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## Between Self-Governance and Political Participation: The Slovene Minority in Carinthia, Austria

The article presents the political participation of the Slovene minority in Carinthia from the plebiscite of 1920 until the present. The changed electoral franchise agreed by the ruling parties in Carinthia in the 1970s blocked attempts of the minority to be incorporated adequately in a broader political sphere. The political actors of the minority followed two strategies: one of building up their own political structures in local parties and one of joining Austrian and Carinthian mainstream parties. This paper gives a brief overview of the minority's struggle for self-governance and political participation. It introduces the organisational structure of the minority and its opportunities for political participation. Its aim is to deal with the question of which factors led to political differentiation and how to assess this.

**Keywords:** Carinthian Slovenes, political participation, minority representation, differentiation, organisational structure.

### Koroški Slovenci med samoupravo in politično participacijo

*Članek predstavlja politično participacijo slovenske manjšine na avstrijskem Koroškem od plebiscita leta 1920 do danes. Sprememba koroškega volilnega reda v 70ih letih prejšnjega stoletja je preprečila zadnja prizadevanja za participacijo manjšine na širši politični ravni. Politični akterji manjšine so sledili dvema strategijama: ustanavljali so lastne politične strukture na lokalni ravni ali se vključevali v avstrijske in koroške večinske stranke. V članku avtor oriše prizadevanja manjšine za samoupravo in politično participacijo. Nato predstavi organizacijsko strukturo manjšine ter njene možnosti za politično participacijo. Ob tem obravnava vprašanje, kateri dejavniki so vplivali na politično diferenciacijo znotraj manjšine in kako gre le-to oceniti v smislu politične participacije.*

**Ključne besede:** koroški Slovenci, politična participacija, zastopstvo manjšine, diferenciacija, organizacijska struktura.

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## 1. Introduction. A Brief Historical Overview Since the Plebiscite of 1920

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovenes were separated by the monarchy's frontiers. During the last decade before the First World War in particular, Carinthian Slovene political and economical organisations were increasingly oriented towards Ljubljana. As a result of the 1920 plebiscite, in which Carinthia was defined by today's borders, the newly created national minority had to rebuild its cultural, economical and political organisations. The first attempt was the founding of the newspaper *Glas pravice*, which was printed from January to July 1921. Due to Carinthian Landtag and local council elections in April 1921, the Political and Economic Association of Slovenes in Carinthia (Politično in gospodarsko društvo za Slovence na Koroškem) was founded. The organisation brought out a weekly newspaper *Koroški Slovenec*, which was published from 1921 to 1941 (Inzko 1988, 82). The organisation's political party Carinthian Slovene Party (Koroška slovenska stranka), succeeded in achieving two mandates in the first Landtag elections in 1920 (Jesih 2007, 25). Carinthian Slovenes also participated in larger German-speaking parties during the first Austrian republic, such as the Christian Social Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. The Slovene socialist Anton Falle was even elected in the Austrian parliament from 1921 to 1934 (Jesih 2007, 27). Carinthian Slovene political movements never again achieved the same success as they did in Austria's first republic from 1920 to 1934 (Jesih 2007, 27). From 1926 to 1930, they took part in negotiations on their cultural autonomy in Carinthia, despite the unpromising initial situation influenced by anti-Slovene agitation, poor economic conditions and the forced emigration of the Slovene intelligentsia after the 1920 plebiscite. During the negotiations, questions of whether or not Carinthian Slovenes should be registered in national cadastres were raised. Thus German nationalists aimed to decrease the number of Slovenes (Moritsch 2000, 20) and they mobilised against cultural autonomy. Finally, the negotiations were aborted by German political parties (Sturm-Schnabl & Schnabl 2016, 725).

During the National Socialist period, Slovene activities and language were forbidden. 927 men and women from bilingual Carinthia – mostly, but not solely Carinthian Slovenes – chose to participate in the resistance movement and joined Partisan forces (Linasi 2010, 678). Several Carinthian Slovenes supported them from home. Linasi estimates a total of 3000 Partisans who fought in Carinthia in this period, around 600 of whom died (Linasi 2010, 679). Other Carinthian Slovenes deserted from the German Wehrmacht and hid in Carinthian forests. 917 Carinthian Slovenes, children as well as old people, were deported to labour or concentration camps (Entner 2014, 104). More than 500 Carinthian Slovenes lost their lives during the National Socialist period (Entner

2014, 11). The traumatic events of this period continue to shape the political and cultural activities of the minority to this day (Wutti 2016, 299).

From the beginning, Carinthian Slovenes were ideologically separated into a bigger, conservative Catholic movement (from 1890 onwards) and a liberal one (Malle 2009, 109, 115), which was later predominantly social democratic. From 1945 to 1955, Austria was administered by the Allied forces. In 1945, the Liberation Front for Slovenian Carinthia (Osvobodilna fronta za Slovensko Koroško) was founded as the sole representative organisation for Carinthian Slovenes (Inzko 1988, 162). The Liberation Front (Osvobodilna Fronta – OF) was first established in 1941 as an anti-imperialistic front (Malle & Entner 1999, 11), with the aim of resisting National Socialism and uniting all Slovenes in one state (Malle & Entner 1999, 104). As late as 1949, representatives of the Liberation Front were still following this vision, which was not shared by conservative Carinthian Slovenes, who condemned communism (Nečak 1985, 78) and favoured unchanged Austrian-Yugoslavian borders. They meanwhile prepared to install their own organisation, the National Council of Carinthian Slovenes (Narodni svet koroških Slovencev – NSKS), which was founded in June 1949 as a Catholic alternative to the Liberation Front (Ogris 2010, 61, Nečak 1985, 91). In the same year, the Front ran as the Democratic Front of the Working People (Demokratska fronta delovnega ljudstva) and the NSKS as the Slovene Christian People's Party (Krščanska ljudska stranka) as Slovene representative organisations in elections for the provisional Carinthian government. Neither of the two Slovene parties gathered enough votes, although the NSKS achieved almost double the support of the Democratic Front (Nečak 1985, 92). If the Slovene lists had run together, they would most likely have been able to join the government (Nečak 1985, 92). After this failure, the political separation of Carinthian Slovenes was absolute (Nečak 1985, 92, Malle 2009, 120).

In the following years, the Democratic Front attempted to “reunify” Carinthian Slovenes (Nečak 1985, 93). Despite this, the NSKS rather established itself as an anti-communist platform and refuge for Yugoslavian political emigrants, under the slogan “loyal to religion – loyal to the nation” (Nečak 1985, 96). Connections between the Yugoslav Communist Party and the Carinthian Democratic Front were apparent (Inzko 1989, 40). Nečak observes that in this period the NSKS rejected every attempt by the Democratic Front to forge links (Nečak 1985, 96). Inzko criticises the Liberation Front's attempts to unify Slovenes in a Communist single-party system and claims that the Front was accountable for the political and ideological split between Carinthian Slovenes (Inzko 1989, 42). In his viewpoint, the Front blocked the independent candidature of Carinthian Slovenes for the Carinthian government in 1945, which led one third of Carinthian Slovenes voting for the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) or Socialist Party (SPÖ), where they remained as party members (Inzko 1989, 41).

In 1955, Austria gained a new state treaty and independence. Jesih (2007, 66) names six political milestones of the Carinthian Slovene minority after World War II:

- installation of a mandatory bilingual school system in South Carinthia in 1945;
- foundation of the Slovene High School in Klagenfurt/Celovec in 1957;
- abolition of the mandatory bilingual school system; installation of bilingual topographical signs, with the escalation of the so-called Ortstafelsturm in 1972, in which all bilingual topographical signs were removed in aggressive acts by German nationalist groups;
- agreement of all three big Carinthian parties to deal with the minority issue only in those cases where all three could agree and the exceptional census in 1976, as well as the agreement on a new ethnic communities law in 1976/77;
- reform of the bilingual school system in its segregational form in 1988.

We could also mention here the change of the Carinthian electoral law in 1979, together with the merging of bilingual with monolingual electoral districts. These changes made it *de facto* impossible for an independent Slovene party to get elected at the Carinthian level: since then, political parties have to cross a threshold of around 10 per cent in one of four Carinthian electoral districts (one mandate) to participate in elections to the Landtag. A recent milestone was the Carinthian memorandum focussing on the question of bilingual topographical signs and Slovene as an official language. Slovene representative organisations, the Carinthian government and the Austrian federal government agreed on a solution, although there was criticism from the very beginning.<sup>1</sup> The memorandum was implemented in a new ethnic communities law with constitutional status in 2011.

Carinthian Slovenes actively participated in almost all Austrian democratic elections with some exceptions in the presidential elections and those for the main farming and forestry organisation. Municipal elections and farmers' organisation elections promised good election results for Slovene parties. However, Slovenes also participated actively in the major Austrian parties in these elections (Malle 1997, 45). Milestones at the international level in recent decades were the declaration of the independence of Slovenia in 1991 and its accession to the EU in 2004. In the Austrian context, both events contributed to the perception of Slovene not just as a minority language, but an international official language.<sup>2</sup>

The aforementioned ideological split between Carinthian Slovenes, in terms of the division into conservative and liberal representative organisations, is still present in Carinthian Slovene politics. In the Carinthian Slovene community, the question of whether members of the minority should participate in Slovene ethnic parties or in bigger German-speaking parties in Austria, is

a current topic of discussion. However, the minority's political landscape is strongly shaped by two traditional organisations.

## 2. Organisational Structure of the Minority

### 2.1 National Council of Carinthian Slovenes (Narodni svet koroških Slovencev)

The National Council of Carinthian Slovenes (Narodni svet koroških Slovencev – NSKS) was founded in June 1949 as a platform for the the Catholics in the minority population (Ogris 2010, 62). While until the 1960s Yugoslavia officially labelled the NSKS as traitors and responsible for the disintegration of Carinthian Slovene unity, newer evidence has shown that there was unofficial contact and support from the beginning (Jesih 2007, 81). In the struggle to democratise the representative structures of the minority, the NSKS strives to hold direct elections of board members and chairs every four years (Ogris 2010, 62). For the same reason, the NSKS is connected with up to 48 directly elected parliament members – the Assembly of National Representatives (Zbor narodnih predstavnikov). The NSKS is traditionally close to the Austrian People's Party, but its representatives have been and are active in other Austrian parties (Jesih 2007, 82). The following Carinthian Slovene organisations can be considered as situated in the circle of influence of the NSKS (Jesih 2007, 82):

- Christian Cultural Union (Krščanska kulturna zveza), one of two cultural umbrella organisations of the minority;
- Carinthian Youth Association (Koroška dijaška zveza), a youth organisation focused on the Slovene Gymnasium in Klagenfurt/Celovec;
- Hermagoras/Mohorjeva Society (Mohorjeva družba), with an important publishing house and a press office;
- Slovene Athletic Club (Slovenski atletski klub);
- Catholic Youth Organisation (Katoliška mladina);
- Unity List (Enotna lista – EL), a Slovene political party at local level.

The NSKS supports independent ethnic political participation and Carinthian Slovene movements, such the Unity List. Nevertheless, the NSKS has also built strategic alliances with other parties – for example, the Green Party or the Liberal Forum (now Neos); it also supports the Community of South Carinthian Farmers (Skupnost južnokoroških kmetov) (Ogris 2010, 62). Notwithstanding, it is politically lobbying for a permanent ethnic representative in the Carinthian Landtag (Jesih 2007, 82), a minority representative system regulated by public law (the so-called Perntaler model) and the unification of Carinthian Slovene representative structures (Jesih 2007, 85).

## 2.2 Association of Slovene Organisations in Carinthia (Zveza slovenskih organizacij)

The Association of Slovene Organisations (*Zveza slovenskih organizacij* – ZSO) was founded in 1955 as the successor organisation of the Democratic Front (Ogris 2010, 61). It is liberally oriented, and members are both organisations and individuals. There have been three chairmen so far: Franci Zwitter (1955-1982), Feliks Wieser (1982-1992) and Marjan Šturm (1992-date). Important member organisations are:

- Slovene School Association (*Slovensko šolsko društvo*);
- The Slovenian Exiles' Association (*Zveza slovenskih pregnancev*), under National Socialism;
- Association of Carinthian Partisans (*Zveza koroških partizanov*);
- Association of Slovenian Women (*Zveza slovenskih žena*);
- Slovenian Alpine Association in Carinthia (*Slovensko planinsko društvo*);
- Slovene Cultural Union (*Slovenska prosvetna zveza*) has an extraordinary position in the organisation. Together with its Christian counterpart, the Christian Culture Association (*Krščanska kulturna zveza*), it is one of two cultural umbrella organisations of the Carinthian Slovenes.

In contrast to the NSKS, the ZSO urged the political integration of Carinthian Slovenes in Austria's major parties, with a focus on the SPÖ (Socialist Party), but also in the Green Party, the Communist Party and Liberal Party (ZSO 1998, 25). It rejects the idea of independent political minority parties (Jesih 2007, 95). However, it leaves an open option for its members to integrate into independent Slovene parties at a local level (Jesih 2007, 96).

Following Ogris, ZSO can be seen as the representative organisation for politically left to centre-right oriented Carinthian Slovenes (Ogris 2010, 62). It propagates the ideas of multiculturalism and interculturalism (Jesih 2007, 96) as well as pluralism and the multi-faceted interests of members of the minority (Jesih 2007, 99). It encourages the preservation of language and cultural values, and rejects the politicising of ethnicity (ZSO 1998, 26). Since the 1990s, the organisation has fostered integration with German-speaking majorities (Brezigar 1996, 30). Its chairpersons and board members are elected at a general assembly by secret ballot.

## 2.3 Association of Carinthian Slovenes (*Skupnost koroških Slovenk in Slovencev*)

The Community of Carinthian Slovenes (*Skupnost koroških Slovenk in Slovencev* – SKS) was founded in 2003 by former members of the NSKS. The differences which led to the split and the founding of the third representative

organisation of the minority, appeared after conciliatory tendencies towards the Carinthian government (Ogris 2010, 63). According to its publications, the organisation currently has more than 1300 members. One of their main focuses is on economic growth of the bilingual region. The SKS fosters the Slovene language and dialogue between Slovene and German speaking Carinthians. Economic and social stability – mostly in rural Southern Carinthia – should lead to the stabilising of the Slovene language as a language of communication in families and villages (Ogris 2010, 64). In this sense, they follow an integrated model, rather than the ideological separation of Slovenes and Germans in Carinthia. The organisation's target group are also those who would like to re-activate Slovene roots or learn the Slovene language for different reasons (Pirker 2017, 125). The organisation has 15 board members and elects them at a general assembly (SKS 2005, 2). They are politically liberal.

## 2.4 Unity List (Enotna Lista)

The Unity List (Enotna lista – EL) is an independent regional party, which is popular not just with ethnic Slovenes, but presents itself as an integrational open bilingual party with a local focus (Pirker 2017, 125). Under the name Volilna skupnost it is present also in other bilingual areas in Carinthia, to attract Carinthian Slovenes with different ideological views. Although the party is ideologically close to the NSKS, it is an independent party of the minority (Jesih 2007, 75).

In 1973, the Club of Slovene Local Councils (Klub slovenskih občinskih odbornikov) was founded. In 1975, it was renamed the Carinthian Unity List (Koroška Enotna lista).<sup>3</sup> In addition to ethnic and national questions, its programme also addresses economic and social topics (Inzko 1988, 203). Since 1991, the name of the party is Enotna Lista. In the last decades the Unity List has had various strategic coalitions with majority-population parties and movements (Demokratie 99, Alternative Liste Kärnten, Grüne Alternative Kärnten, ...). In the 2015 elections, the party gained two mayors in Southern Carinthia: one in Globasnitz/Globasnica and one in Bad Eisenkappel/Železna kapla. Deputy mayors from the Unity List party are present in Bad Eisenkappel-Vellach/Železna Kapla-Bela, Zell/Sele and Feistritz ob Bleiburg/Bistrici pri Pliberku. The party controls town councils in Bleiburg/Pliberk and Ferlach/Borovlje. In the 2015 elections, 58 Carinthian local councillors were elected in Slovene and bilingual parties coordinated by the Unity List (Gemeinderatswahlen EL, 2015).

## 3. Forms and Opportunities for Political Participation

According to Toggenburg and Rautz (2010), the aim of participation of minority members is their integration in the political, cultural, social and economical

life in minority matters, but also public life in general. Such participation is a precondition for a minority to feel loyalty and a sense of belonging to a nation state. It is also important to note that participation by individuals is not sufficient. Opportunities to form groups to represent the political and economic interests of a minority and participate in decision-making processes are necessary (Toggenburg & Rautz 2010, 204). To ensure political participation of minorities, instruments of facilitation such as the exemption from percentage thresholds (Toggenburg & Rautz 2010, 205) and reserved seats in political decision-making bodies (e.g. parliament and the Carinthian Landtag) are necessary (Toggenburg & Rautz 2010, 208). A third instrument to facilitate participation is the minority-friendly arrangement of electoral districts (Toggenburg & Rautz 2010, 207). However, not a single of these three mentioned points is valid for the Carinthian Slovene minority. In Austria, recognised minorities have no chance of directly participating in legislation concerning minorities (Pirker 2017, 88). The Austrian legal system does not foresee any special right of persons belonging to national minorities to be represented in elected bodies. Legal experts conclude that the only mechanism that allows for minority political participation in the decision-making process is the Advisory Council (Lantschner 2010, 30). However, this is highly limited.

### 3.1 Advisory Council

The Advisory Council (Volksgruppenbeirat) was established by the new ethnic communities law of 1977. It is organised within the Austrian Federal Chancellery. The Carinthian Slovenes and their organisations first rejected the Advisory Council as well as the ethnic communities law (Jesih 2007, 106). At first, both traditional representative organisations of the minority – the ZSO and the NSKS – rejected participation in the Advisory Council. They were afraid that their participation might weaken chartered minority rights in the Austrian State Treaty from 1955 (Baumgartner & Perchinig 1995). The NSKS first entered in 1988 and sent its nominee; the ZSO followed this example one year later (Jesih 2007, 83).

The Advisory Council acts as a council for the Federal Government and the Carinthian Government. There are Advisory Councils for the Slovene minority, as well as for the Croatian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Roma minorities. The Advisory Council consists of 16 members: 8 are named by Slovene representative organisations, 8 by the political parties and the Catholic Church. All members have to be considered as Carinthian Slovenes. One important task of the Advisory Councils is to advise the government each year as to financial support for the minorities. The criticism has been voiced that the role of the Advisory Council is limited to advice and hearings (Pirker 2017, 267). It has further been commented that the Advisory Councils fall short of even the minimum of democratic representation and efficiency (Marko 2010, cited in



Lantschner 2010, 34) and that they are too much under the influence of the Federal Government. For example, the Austrian government decides about the number of their members and about which minority organisations are invited to submit proposals (Lantschner 2010, 34). Criticism about the mandate as well as the membership has even been expressed by the Advisory committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, but nothing has changed (Lantschner 2010, 32). Marjan Sturm, chairman of the ZSO, acted as chairman of the council for 23 years. In November 2015, he was replaced by the NSKS's Nanti Olip.

### 3.2 Slovenes in Major Parties

Aside from the above-problematised political participation through the Advisory Council and inclusion in ethnic Slovene parties such as the Unity List, the Carinthian Slovene minority can politically participate in major parties. This path was followed especially by the representative organisation Association of Slovene Organisations (ZSO), which in its early years fostered the integration of Carinthian Slovenes, especially in the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ). In the early 1970s, the greatest success of this effort was the election of the vice chairman of ZSO, Hanzi Ogris, to the Carinthian Landtag for the SPÖ (Jesih 2007, 93). However, because of anti-Slovene reactions in major parties on the installation of bilingual topographical signs in 1972, ZSO ended its engagement in integrating into political parties until the 1990s, when domestic and foreign policy again changed (Jesih 2007, 95). Anti-Slovene pressure in major parties in the 1970s, as well as a crisis with its traditional political partner, the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) because of the first efforts to establish ethnic Slovene parties in the 1960s, also led the NSKS to decrease its engagement in major parties. The NSKS has not changed its position until today. However, beside its well-recognised preference for ethnic Slovene political representation, it has supported connections to the Austrian Green Party or the Liberal Forum (Jesih 2007, 82). As a result of this effort, Karel Smolle was elected to the Austrian parliament for the Green Party as the first Carinthian Slovene in this position. He held it from 1986-1990, with the change to the Liberal Forum.

Today, Carinthian Slovenes from all three representative organisations hold visible positions in major parties: Ana Blatnik has been a member of the ZSO and of the Austrian Federal Council since 2004. In 2014, she was also its chairperson. Zalka Kuchling, who is a member of the board of the SKS as well as the Green Party, has been a delegate to the Carinthian Landtag since 2013. Angelika Mlinar, a member of NSKS, has been a member of the European Parliament for the Austrian party Neos (a successor of the Liberal Forum) since 2014. There are Carinthian Slovene SPÖ mayors in Neuhaus/Suha, Bleiburg/Pliberk and Zell/Sele. Several ÖVP candidates have been Carinthian Slovenes, such as Raimund Grilc, who was a delegate to the Landtag from 1994 to 2009.

Mirko Messner, a member of the ZSO, has been the national spokesperson of the Austrian Communist Party since 2006.

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### 3.3 Youth Participation

Carinthian Slovene youth is present in all minority political organisations. However, they do not fill important positions. The most active members present in youth organisations with independent statutes:

- Young Unity List (Mlada Enotna Lista) is the youth organisation of the Slovene political party the Unity List. It is active at the local level in some South Carinthian regions.
- Catholic Youth Organisation (Katoliška Mladina), a Slovene counterpart of German-speaking Catholic youth initiatives.
- Carinthian Youth Association (Koroška dijaška zveza - KDZ), a youth organisation focused on the Slovene Gymnasium in Klagenfurt/Celovec.
- Club of Slovene Students in Vienna (Klub slovenskih študentk in študentov na Dunaju – KSSŠD), the oldest youth organisation, founded in 1923. It has more than 600 members (KSSŠD 2013, 5) and is a most important Slovene organisation in Vienna. Its library, which is organised by the students, contains the most Slovene books anywhere in Austria's capital.
- Club of Slovene Students in Graz (Klub slovenskih študentk in študentov Gradec). It was founded in 1974 to bring together Slovene students in Graz. Due to its geographical proximity to Maribor, it is the youth organisation with most active members from Slovenia.
- Club of Slovene Students in Carinthia (Klub slovenskih študentk in študentov na Koroškem) is the active since the 1990s and the youngest student organisation of the minority.
- Slovene Youth Organisations (Slovenske Mladinske Organizacije) as a platform and umbrella organisation in Carinthia.

The Club of Slovene Students in Vienna, the Young Unity List and the Carinthian Youth Association are member organisations of the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN), which acts as an umbrella organisation for youth minority organisations in Europe. Its main goal is to work for the preservation and development of the rights of the minorities and ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup> These Carinthian Slovene Youth Organisations are three of 39 member organisations of the YEN. They take part in annual international seminars and workgroups. The Club of Slovene Students in Carinthia, the Carinthian Youth Association, the Young Unity List and the Catholic Youth Organisation formed the umbrella organisation Slovene Youth Organisation (Slovenske Mladinske Organizacije) to establish and organise a youth club in the centre of Klagenfurt/Celovec. It is used for cultural, political and societal events especially by students and pupils.

## 4. Conclusion

The Carinthian Slovene minority has reached a high level of organisational structure (Jesih 2007, 221), although the conditions for political participation are still far from satisfactory. This is noted by the minority itself, as well as by international observers such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. According to Boris Jesih (2007, 219) at all levels of political participation, Carinthian Slovenes have to decide between the (ethnic) minority option or the ideological-state option. He maintains that this is a very certain form of assimilation. Viewpoints on ideal political representation as well as strategies differ among Carinthian Slovene representative organisations. However, the brief historical overview in this article shows that the question of unifying Carinthian Slovene representative structures emerged already in the late 1940s when a Catholic representative organisation appeared next to a Communist one. Nowadays, it is the conservative movement that proposes unification. Carinthian Slovenes were ideologically divided from their first political movements (Malle 2009, 109).

One could conclude that the forbidding framework for political participation of minorities in Austria, together with German nationalism in Austrian major parties in the 1970s, led to a division in strategies of minority representatives for achieving political participation. However, in the described circumstances, participating in ethnic Slovene parties or in bigger German-speaking parties in Austria should not be seen as mutually exclusive strategies. The success of the Unity List as a regional bilingual party – not just for ethnic Slovenes – but as an integrated open bilingual party with a local focus (Pirker 2017, 125), as well as success for Carinthian Slovenes integrated into major parties indicate two promising tendencies. However, legal changes in Austria still seem necessary.

The political participation of Carinthian Slovene youth is visible, but mostly outside the established political structures of the minority. This could be considered as a challenge for the representative organisations. The delicate question of whether major parties offer better opportunities for successful Carinthian Slovene female politicians than traditional minority representative organisations could be addressed in another paper.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See e.g. Vouk, R., 2011.
- <sup>2</sup> See e.g. the joint letter of Marjan Sturm, Valentin Inzko and Bernard Sadovnik, the chairmen of the Carinthian Slovene representative organisations the ZSO, NSKS and SKS to Peter Kaiser, the new Governor of Carinthia in June 2013. Kaiser spoke both German and Slovene in his inaugural speech. In the letter, beside other topics, minority languages as official languages of the EU are addressed (SLO.AT, 2014)
- <sup>3</sup> See Enotna Lista/Einheitsliste – EL.
- <sup>4</sup> See YENI – The Youth of European Nationalities.