slovenia in terms of its rights and protection, political participation, socio-economic activity and cultural vitality. These factors will be studied on a comparative basis, i.e. looking at changes in the minority situation after the dissolution of communism and the creation of new independent Slovene state to conditions in the former Yugoslavia. The article proceeds from the case study on the condition of the Italian minority in Slovene Istria, which represents part of the eligible cross-border region between the two states, Slovenia and Italy. In addition it strives to respond to the following questions: how and to what degree has the Italian minority in Slovenia been involved in cross-border cooperation, does cross-border cooperation promote integration between minority and majority populations (Italians in Slovenia and Italians in Italy) or between two minority populations (Italians in Slovenia and Slovenes in Italy) and what are minority and majority perceptions of their regional or national-ethnic identity in relation to the European Union and European identity.

## **Keywords:**

Italian national community, European integration, minorities, identity, cross-border cooperation

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