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The Austrian Policy towards Elementary Bilingual Education in Southern Carinthia and its Changes between 1958 and 1988

The article deals with the Austrian policy towards bilingual elementary education. After World War II Austria introduced compulsory elementary bilingual education within almost whole territory of Slovene indigenous settlement in southern Carinthia. Soon after the State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria of 1955 was signed the German nationalists sharpened their demands that parents should decide on the language of education of their children. As a result of this pressure the compulsory bilingual elementary education was abolished in 1958. Author deals with the debates in Austrian parliament which led to the passage of new minority school law in 1959, which worsened the positions of Slovene minority. The second part of the article deals with debates and procedures when this law was changed again in 1980s. The changes did not achieve the aims of those who proposed them. The political circumstances after the fall of Berlin Wall and increased importance of Slovene language as one of the official languages of EU again increased the interest in Carinthia for bilingual education.

Keywords: Carinthian Slovenes, ethnic/national minority, minority protection laws, bilingual education

Avstrijska politika do osnovnošolskega dvojezičnega izobraževanja na južnem Koroškem in spremembe leta med letoma 1958 in 1988

Prispevek obravnava avstrijsko politiko do obveznega dvojezičnega šolstva na Koroškem. Po drugi svetovni vojni je Avstrija uvedla obvezno dvojezično šolstvo na skoraj celotnem območju avtohtone poselitve Slovencev na južnem Koroškem. Kmalu po podpisu Pogodbe o obnovi neodvisne in demokratične Avstrije leta 1955 so nemški nacionalistični krogi zaostriili zahteve, da bi o učnem jeziku svojih otrok odločali starši. Na njihov pritisk je koroška deželna politika leta 1958 odpravila obvezno dvojezično šolstvo. Avtor nato obravnava zakonodajne postopke v koroškem deželnem zboru in v avstrijskem parlamentu, ki so leta 1959 privedli do sprejema novega manjšinskega šolskega zakona, ki je slovenski manjšini zelo poslabšal že pridobljene pravice. V nadaljevanju je obravnavano spreminjanje tega zakona v 80. letih 20. st. Te spremembe pa namena predlagateljev niso dosegle. Spremenjene politične okoliščine po padcu berlinskega zidu in naraščanje pomena slovenščine kot enega uradnih jezikov v EU so povečale tudi zanimanje za dvojezično izobraževanje.

Ključne besede: koroški Slovenci, etnične/narodne manjšine, manjšinska zaščitna zakonodaja, dvojezično izobraževanje

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1. Introduction

Bilingual education in southern Carinthia has always been the cause of conflicts between the German-speaking majority and the Slovene-speaking minority of the province and especially after 1848 when the Slovenes started to become politically aware of their interests as a modern European nation and these interests started to overlap with the interests of the Greater German nationalists (Berchtold 1967; Cvirn 1995, 73–82). These tensions were also caused by the fact that, until 1938, the bilingual utraquistic schools served primarily as a means to make children learn German as quickly as possible (Ude 1955; Hassler 1959; ÖRK 1989; Kurz 1990, 120; Oblak 1990). Even in 1934, there were 78 Slovenian-German bilingual utraquistic schools where they taught 12,027 children (Suppan 1983, 160). During the Nazi period the Slovene language completely disappeared from schools. After the World War II, with the introduction of compulsory bilingual elementary education in almost the entire bilingual region of Southern Carinthia Austria formally demonstrated a positive political will to tackle the old German-Slovene contradictions. The State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria (also known as the Austrian State Treaty – AST) of 1955, in the second paragraph of Article 7 states that Austrian citizens of Slovene and Croatian national minorities in Carinthia, Burgenland and Styria are “entitled to elementary instruction in the Slovene or Croat language and to a proportional number of their own secondary schools” (BGBl 1955, 727). However, in the field of minority protection Austrian legal practice did not follow the requirements of the AST (Pleterski 1960, 7–99; Stuhlpfarrer 2004, 39–58). The reason for this, especially in the field of education, was the fact that almost no denazification took place in Carinthia. The provincial governor of Carinthia Hans Piesch in 1946 stated that if the denazification were to be completed in the field of education in Carinthia, they would have to close all schools (Knight 1998, 531–558; Tributsch 2005, 81–83; Wakounig 2008, 172–177).

2. The Abolition of Compulsory Bilingual Elementary Education

Opponents of bilingual education loudly demanded from 1949 onwards the introduction of the so-called parental right, i.e., that the parents would have the right to decide on the language of instruction of their children (Malle 1998, 511–513). Individual protests of German nationalists against bilingual education took place already in 1946 (Fräss-Ehrfeld 2005, 123). Until 1956 only the Socialist

Party of Austria [*Sozialistische Partei Österreichs* – SPÖ] rejected such changes and then – out of fear of losing votes at the elections – itself succumbed to the demands of the German nationalists (Zorn 1976, 127–128; Nečak 1985, 100–101).

Opponents of bilingual elementary education in Southern Carinthia organized school strikes and forced both government parties, i.e., the SPÖ and the Austrian People's Party [*Österreichische Volkspartei* – ÖVP] to file a proposal of new bill on bilingual elementary education in Carinthia on 11 September 1957. According to this proposal minority education in the elementary schools [*Volksschule*] and in school grades five through eight [*Hauptschule*] would in accordance with the article 7 of AST fall under the jurisdiction of federal authorities, while the establishment of the school networks would fall under the jurisdiction of provincial authorities. The proposal also foresaw the establishment of a secondary school with Slovene as the language of education and additional education for teachers who taught in the Slovene language, and it regulated the optional teaching of Slovene language in compulsory elementary education and in secondary schools. The proposal dealt with the supervision of these schools. It defined members of the Slovene national minority as those Austrian citizens who recognized themselves as members of minority. The recognition of the membership of minority was a matter which officials could neither deny nor review in any way. Both federal and provincial legislators were to make sure that no pupil would attend school in the Slovene language or be taught Slovene as a compulsory subject without the consent or expressed will of his or her legal representatives. On the other hand, in accordance with this proposal all pupils in the linguistically mixed area of Carinthia – if their legal representatives so requested – would receive instruction in one of the schools in which the education took place only in the Slovene language, or in schools in which instruction was in German and Slovene, or in schools with German as the language of education in which classes with Slovene language of education would be organized. In schools with Slovene as the language of instruction German would be taught as a mandatory subject for six hours a week. In schools with Slovene and German as the languages of instruction, in the first three grades the language of instruction was to be to quantitatively the same in Slovene and in German. From the fourth grade onwards this instruction would take place only in German, while Slovene would be taught for three hours a week. The proposal also provided for additional training for teachers who taught in Slovene, and also the termination of the validity of the decree on compulsory bilingual elementary education of 3 October 1945 (SP 1957, 201–300).

German nationalists stepped up their efforts to abolish compulsory bilingual elementary education in southern Carinthia, in particular after the beginning of May 1957, when the Minister of Education Heinrich Drimmel sent a decree

establishing the Slovene Federal High School in Klagenfurt/Celovec to the Provincial School Council of Carinthia (Verordnungsblatt 1957, 1). In order to somewhat calm passions, two deputies to the Austrian parliament, Walther Weissmann (ÖVP) and Max Neugebauer (SPÖ), on 20 November 1957 proposed to the Austrian Parliament a new draft of the law on bilingual education in Carinthia, and this was discussed in the Subcommittee on Minority Education in Carinthia (SP 1958–59). Despite these attempts by the Austrian government, German nationalists with the support of the ÖVP and the Freedom Party of Austria [*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* – FPÖ] managed to force the Governor of Carinthia Ferdinand Wedenig (who presided over the Provincial School Council of Carinthia) to abolish the decree on establishment of bilingual education that had been issued in 1945 (Verordnungsblatt 1959a, 31). Due to nationalist pressure on parents, most of the children de-registered from bilingual instruction. 10,588 children were withdrawn, while only 2,186 registered for bilingual instruction (Barker 1984, 234; Glantschnig 1998, 524; Domej 2000, 36–42). Most of those registered were children from economically and socially independent farm families and from the families of craftsmen and traders, who could resist the various pressures (Tributsch 2005, 79–98; Nečák 1985, 117–120).

Carinthian Slovenes reacted sharply to the decree of “abolition from compulsory Slovene school” (Wakounig 2008, 181), as the German nationalists called it. Part of German-speaking population condemned the campaign against bilingual education; among them were two deputies to the Austrian parliament, Ludwig Weiß (ÖVP) and Max Neugebauer (SPÖ) (Neugebauer 1958, 5). Since the Austrian parliament had not passed the new minority school law by autumn of 1958, the Provincial School Council of Carinthia issued a new decree on 11 November (Verordnungsblatt 1959b, 32), which enabled the renewed registration of pupils for bilingual education. Due to continuing German nationalist pressures, on the basis of this decree only 213 pupils reregistered out of the 10,588 pupils who had already been withdrawn (Glantschnig 1998, 524). In reality, then, the registration of children for bilingual education essentially amounted to a statement by the parents about their ethnic identity. German nationalist propaganda proclaimed the inferiority of Slovene language, making this kind of statement by the parents difficult (Suppan 1991, 397–425). Although the proportion of pupils with Slovene mother tongue in the bilingual territory in 1958 was still around 40 per cent, there remained only 19 per cent registered for bilingual education (Fischer 1980, 208–212).

The Board of Education of the Austrian Government did not discuss the draft of the Minority Education Law, which had been submitted in November 1957, until 11 March 1959 (SP 1958–59, 601–665). The proposal, *inter alia*, foresaw a special

law concerning an official census of the minority – yet to be passed by the Austrian parliament – on the basis of which the network of bilingual schools would be established. Until then the network of schools as it was in place at the beginning of the school year 1958/59 was to be used. Therefore the proposal foresaw also a three-year transitional period, which would allow the provincial legislature to establish a network of schools, where the Slovene language could be taught and used as teaching language, taking into account the results of the official minority census (SP 1959, 4114–4115).

When the members of the Austrian parliament discussed the Minority School Law they simultaneously discussed a law governing the official language of the courts in relation to Paragraph 3 of the Article 7 of AST. In doing so, the lawmakers limited the extent of the territory on which the Slovene language could legally be used in courts additionally to German, i.e., only to the three (Eisenkappel/Železna Kapla, Bleiburg/Pliberk, Ferlach/Borovlje) of the nine judicial districts in the Slovene ethnic territory of Carinthia (BGBl 1959b, 609–610). A discussion of both laws was held on 19 March 1959. In the discussion Ludwig Weiss (ÖVP) defended the so-called right of parents as well as the establishment of a secondary school in Carinthia with Slovene as the language of education. On the other hand, Johann Kopenig (KPÖ) rejected the new school law and requested several changes to the benefit of minority. He demanded that Austria use the same criteria for protection of Slovene minority in Carinthia as it had requested for the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol. It is interesting to note that members of other parties interrupted Kopenig several times with various insults (SP 1959, 4117–4121). In this discussion, also, the issue of the validity or invalidity of the theory of the existence of Windisch as special language came to the fore in discussion about Dr. Weissmann's speech. Ernst Fischer (KPÖ) as a linguist stated that Windisch was a Slovenian dialect (SP 1959, 4114–4126). FPÖ deputy Helfried Pfeifer requested that the Law should be valid only after a special minority census took place and even then only for the communes in which there were more than 25 per cent or even more than 30 per cent of Slovenes (SP 1959, 4140). By a special resolution, the members of the parliament demanded that the Government propose a Law on a special minority census by 30 June 1960 (SP 1959, 4117).

The new Minority School Law for Carinthia finally abolished the regulation on compulsory bilingual education of 1945. In principle, it provided only for schools with instruction in German. Only those pupils who were registered by their parents and lived in municipalities where there were bilingual schools at the beginning of the school year 1958/59 were allowed bilingual education (BGBl 1959a, 605). The minority school law also included another clause that was unfavorable for the Slovene minority: "The settlements in which bilingual elementary schools and

high schools [grades five to eight] will be created (...) will be determined on the basis of data which will come from an official determination of minorities” (BGBl 1959a, 606).

This official determination of minorities took place on 14 November 1976, when the Austrian authorities with the census of special kind tried to determine the size of minorities in the whole territory of Austria. Due to a successful boycott of the Slovene minority and low participation of majority population the ensuing data could not be used for the implementation of the minority school law or any other minority protection law (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2008, 99–114).

3. Changes in Bilingual Education in the 1980s

In practice the Minority School Law of 1959 fulfilled the wishes of the German nationalists. Therefore until the 1980s they did not demand any changes in minority education. The German nationalists were probably also very happy with the continuing decline in the percentage of pupils who attended bilingual elementary education, which by the school year 1976/77 decreased to 13.45 per cent (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 342–343). Once this percentage in the early 1980s began to rise again, the *Kärntner Heimatdienst* (KHD), through its newsletter *Ruf der Heimat* began to escalate resistance against bilingual elementary schools and spoke out with slogans such as “Only German teachers for the German Carinthian schoolchildren” (Kukovica 2004, 95–96).

Table 1: Children Registered in Bilingual Education in Southern Carinthia, 1959/60–1989/90

School year	Total Pupils	Registered in bilingual education		Preschool education	Elementary school in Klagenfurt/Celovec
		Number	Per cent		
1959/60	10,325	1,994	19.31	0	0
1964/65	11,070	1,602	14.47	0	0
1969/70	10,544	1,485	14.08	0	0
1974/75	8,978	1,292	14.39	0	0
1976/77	8,461	1,138	13.45	0	0
1979/80	7,435	1,065	14.32	0	0
1984/85	5,821	1,070	18.38	19	0
1989/90	5,664	1,134	20.02	44	41

Source: Klemenčič & Klemenčič (2010, 342–343)

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Given past experience, it was clear that the political parties in the Carinthian provincial assembly eventually would succumb to the requirements of KHD. The draft of the new law on minority education was submitted to the Carinthian provincial assembly at the end of November 1983 by the Carinthian FPÖ. It stipulated the elimination of German-Slovene classes in the first three years of the elementary school. It would allow the existence of these schools only in the area of the then 13 municipalities in which the Decree on the official language of the 1977 recognized Slovene as an official language (Unkart 1988, 21–28).

While the Carinthian political parties pushed for early debate in the Provincial assembly to settle the issue of minority education in southern Carinthia, the KHD and the *Kärntner Abwehkkämpferbund* progressively escalated their positions with respect to the new proposal and requested separate classes. The territory of validity of the new school legislation would be determined by the results of the Census of special kind of 1976 and the existence of requests for bilingual education in the school year 1983/84. The pre-condition for Slovenian class would be at least ten registered pupils. From schools where applications would not reach this number, pupils would be chauffeured daily to the nearest school with a Slovenian class. Under such conditions the number of schools with bilingual instruction would fall from 81 to 45. In schools where for several years there had not been a sufficient number of applications, bilingual instruction would simply be canceled. The head of the KHD, Josef Feldner, announced a collection of signatures to a petition that would call for a Carinthian “cross-party referendum on fair regulations of the Carinthian school question” (Feldner cited in Unkart 1988, 29–44). The KHD filed a request for a referendum to the Election Office of the Carinthian Government in June 1984. The KHD gathered almost 34,000 signatures (8.9 per cent of the eligible voters in Carinthia), which was sufficient for the FPÖ to require a debate on the issue of bilingual schools on behalf of KHD in the Carinthian Provincial Assembly (Stritzl & Koffler 1984, 3).

Carinthian Slovenians rejected the proposal of the KHD and the FPÖ. Its implementation would, they argued, be contrary to the Austrian Constitution (NT 1984a, 1). The campaign for the elimination of bilingual schools found echoes also outside Carinthia; experts stated that the KHD and FPÖ proposals were against the will of the Slovenian minority in Carinthia; that bilingual education should not be changed and that “Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty does not foresee any connection between minority rights in education, territorial validity of the official language usage and bilingual localities’ signs” (NT 1984b, 4; Hudobnik 1984, 5). Even members of the delegation of experts from Switzerland, Germany and Finland who visited Carinthia at the end of September said that “didactic and pedagogic requirements can not justify German nationalist circles’ demands

for segregation of German-speaking children from Slovene ones” in Carinthian schools (KZ 1984, 4).

Under international and domestic pressure, the Austrian government established a legal and educational commission of experts to examine the state of bilingual education in Carinthia (KN 1984, 2), but its endeavors did not bring about any significant progress. Therefore, the Carinthian provincial assembly in April 1986 established a special political party commission led by the head of Carinthia’s Constitutional Services Dr. Ralf Unkart. From the 22 representatives of political parties and Provincial School Board, the six selected for the working group produced a new proposal for a model of minority education by the end of May, also known as the Carinthian pedagogical model. This model maintained common schools but provided for the segregation of classes for the German-speaking monolingual pupils on the one hand and, on the other, for pupils in bilingual Slovene and German-speaking classes whose parents wished that their children attend bilingual classes. In the classes in which there would be at least seven bilingual or at least seven monolingual children the classes would be held in one classroom, but with two teachers (Unkart 1988, 105-112; Devetak et al. 1988, 15-17). The Carinthian pedagogical model was unanimously endorsed by the Carinthian provincial assembly meeting on 26 February 1987 (Unkart 1988, 122).

The representatives of Carinthian Slovenes refused to accept this new model of bilingual education. The leader of the Carinthian department of minority schools, Dr. Valentin Inzko Sr., assessed the Carinthian pedagogical model as a model of segregation using linguistic criteria, which was contrary to the findings of the profession and to the provisions of Article 7 AST (KZ 1986, 4). Notwithstanding, the leaders of the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ in the so-called minority school summit on 11 November 1986 in Vienna agreed that the Carinthian pedagogical model would serve as the basis for further negotiations (Lehofer 1986, 1-2). Carinthian Slovenes reacted to this decision with indignation. It did not help much that in parliamentary elections in late November 1986 Carinthian Slovene Karel Smolle, was elected to the Austrian parliament. Smolle already in his inaugural address pointed out that the Austrian Parliament should not become an “executive body of anti-minority groups” and urged deputies to “reject the proposals which advocate the segregation of schoolchildren” (Smolle cited in SP 1987, 218-225).

Members of the Federal Commission on Bilingual Education met for the first time on 16 March 1987 in Vienna. The Commission consisted of representatives of the Carinthian Government, the Chancellor’s Office, the provincial school board, the educational commission of Carinthian provincial assembly, experts at the Ministry

of Education, Arts and Sports and experts appointed by the National Council of Carinthian Slovenes (NSKS) and the Federation of Slovene Organizations (ZSO). Although the commission members had hoped that their work could be done without pressure, the Carinthian parliamentary parties required a decision as soon as possible. On 24 September 1987 they even confirmed a special schedule, according to which the new law on minority education would be enforced already in the school year 1988/89 (KTZ 1987a, 1, 5). The members of the Federal Commission met on 30 September 1987 in Vienna to discuss the final form of the interim report. They reached consensus in most of the points; however some questions relating to parallel bilingual classes and second teacher remained unresolved (KZ 1987, 4). Despite these disagreements, the provincial governor of Carinthia Leopold Wagner convened a meeting of the leaders of parliamentary parties and representatives of the Carinthian Slovenes, and tried to reach a so-called historic compromise. The representatives of Carinthian Slovenians declared themselves willing to compromise, but certainly not willing to agree on the segregation of children (SV 1987, 1).

When the search for the solution to the problem moved from the experts into political circles, the leaders of Austrian political parties did not resist the proposal imposed on them by their Carinthian branches. The representatives of the SPÖ, ÖVP and FPÖ on 18 November 1987 in Klagenfurt/Celovec signed a special three-party agreement which supported the Carinthian pedagogical model (VZ 1987a, 8). Such a decision upset those who supported the bilingual education in Carinthia. On the day after the adoption of this model mass protests already took place, especially in Klagenfurt/Celovec, Graz, and Vienna. On 26 November 1987 the demonstrators occupied the building of the Carinthian provincial government (VZ 1987c, 6, 7). Some Austrian politicians critically assessed the Carinthian pedagogical model. The Austrian Minister of Education, Hilde Hawlicek, mentioned the possibility of changes to the points of agreement in the parliament, since "changes in bilingual schools in Carinthia are not Carinthian, but a federal case" (Hawlicek cited in VZ 1987b, 5). Chancellor Franz Vranitzky at a 11 December meeting with representatives of the Carinthian Slovenes agreed to discuss the issue in the parliamentary subcommittee on education (KTZ 1987b, 4–5). Despite the peaceful tone of the Carinthian Slovenes, protests continued. The largest took place on 19 December 1987 in Vienna, where about 7,000 people protested in front of the building of the Chancellor's office (Die Presse 1987, 17). The protesters requested: (1) cancellation of the decision of the three political parties on minority education, (2) annulment of the Carinthian pedagogical model, (3) resumption of negotiations within the framework of the expert commission in Vienna, (4) consideration of the positions of the University of Klagenfurt/Celovec experts and bilingual teachers, and (5) participation of

representatives of the Carinthian Slovenes in all negotiations (Devetak et al 1988, 136–137). The demonstrations were widely reported by the press, also in German and French speaking countries (FAZ 1987, 8; Liberation 1987, 21; NZZ 1987, 4; SDZ 1987, 8).

The SPÖ, ÖVP and FPÖ introduced a statutory proposal to amend the law on minority education in parliament on 22 March 1988. It provided for the establishment of separate classes for seven or more children whose parents registered them in bilingual education. The proposal also introduced an assistant teacher into bilingual class for up to 14 hours per week. S/he would have the same powers as the teacher. The proposal also provided for additional classes for pupils with a poor command of the Slovene language, which would be introduced only if there would be at least three pupils who asked for it. Additional pedagogical training courses were provided at the Education Institute, whereas a language course in Slovene for assistant teachers would be only on a voluntary basis. The law would apply only to those municipalities where there had been bilingual education in the school year 1958/59 (Antrag, 1988).

In addition, Smolle introduced a proposal to amend the law on minority education on 22 March 1988. It was a proposal from the Carinthian United List [*Koroška enotna lista* – KEL], the only political party of Carinthian Slovenes which envisaged the division of a class if there were ten pupils registered for bilingual education, but in this division the linguistic criteria should not be decisive. The system of employing an assistant teacher was to be tested in a five-year period in any classroom with more than six pupils registered in bilingual education. An assistant teacher should have the same qualifications as a teacher and should be competent in both German and Slovene. Only in extreme cases would it be sufficient for an Assistant teacher to have passed the final high school exam (*matura*) in the Slovene language, or to have passed a two-semester final-level Slovene language course. Bilingual instruction should be carried out also at the pre-school level, and the law was expected to apply in those municipalities which were included in the Regulation on Compulsory Bilingual Education in 1945 (NT 1988b, 2–3). Interestingly, this proposal was positively assessed by the expert on minority issues, Felix Ermacora, who was an ÖVP deputy. Ermacora also wanted to become a member of the Subcommittee on Minority Education; but when his fellow party members found out the position he represented, they blocked his participation in the subcommittee. The ÖVP then appointed to this subcommittee two deputies, who otherwise were engaged with the problems of agriculture (NT 1988a, 2).

Leopold Gratz, the President of the Austrian Parliament, sent the proposal of the three parties and the petition from the KEL to the subcommittee on bilingual

education. The first meeting of the subcommittee took place in mid-April 1988. Smolle spent an hour and fifteen minutes explaining the position of the umbrella organizations of Carinthian Slovenians, the Rectors' Conference, etc. He pointed out that in the interim report, consensus had not been reached in three points only, and noted that the proposal of the SPÖ, ÖVP, and FPÖ did not follow even the unanimously accepted points of the interim report (NT 1991, 15).

The second meeting of the parliamentary subcommittee on bilingual education on 28 April took the form of consultations with various experts. Among others invited were Reginald Vospernik (NSKS), Marjan Sturm (ZSO), Josef Feldner (KHD), the district school inspector Franz Wiegele, Ralph Unkart, etc. Sturm did not attend the consultations in protest because Haider invited to this conference the President of the KHD, Feldner (NT 1988c, 15). Prof. Peter Gstettner, Head of the Department of General Pedagogy at the University of Klagenfurt/Univerza v Celovcu, explained that Feldner's participation at the meeting showed that debate on new minority school law represented no more than "an attempt to liquidate common bilingual education" (NR 1988, 292; KTZ 1988a, 2).

At its meeting on 31 May the subcommittee on minority education adopted a proposal for a new minority school law. Smolle's forecast "that he was ready to support the new school law, if the Carinthian provincial government agreed in writing to the changes proposed by him and Andreas Wabl from Green Alternative List which would substantially alter the wording of the 'Carinthian pedagogical model'" (KTZ 1988b, 1–2) was a great surprise for part of the Austrian public, but even more for some of the Carinthian Slovenes. In question were in particular the qualifications of the assistant teacher. While the Carinthian pedagogical model did not provide for an assistant teacher to have proficiency in the Slovene language, Smolle requested that the priority for employment as assistant teacher would be given to a teacher with bilingual qualifications, so that a higher qualified teacher could displace a less qualified teacher (i.e., a bilingual teacher could displace a monolingual). The same rules should be applied for the appointment of headmasters of bilingual schools. He proposed also the three-year probationary period for the implementation of the new school model, which would be monitored by a special commission of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sport (KTZ 1988b, 1–2).

Smolle's decision to support the new minority school law met with firm rejection by that part of the Carinthian Slovenes which had gathered around the ZSO. At a press conference at the headquarters of the ZSO Vladimir Wakounig said that "the four-party pact (...) means the humiliation of the Slovene people and democratic Austrian German speakers, who strongly oppose segregation" (Wakounig cited

in Lukan 1988, 2). The *Slovenski vestnik* wrote with respect to Smolle's action that "with his signature (...) he not only ridiculed himself, but also enabled the other three [political] parties to confirm the bill" (SV 1988a, 2).

Austrian politicians at the provincial and federal level described the compromise agreement of the parliamentary subcommittee on minority education as a historic compromise "without winners and losers" (KTZ 1988c, 1–3). It was positively assessed also by some of the Carinthian Slovenes, those who gathered around the NSKS, although they emphasized that the bill was not the "optimal solution" (NT 1988c, 2). On the other hand, the representatives of the ZSO expressed their outrage and resolutely refused this decision, which was "for the Slovene minority fateful, because it represents a historic intervention" on what was left of Carinthian Slovenes (KTZ 1988d, 2). Also, the Carinthian provincial government and the KHD did not agree to all points of the proposal of the parliamentary subcommittee (KZ 1988, 4).

The parliamentary debate on the new minority school law took place on June 8, 1988. Johann Wolf (ÖVP) presented the report of the parliamentary minority education subcommittee regarding the law (SP 1988b, 7258–7260). The first discussant was Smolle (in SP 1988b, 7260), who began his speech by saying:

To me this is the most difficult moment since I've been in Parliament. I think I decided for this most important political step in the interest of the Slovene ethnic community [*Volksgruppe*] and also in the interests of other ethnic communities in Austria. I shall support the minority school law, although I do not agree with the contents of this law.

Smolle then discussed all the then-obtaining problems of recognized minorities in Austria. He assessed the minority policy of Austrian government as completely inadequate. As he spoke, the parents of bilingual pupils protested at the gallery, as they were not satisfied with Smolle's support of the proposed bill. The presiding officer temporarily interrupted Smolle's speech and threatened to empty the gallery. Smolle (in SP 1988b, 7263) then continued:

I think that the Slovenian ethnic community protests /.../ about this issue are more than justified, since the political parties /.../ did not behave in exactly the most exemplary way; on the contrary, I had to /.../ fight for every little change, as if it were an important state political issue.

Smolle then read a letter from the parents' initiative "for joint bilingual instruction – against any segregation" (cited in SP 1988b, 7264–7265), in which the proposed law was labeled "a serious blow against democracy and all those who are committed to the common teaching of children and a tolerant cultural climate of

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equality and values of mutual respect in Carinthia.” Among other things, the letter stated that “the law met the requirements of the Carinthian FPÖ and *Heimatsdienst* for the segregation of children according to language criteria, and openly showed support for policies which intended to bring about ‘the pure German character of Carinthian province.’” In this regard, they reiterated a statement by Jörg Haider, that Carinthia will become “free only when it will be a purely German Land.” At the end of the letter the parents’ initiative asked all members of the Austrian Parliament and Smolle not to support the current bill.

Smolle then continued and spoke at length about how the new minority school law came into being and the consequences of this law which would be disastrous for Slovene minority. He said (in SP 1988b, 7263) that

[w]e were unable to get into the bill /.../ something that actually should be obvious, namely that the teacher, if he comes to the bilingual class to conduct effective, modern teaching, should have to understand the language of children, even if he is ‘only’ – with quotation marks – the second or assistant teacher.

In the last part of his long speech, Smolle (in SP 1988b, 7274–7276) explained why he will vote for the new minority school law, which was far from the wishes of the Carinthian Slovenes:

There are two reasons why, despite all the concerns I give my consent to this law and I hope you understand that my position is really difficult. First, I want to remain faithful to my word, for my willingness since the consensus /.../ led to significant positive changes, although the biggest weaknesses of the Law, namely the segregation and poor qualification of the second teacher, remain. /.../. I want to say in this house quite clearly: I wish to start a new dialogue on the minority question in Carinthia and throughout Austria, and I hope that you will accept this offer /.../ seriously /.../. Therefore I appeal to the presidents of the political parties, to the Parliament, to the provincial governments and to federal government to finally begin a new dialogue with the ethnic communities [*Volkgruppen*] /.../. I tried and I shall try to remove the minority issue from the provinces. We might, for example, begin making /.../ a new all Austrian minority school law /.../ I hope – no, I more than hope – for a new dialogue.

Because minority education had always been a burning topic, ever since the enactment of mandatory bilingual education in southern Carinthia in 1945, but even more so from 1958 onwards, over 50 members of the Parliament participated in the debate. The first discussant after Smolle was former Federal Chancellor Fred Sinowatz (SPÖ), who among other things said (in SP 1988b, 7276–7281):

This law is not unproblematic /.../. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this day was a good day for the Austrian Parliament, as we will /.../ adopt a very significant change in minority school law; the law has encouraged the thinking of Austrians far beyond the

directly affected ethnic community; the law has prompted heated debate not only by those directly affected, but almost more so by those who are not directly touched by its consequences / .../. Almost completely ignored by the public is that from Paragraph 10 of the minority school law something was omitted, i.e., the census of minorities. This is something that – rightly – disturbed the minority / .../ I find it very important /.../ to what extent public opinion sympathizes with the concerns of the Slovene minority. Anyone who has followed this must say: This was something new! /.../ It was very good progress.

Jörg Haider (in SP 1988b, 7276-7281) who as the leader of the FPÖ was one of the main initiators of the new minority school law, said:

The core of this Agreement is that in the future there should be an assistant teacher for those children whose parents have not registered them in bilingual classes; /.../ there should be the possibility for the establishment of parallel classes according to the language of instruction, provided that the number of children registered in bilingual education has met or exceeded the number seven, as well as the basis for new classes if the number of children reaches 20 / .../. In this way we also achieved a situation in which precisely in the linguistically mixed area it is not easy to threaten the smaller school units, which are now even better preserved.

Also very interesting was the contribution of Felix Ermacora from ÖVP (in SP 1988b, 7332–7334), who pointed out:

The debate and the morning event in the galleries very clearly demonstrated what it is actually all about. Here it is about one of the political issues of ethnic communities, namely the question of whether an integrated school model serves better than a model of segregated schools or the mixed model which we have before us / .../. With reference to those who spoke against the bill, let me say that I do not see the proposed solution as one that would be directed against human rights or solution that would be contrary to the Austrian State Treaty. I think that in our political discussions we need to discuss the problem of assimilation and integration / .../, which should not be discussed in terms of law. Discussions in this direction I consider to be simply incorrect. International minority law leaves it to states /.../ how to regulate the rights of minorities in the education area. Respected must be only one thing: the minority must be protected, at the same time the right of parents [*to choose the language of education of their children*] should be guaranteed. The right of parents was included in one of the agreements entered into by Austria. In the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education explicitly the right of parents in terms of language use can be found / .../. Personally, I think that /.../ it would be beneficial for the young German-speaking Carinthians to exploit the opportunity and to learn a Slavic language in an easy way. This is my personal opinion on this issue.

After stormy debate, the new minority school law for the southern Carinthia was passed. The essential features were the maintenance of common classes and the reduction of the maximum number of children in bilingual classes to 20. At the insistence of Carinthian branches of Austrian political parties, this law did

102 not require any knowledge of Slovene language on the part of assistant teachers. However, under the new law candidates for assistant teachers who had passed a course in Slovene language have advantage in employment over other candidates (BGBl 1988a, 2457–2459; BGBl 1988b, 2459–2460). These changes, which occurred shortly before the vote on the bill, brought about the support for the new law by half of the members of the Green Alternative, among them Karl Smolle (NT 1988c, 17). While the NSKS supported Smolle's decision, although this law by no means constituted a satisfactory solution, the ZSO strongly rejected this law because children were divided using linguistic and ethnic criteria (SV 1988b, 2).

4. Effect of Changes in Minority Education Legislation

The Minority School Law for Carinthia in 1988 represented one of the largest political interventions in minority education and the discussion of the problem far exceeded Carinthian and even Austrian borders. According to Vladimir Wakounig (1988, 121–122)

[d]iscussion on the segregation of children /.../ somehow redefined the boundaries between the majority and the minority, which means that belonging to a language no longer corresponds to the traditional relationship between majority and minority. The minority overnight found support from all those German-speaking structures and German-speaking individuals who have acted against public school segregation and pushed for bilingual education /.../. We may propose the thesis that in the discussions on bilingual education part of the Carinthian population became emancipated and abandoned certain ideology that had been determined by Carinthian politicians.

The demands of the German nationalists for the cessation of bilingual education, despite the adoption of the new Law, only consolidated bilingual minority education. This is demonstrated by the increase in the proportion of registered children in bilingual education in the elementary schools which by the school year 2010/2011 increased to 43.96 per cent (LSR 2010). Various factors influenced this increased interest in bilingual education: (1) the negative attitude of the greater part of the majority population towards the demands of German nationalists to divide children on the basis of language; (2) the European policy of multiculturalism and multilingualism; (3) social and political changes in the states of Central and Eastern Europe; and (4) the entrance of Austria and Slovenia into the EU (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 343–344). In this connection we have to emphasize that German nationalists in the past linked the Slovene language with Communism and as such also with the language of the enemy number one of Carinthia. This

negative propaganda had for a long time negative effects on parents' decisions to register their children in bilingual education. It took until the process of European unification to include Austria and Slovenia, for the myth of the Slovene language as a culturally lower language to begin to be destroyed (Wakounig 1990, 79–97); since that time there have been some positive developments in the field of minority education in southern Carinthia. Thus, on the basis of private initiatives since the end of the 1970s, the Carinthian Slovenes formed several bilingual kindergartens; public bilingual kindergartens were established in some municipalities (Divjak Zalokar 2010). In 1990, the Constitutional Court decided that bilingual education can be implemented also outside of the area of minority education of 1945. Already in 1989 private bilingual elementary school in Klagenfurt/Celovec was organized by Hermagoras Society; in September 1991 also a public bilingual elementary school was started in the same city. In these bilingual schools German and Slovene as languages of instruction are alternating in public bilingual elementary school daily, and in the private bilingual elementary school which was organized by the Hermagoras Society weekly. In the 2000/2001 school year bilingual instruction was extended to the fourth grade of elementary school (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 468–469). In the 1990s the bilingual Commercial Academy in Klagenfurt/Celovec was established in addition to the Secondary School in St. Peter/Št. Peter near St. Jakob im Rosental/Šentjakob v Rožu which developed into the Technical College of Business.

5. Conclusions

Changes in legislation with respect to elementary bilingual education in Southern Carinthia at the end of 1950s meant the end of compulsory bilingual education and an ethnic differentiation among the parents of the children concerned, because registration for bilingual education was considered also a declaration of the ethnic identity of their parents. Under the circumstances the passage of this law worsened the situation of the Slovene minority in Carinthia and it was the first in the series of laws which the Austrian Parliament passed during the next six decades and which legally and actually worsened the situation of the minority, although they were passed to fulfill Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty. Changes in the late 1980s did not have consequences which were desired by those who suggested them. The political circumstances after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the establishment of the independent Slovene state and the inclusion of Austria and Slovenia in the EU caused the circumstances to be changed, and also the attitude towards Slovene language was altered, as it became one of the official languages in the EU and this increased its value. Also German-speaking parents to a greater extent

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than previously began to register their children in bilingual education. This led to increases in the percentage of children registered for bilingual education to almost 44 per cent. Due to poor prior knowledge of Slovene, the question of quality of instruction is now important, and it would be useful if the new model of weekly or daily alternation of the language of instruction, as used by the two bilingual elementary schools in Klagenfurt/Celovec, were to be used also elsewhere in bilingual schools in southern Carinthia.

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