

**ESF – SCH EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP:****(Hidden) Minorities:  
Language and Ethnic Identities in the Alpine-Adriatic Region**

Radenci (Slovenia), 20-24 March 2002

**SCIENTIFIC REPORT****CONVENORS:****Ass.-Prof.Dr. Eduard Staudinger**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2001 was the European Year of Languages. During this year and still afterwards many conferences and workshops were organized to extend our existing knowledge and understanding of minority languages and to emphasize the importance of their adequate protection as part of a democratic and multicultural Europe. Based on international and transdisciplinary research the workshop tried to give new and fundamental insights into problems of small ethnic groups and their multiple, but hidden identities. It concentrated on the Alpine-Adriatic-Danube region which is a key region in the ongoing enlargement process of the European Union. Ethnic issues in this area express themselves often in the social status of local vernaculars. Due to that fact language and ethnic identities are closely interconnected with each other. The different social roles of language and their cultural impacts in respective ethnic groups was discussed in several case studies. The case studies comprised on the one hand various small autochthonous ethnic groups in Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia, including the Roma communities. On the other hand migrant groups were also included.

Most of the groups the papers of the workshop dealt with live under changing circumstances in old or new border regions where many of the groups' identity problems have their origins and manifest themselves. Therefore, living at and with borders and the impact of this fact on specific *border identities* were key elements of the discussion. This is also true for the important notion of multiple and/or *switching identities*.

Finally, the various shortcomings in the current national and European legal frameworks and the prospects for the survival of minority languages and ethnic identities in the process of European integration were also kept in mind to guarantee a continued linguistic and cultural diversity. In this respect the often mentioned concept of a "Europe of the regions" is of particular importance for the Alpine-Adriatic-Danube region.

The workshop intensified collaborative links between researchers dealing in different scientific fields and disciplines with minority languages and ethnic identities and

identified areas where more international and transdisciplinary research is necessary and should be done.

## SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

The international workshop on (Hidden) Minorities: Language and Ethnic Identities in the Alpine-Adriatic Region, sponsored by the European Science Foundation, was held at the conference room of Hotel Miral at Radenci, Slovenia, on 21-23 March 2002.

The workshop was convened by Eduard Staudinger and additionally organised by Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik and Christian Promitzer and (all University of Graz) in co-operation with Oto Luthar (Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Science and Arts). The aim of this event was to discuss the different, but comparative, aspects of language and ethnic identities in this part of Europe with the approaches of socio-linguistics, ethno-linguistics, history, political science, cultural anthropology, ethnology and jurisprudence. A special focus was put on the specifics of small ethnic groups in the Alpine-Adriatic Region, which were discussed under the new research concept of *hidden minorities*.

### 1. Keynote Speech

The workshop started on Thursday 21 st March 02 at 9 a.m. with the opening adress of Eduard Staudinger. Thereafter Albert F. Reiterer from the Carinthian Institute for Ethnic Minorities, Villach/Beljak (Austria), made his key-note speech on "Minorities and Minorities' Policies in Europe ". In his introduction he extended the theoretical discourse on conective identities from ethnic identity to social identity in common. In his view minorities -in the framework of a specific nation-state -are conceptually linked to the term of a smaller group, which mostly implies a position of lower ranks of social or political power (he made a counterpoint, however, by telling about the political importance of being a minority); consequently, these concepts follow a tradition of discrimination, which is also distinctive and therefore ethnically constitutive.

Therefore it can be fixed within the contemporary discourse of ethnicity, going together with the description(-s) of ethnic identity(-ies). But Reiterer wanted also to distinguish between national, ethnic, and linguistic minorities and therefore spoke of

an ethno-national sphere or replaced ethnic with linguistic, in order to avoid the inflationary use of the term ethnicity in this context.

Finally, he developed a differentiation between the use of the term ethnicity in historical, ethnological and/or anthropological minority-research, on the one hand, and the use of terms like social identity of minorities in social sciences. At the end of his key-note speech Reiterer criticised the dominant view on the historical and political development of minorities which he ironically called a history of suffering, implying that One has to look at minorities as results of modern nation building.

Thereafter in six thematic panels 17 papers were presented:

## 2. Theoretical aspects

This 1<sup>st</sup> workshop-session started with the paper *"Speaking Slovene -Being Slovene" reconsidered Language and Identity with Reference to the Situation of Ugovizza Villagers in Val Canale, Italy"* given by Robert G. Minnich from the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Bergen (Norway). Minnich critically viewed the term "hidden minority" within the context of the connective self-understanding of a small group. Minnich posed the question of the use of ethnic categorisation within the process of social integration, by giving primacy to the notion of a disempowered local group within a given society: The connective self-identification of Slovene dialect speaking villagers in the three-border-region Val Canale, Italy, do not subscribe themselves automatically to Slovene identity. The comparison of the Slovene speaking agrarian householders in Ugovizza with inhabitants in the Austrian villages of Achomitz and Feistritz on the other side of the Carnian Alps, makes the role of language in identity formation visible, as far as language has become a marker of group membership. The use of the Slovene vernacular in relation to other codes, used in the local communication matrix, is governed rather by pragmatic than by ideological considerations. Language-switching, respectively code-switching, to a standardised language such as German or Italian happens all the time in conversation, especially if someone is involved who indicates that he does not understand the Slovene vernacular.

In his paper "Hidden Minorities -a New Research Concept?" Christian Promitzer intended to

show, how the term "Hidden Minorities" can be theoretically used. He drew a comparison between the political, or rather legalistic, term of ethnic minorities and the cultural term of small ethnic groups. For Promitzer the term "hidden minority" does not deny the constructionist character of ethnicity, but it shows that the tenacity of ethnic phenomena-which must not be mistaken for their alleged "invariability", as was the belief of the pre-constructionist era-has to be taken into consideration as well. The Alpine-Adriatic Region seems to be useful to allow mutual comparability of case studies, since the regional setting can be described as a zone of overlapping cultural areas between Central Europe, the Mediterranean area and the Balkans. A research group, based at the University of Graz and also present at the workshop with papers of its own, was established, in order to investigate the possible theoretical range of the concept of hidden minorities. This project-group (Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, Marijana Jakimova, Tanja Petrović, Eduard Staudinger and Ivica Šarac) is financed by the FWF Austrian Science Fund under the call-no. 15080. The project concentrates upon the analysis of five different ethnic groups: (1) the Bulgarian gardeners in Graz, a group of migrants from the Balkans which settled down in this Austrian city; (2) the Slovene speaking population on the southern border of the Austrian federal province of Styria (the Söbotoh region); (3) several German speaking villages in northern Slovenia in the so called basin of Apače/Abstall basin; (4) four Serbian orthodox villages in the region of Bela krajina in southern Slovenia; (5) an urban minority which was stimulated by an intellectual movement and pursued a certain national discourse: the catholic Serbs of the Dalmatian city of Dubrovnik.

### 3. Language and Ethnicity

In his paper "Sichelburg (Žumberak) -a Small Balkan Enclave in Central Europe" Nikola Živković, a historian and journalist from Berlin, presented a mountainous region, Zumberak, which is located at the Croatian border with Slovenia and begins few kilometres west of the Croatian capital Zagreb. This area includes over 40 villages, where inhabitants are of Uskok origin. The Uskoks had been settled there during the 16th century. In some of the villages the inhabitants in their self-description consider themselves Serbs, and by the perception of their neighbours they are called

Serbs. Apart from the Croatian language, dominant in the surrounding, they speak a southern Slav dialect, which has close linguist ties to Herzegovina and Montenegro. In religion they distinguish themselves from the Roman-Catholic Croats, since they are members of the Greek Catholic church. In the early modern period Zumberak was part of the Austrian Military border, which guaranteed the Uskoks a certain amount of autonomy and prevented assimilation to the Croat nation for a long time. During the fall of the second Yugoslav state and following the establishment of the Anti-Serbian Tudman-regime in Croatia the population began to hide its Uskok origin and its affiliation to the Serbs. In 1991 even 15 villages from East-Zumberak vainly tried to be incorporated to the new Slovenian state. Nowadays the Uskok inhabitants/Serbs of the Zumberak villages are a small ethnic group with a hidden identity.

"The language of the Autochthonous Serbian Minority in Southern Slovenia" was the title of the paper given by Tanja Petrović, who is both affiliated to the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade (Yugoslavia) and to the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and member of the already mentioned FWF-research-project on "Hidden Minorities" located in Graz (Austria). She presented the current socio-linguistic structures in four autochthonous Serbian orthodox villages in the region of Bela krajina in southern Slovenia, by showing the modes of language behaviour among the population. As in the case of Zumberak the inhabitants of Bela krajina hail from the Uskoks and have preserved their native vernacular for more than five centuries. Petrović gave examples based on fieldwork studies in four local villages (Bojanci, Milići, Paunovići, and Marindol). Only few inhabitants of the four villages deal with the slow dying of their native vernacular in different ways, due to mixed marriages with Slovene women. But there is no common interest in the preservation of the traditional vernacular. This leads directly to One of the main issues in connection with hidden minorities: the lacking of official support for the Serbs in Bela kraina and the hiding of their Serbian identity behind the Slovene identity.

Biljana Sikimić from the Institute of Balkan Studies at the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade (Yugoslavia) was also a linguist, but in her paper on "Ethnolinguistic research of Serbs on the island of Csepel, Hungary: possibilities and perspectives" she

applied an ethno-linguistic approach, using methods of dialectology and ethnology. She gave a historical overview of the Serb migration to Hungary and their descendants, who partly until nowadays have preserved a Serbian identity. Sikimić consequently concentrated herself on the Serbian group in Csepel, the 21<sup>st</sup> district of Budapest, situated between two arms of River Danube south of the centre of the Hungarian capital. By giving some examples out of a vast number of interviews, her research team had connected in the field, Sikimić illustrated the status of bilinguality (Hungarian-Serbian) as well as the tenacity of Serbian rituals (Christmas, wedding, funeral customs, calendar feasts etc). A special focus was put on descendants of Bulgarian gardeners who had merged into the Serbian community forming a special variant of a hidden minority within the Serbian minority.

The final paper of the linguistic panel was given by Mirko Križman, Professor emeritus at the Department for German studies of the University of Maribor (Slovenia). Križman spoke about "Sociolinguistic Research of the German Speaking (Hidden) Minority in the Mur-Region at the Slovene-Austrian Border". He started with historical remarks on the German-Slovene respectively Slovene-German Bilingualism in that region, which he underlined with quite a number of examples from his empirical studies. Among those he also presented excerpts from interviews with an 88 and a 69 years old lady, who are rather often inclined to switch from one vernacular to another one. In his reflections on the present situation Križman put a focus on the possibility for the young generation to attend German instruction at school, a possibility which had been existent since the 1950s but is nowadays of greater significance, since there is an overall increasing interest in German language.

#### 4. Vanishing Hidden Minorities

In the morning session on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 02 Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, member of the Graz based research-project on hidden minorities located at the Department of South-Eastern-European-History, Graz (Austria) spoke on "Styrian Slovenes (Austrian Styria) -the example of Soboth region." He presented a historical and an ethnological outline of the still less known autochthonous minority of Styrian Slovenes living close to the Austrian border with Slovenia. Three main settlement areas of the Styrian Slovenes can be distinguished: the Radkersburg- triangle to the South-East of Styria, a

second area south of Leutschach in the middle South-West and finally the mountainous Soboth region in the far South- West close to the Styrian border with Carinthia. The division into three different areas within different local contexts is one of the main reasons, why a mutual solidarity between Styrian Slovenes never came into being as is the case with the rather compact minority of the Carinthian Slovenes. Another reason, why the Styrian Slovenes want to stay hidden, is assimilation pressure from the German speaking majority, which has lasted for decades and has always tried to suppress every single expression of Slovene cultural origin. Therefore during one century one can observe a switching from Slovene monolingualism over Slovene-German bilingualism towards a predominantly German (-Austrian) identity, while remnants of a Slovene identity are deeply hidden. Hermanik gave examples from his fieldwork in the Soboth region, in order to illustrate this process.

Eduard Staudinger made remarks on the German speaking population in the so called Basin of Abstell. Four crucial periods can be recognized in the historical development of the Basin and its population. The first period lasted until 1918 during which the Basin belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For this period the Basin is often described in historical, ethnic and linguistic terms as a region with a predominantly German speaking population which started to settle there in the Middle Ages.

Economically the mainly agrarian area and its communities gravitated towards the local traffic centres and market places in the North. The second period lasted from 1919 to 1941 during which the Basin belonged to Yugoslavia. The new international state border drawn between Austria and Yugoslavia after World War I had some fundamental consequences for the region and its German speaking inhabitants. First they belonged now to the newly created state of Yugoslavia and according to the censuses the demographic relations in the Basin shifted in favor of the Slovenian population. Secondly the Basin became a border region at the periphery in the Northeastern part of Slovenia in which the German speaking population could not maintain their traditional lines of communication and economic connections as before. Nevertheless the period from 1919 to 1941 did not mean a total break in the situation of the German speaking population. Although they became a minority in a new state in the region itself they remained a compact group and kept politically and economically



strong positions in the local power structures. The third period lasted from 1941 to 1945. After the attack of the Third Reich on Yugoslavia in April 1941 the Slovene population of the Basin of Abtall was submitted to the general policy of Germanisation and deportation. The fourth period finally started with the breakdown of the Third Reich in May 1945. The new communist regime of Yugoslavia now ordered internments and the expulsion of the local German population. Only few of them returned and remained there as a very small number of individuals who adapted to their new living conditions. Further research has to show if they can be called a "hidden minority" or not.

"Some remarks on the Catholic Serbs of Dubrovnik" were made by Ivica Šarac from the Department of History at the University of Western Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and also member of the Graz group. He pointed out that the coincidence of religion and nation in the case of Serbs and Croats might prevent a serious view on nation-building among both of them, since this coincidence in a special war allowed for the development of auto- and hetero-stereotypes which included the religious sphere, as could be seen lately in the post-Yugoslav wars. Sarac showed that these stereotypes could not be applied in the case of the Catholic Serbs in the area of the Adriatic city of Dubrovnik, a group which came into being during the late 18th and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the centre of which was an intellectual movement and which had also same journal.

The twofold foundation of the Yugoslav state led to the diminishing and finally vanishing of these groups from the public. In particular after 1991 this group was totally hushed up by the Croatian public and the descendants of this group also denied their Serbian ancestry, since they do not want to get into conflicts with the Croatian majority population. Sarac told about the difficulties in the field to get into contact with this group, especially about the wall of silence he met during research which he finally succeeded to break, so that he could go on with fieldwork among a village of Catholic Serbs in the hinterland of Dubrovnik.

In her paper "Bulgarian Migrant Gardeners in Austria: Intregation and Assimilation" Marijana Jakimova, from the Department of South-Eastern-European-History, Graz (Austria) and member of the Graz group, discussed the intergenerational identity-

switching of Bulgarian gardeners and their descendants in the Austrian city of Graz. Bulgarian gardeners migrated to Graz in the first decade of the 20th century and became an even larger group after the First World War, so that they would shape a serious concurrent of local Austrian gardeners on the vegetable market.

Compared to other contemporary migrant groups Bulgarian migrants were restricted to a special professional segment which helped to delay linguistic and cultural assimilation until the end of the Second World War. But they started to abandon their customs and their confession, which for decades had formed a sense of tradition and solidarity, when the Communist government of Bulgaria closed the borders in the second half of the 1940s. To be cut off their native country brought the second generation of Bulgarian migrants to accept Austrian citizenship and to educate their children solely in German language. After all, the third generation of immigrants is more or less assimilated, only the new influx of Bulgarian migrants after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and therefore renewed contacts with Bulgarian customs are sometimes a mirror for their Bulgarian descent.

#### 5. Ethnicity and Hidden Minorities

The afternoon-session on Friday 22nd March 02 started with Mojca Ravnik, from the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana (Slovenia). She spoke on "Family and Identity in Slovenian Istria." Her paper is based on years long fieldwork period lasting from 1989 to 1994, where she connected life stories related by local residents in the city of Trieste and its hinterland in today's Slovenian and Croatian Istria. The life stories refer to the period from the first half of the 19th century until the present time. Ravnik concentrated on the reconstruction of family histories, whereby each interviewee answered questions about social and local origin, religion, language and about the complex of identity. The migration of individuals from the hinterland to the city was not only a migration from one linguistic and cultural setting (mostly a Croatian and Slovenian one) into another one (an Italian one), and a migration from a rural surrounding into an urban one, moreover, after the Second World War, the city and its hinterland became also separated by state borders. Ravnik showed how members of the same generation of a lineage adopted different cultural and/or national identities, depending upon the fact, whether they left their home village or not. But

even if it came to a certain interruption of cultural continuity in family histories, in many cases the origin of the ancestors remained a symbolic part of one's own life history, as the regular and ritualised return to the home village of the family, which often leads to the family grave, shows. The paper of Ravnik was of special interest for the general concern of language and ethnicity, but also for the narrower topic of hidden minorities since it showed in a methodological way the use of an approach which focuses upon family histories and the respective place of the individual's identity within the lineage.

The session continued with Duška Knežević-Hočevar, historical anthropologist from the Institute of Medical Science at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana (Slovenia). She spoke on "Language and Self-Ascriptions at the new Slovenian-Croat state Border in the Upper Kolpa-Valley." In the years 1993 and 1996 she had conducted two extensive field studies in this area, between , where the river formed a state border between Slovenia and Croatia after 1991. After a historical survey of the upper Kolpa-valley Knezevic-Hocevar presented the results of her field work, whereby she put a special focus on a family which by exogamy had got relatives across the river in the respective other state. Due to the three years lag between the field studies she could ascertain, how fast connective memories were influenced by the new state border, so that the value of family ties were overlaid by recently formed connective auto- and hetero-stereotypes of the inhabitants of the Croatian and Slovenian side of the border, showing that the formerly hazy boundaries between these two groups had become sharp within a new framework of negative stereotypes among the locals on both river banks in general, and among the members of the cross-river family.

The third paper in the afternoon-session "Hidden identities in national minority groups: the case of Slovenes in Carinthia and in the Province of Trieste" was read by Marija Jurič-Pahor, collaborator of the Ljubljana based Institute for Ethnic Studies in Trieste (Italy): Her starting point was that namely in Carinthia Slovene national movement did not encompass the entire Slovene population, so that many speakers of the Slovene language (respectively the local Slovene dialect) developed only a partial identification with the 'national ideal of Slovenedom.

A certain connection to their 'original ethnicity' is surprisingly still alive, on the other hand. But in the case of Trieste the separation into 'ours and others' was much more stronger, even before the First World War. Juric-Pahor analysed these processes of segregation and segregated identities and she remarked that, despite other assertions and observations, the scale of possible identities owns a great variety of diverse and ambiguous phenomena, not only those identities which build upon the common sense of rigid distinction between majority and minority. So essential myths or 'great narratives', which contributed to this distinctions, have to be interpreted in a new way. The last paper of this afternoon is read by Oto Luthar, historian and director of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Science and Arts in Ljubljana (Slovenia); his paper was titled: An invisible Community. Between dispersal and a new sense of belonging: Surviving Strategies of Gypsies in Prekmurje -Slovenia. He concentrated upon aspects of Gypsy cultural practices and their surviving strategies in Prekmurje, the north-eastern part of Slovenia, where Luthar has conducted research on the regional inter- and multicultural environment over five years. Prekmurje is the only spot in Europe where conglomerates of Roman, Germanic, Slav and Hungarian culture(s) meet. This local cultural melting pot in Prekmurje, together with very complex extended family structures of the Gypsies in history and in present, led to a point of "like-crabs-in-a-bucket"- situation in which -discriminated against the Slovene majority - learned persons of the Roma group rather obstruct each other than help their community to get ahead as a recognised minority in Slovenia, which, of course, is only partly their fault, but an excuse that the demand of the Slovene constitution for a minority law for the Roma population in Slovenia has remained unfulfilled until now.

## 6. Law and Politics

The morning session on Saturday 23rd March 02 started at 9 a.m. with the paper of Mirjam Polzer-Srienz, from the Department of Political Science at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) on "The Representation of small ethnic groups in States Bodies: The Case of Austria and Slovenia." The principle of equality is often not sufficient in order to protect the fights of a minority. Therefore they need a special status, which not only guarantees equality at the individual level but also at the connective level. For the latter different models of representation are considered for, e.g. 'fair

representation', 'equal representation', or models of participation. If there is no such guaranteed representation or participation, minorities have to look for alternative democratic ways to articulate their interests, which Polzer-Srienz demonstrated by the examples of the Styrian Slovenes in Austria and the German speaking minority in Slovenia.

The following paper "How to call back to public life a dying hidden minority in Austria? The example of establishing the very first cultural organisation (kulturno drustvo člen 7) of the Styrian Slovenes" was read by Wolfgang L. Gombocz, from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Graz (Austria). Gombocz spoke as a contemporary witness, since in the late eighties, he had been the main promoter of an organisation for the Slovene speaking, respectively bilingual, population in Austrian Styria. The intention of the founders of the above mentioned "kulturno drustvo člen 7" was to 'drag' the hidden bilingual population of Austrian Styria out of their hiding-places. The proponents, mostly students and academics, hoped that within such a new association the bilingual people would partially become active themselves, and that the public would face the existence of something so far hidden 'very empirically'.

Gombocz presented several difficulties the newly founded organisation had with the members of the minority, on the one hand, and the local public, on the other. He came to the result that the majority of the minority population wants to stay hidden and avoids to be brought before the public, even if such an intention was well-meant as in the case of the above mentioned cultural organisation.

#### 7. Additional Input and Final Discussion

Giorgio Ziffer from the Department of Language and Cultures in Central -and Eastern Europe at the University of Udine (Italy) spoke on "Languages in contact in the Alpine-Adriatic Region in the High Middle Ages." He investigated the historical contact of Slavic and German languages in the Alpine-Adriatic Region (together with Moravia and Pannonia) by the interpretation of the lexicology of holy texts in Church Slavonic language which had their origin in the High Middle Ages and which are the one of the few available sources for that time. For Ziffer quite a lot of loan translations of abstract nouns from Old High German indicate that at that time in the Alpine-Adriatic Region existed intense language contacts between speakers of Old

High German and of Slavonic, so that even forms of bilinguality among the population of the region was plausible.

Ziffer's contribution showed that language and ethnic identities in the Alpine-Adriatic Region are features which have to be interpreted not only from their contemporary state, but have to be considered in their historical dimension, i.e. starting with the period of the first encounter of languages and ethnic groups in that part of Europe.

After this paper the participants held a final discussion. The final discussion has shown that the concept of "hidden minorities" has to be enlarged in some directions. Ethnic identity should be seen as a (key) part of a wider social identity. The character of the relationship between an individual and an ethnic group has to be defined in the context of various social relationships that the individual during his or her lifetime first establishes and then either maintains or deserts. Furthermore the terms "group" and "minority" should be used cautiously. Psychologically speaking, a group exists when individuals think of themselves as members and are affected in their experience or behaviour by their membership. As far as "hidden minorities" are concerned group awareness though is not always self evident. Do specific individuals see themselves as members of an ethnic group (self-ascription) or is the membership an ascription from outside? Finally different meanings of "hidden" have to be kept in mind and the question has to be posed whether a "hidden" small ethnic group can be seen as something stable or more as part of a dynamic process, where the term "hidden" designates a period of transition from one ethnic identity to another one.

The Workshop ended with an excursion to the multicultural region of Prekmurje on Saturday afternoon and evening, organised and financed by the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC -SAZU).

## ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS, CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE FIELD

The workshop started from the state of the art in the current transdisciplinary discussion on language and ethnic identities. It was a great advantage that scholars from various scientific fields and with different scientific approaches participated in

this event. They had to find a common language for the discussed issues which led to cross-discussions and mutual understanding.

The workshop had its geographical focus on the Alpine-Adriatic-Danube region, a central part of Europe which from the scientific point of view was common to all the participants. On the theoretical level the term of ethnicity and its use were reconsidered, while the new concept of *hidden minorities* was critically accepted as a starting point for further research. The participants were able to identify emerging issues in this debate and to formulate guidelines for further collaborative research with the focus on the notion of *multiple* and/or *switching identities*.

### Results and emerging issues

#### The range of ethnic identities

A very important insight was that, in order to describe identities, the term “ethnic identity” seems to be overused in some cases. Ethnic identity has to be seen as part of a general social and cultural identity and the focus has to be on the modes of awareness of specific individuals or of a group. In some cases of small groups it would be even more useful to speak of a mere social and not of an ethnic identity.

Concerning the groups presented in the workshop this was to be accurate with the Bulgarian gardeners in Austria.

Furthermore, ethnic identities have to be considered within a framework of *multiple* and/or *switching identities*. But one has to be cautious to see this matter of fact exclusively positive, i.e. in a postmodernist way. One has also to keep in mind the mental strains and hardships of individuals and groups involved in and affected by these processes. The investigation of multiple and switching (ethnic) identities could for example be focused on family histories to avoid the before mentioned trap; as the role of family should be generally considered in the reproduction of language and construction of identities.

Another issue was the aspect of gender within the process and ideology of nation-building and its consequences on possible ethnic minorities.

Finally, the scholarly interest in small groups like those presented in the workshop was generally connected with the interest for Human Rights and national/international legal frameworks to ensure continued linguistic and cultural diversity.

### The concept of “hidden minorities”

At the beginning of the workshop some participants were critical about the possibility of a theoretical link between the political term “minority” and the cultural term “ethnic group”. On the other hand a general agreement was achieved that the term “hidden minority” can be very useful for describing specific ethnic phenomena at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The term “hidden minority” and its meaning is not connected with a real historical tradition, although the question of ethnic roots in history has to be considered also for those *small ethnic groups* which today can be described as “hidden minorities”. The discussions on the sample of groups presented in the workshop led to the conclusion that the term “hidden minority” is resistant to traditional typologies of national or ethnic minorities. Nonetheless it can be attached to the mentioned groups as they became marginalized in the processes of nation-building, modernisation and – since most of them are rural communities living at new or old state borders – of de-agrarisation and peripherisation caused by the drawing of new borders which divided economically interconnected areas.

A second aspect which for members of “hidden minorities” can be described as very significant is a state of vacillation. On the one hand – mainly in private atmosphere - they remain in various (hidden) ways attached to their group while on the other hand they seek to organise their lives and careers in accordance to the norms and practices of the majority population. Their fear(s) to attract suspicion of being different should also be mentioned as one starting point for this vacillation. Finally, the discussants considered the concept of “hidden minorities” as useful and practicable and further research will certainly lead to some necessary refinements.

### The position of ethnic identities within society

The various degrees of the individual relevance of ethnicity were a further key issue in the discussion. In the case of recognised ethnic minorities the political aspect on the one hand may get more importance than the cultural one, since to define minorities



exclusively or mainly by cultural traits would possibly fix them to a status of “living objects” in an ethnological/anthropological museum. On the other hand this position can be called in some ways as instrumentalist, since it does not really care for those ethnic groups which still wait to become recognised minorities or don’t have ambitions to get the status of a recognised minority.

### Conclusions

The topic “Language and Ethnic Identities in the Alpine-Adriatic-Danube Region” can be seen as part and example of a general discussion on that issue. The specific geographical setting of the region as a key region in the enlargement process of the European Union (Hungary, Slovenia and later on perhaps Croatia, Serbia and others), however, makes possible some specific insights into the topic which will still have to be proved in other parts of Europe, especially in its eastern and south eastern regions:

- the clarification of ethnicity as a cultural and/or political concept
- the concept of “*hidden minorities*” as a term of work in progress and with its emphasis on specific vacillations and diffusions concerning the processes of identification and orientation of the members of a “hidden minority”
- an additional focus on the indistinct grey area which exists between a recognised minority and the majority population as a bond of contention concerning historical claims by the representatives of the minority on the one hand and processes of linguistic and cultural assimilation on the other hand. This is the case for example in Carinthia (Austria) or in the region of Trieste (Italy).

### Contributions to the future direction of the field

The workshop with scholars from different parts of Europe and academic disciplines demonstrated that every future research on the topic has to be international and interdisciplinary. Furthermore, it was a particular advantage of the workshop that researchers from member states of the European Union came in touch with colleagues from (still) non-member states and vice versa.

The discussions and exchanges of scientific experiences in various fields of research were the beginning of a new network of academics who have already indicated their interest and willingness for further cooperation:

- to publish the proceedings and results of the workshop
- to organise a further workshop on “Endangered Languages and Covered Identities in Central Europe and the Balkans”, presumably 2003 in Belgrade (Yugoslavia)
- to introduce and establish the topic of “hidden minorities” in the scientific discourse on ethnic groups and of course in the academic teaching.

In addition to the future scientific cooperation the contact to practitioners and activists will be sought. The extension of the network in this direction will create the possibility to reconsider the legal definition of minorities, to formulate suggestions for a better political representation and to develop judicial tools for the preservation of small ethnic groups.

## ESF/SCH EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP

### (HIDDEN) MINORITIES: Language and Ethnic Identities in the Alpine-Adriatic Region

Radenci, 20.-24. March 2002

#### Final Programme

#### Wednesday, 20 March 2002

*day of arrival*

#### Thursday, 21 March 2002

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 09.00 - 09.30 | <u>OPENING ADDRESS</u><br><b>Eduard Staudinger</b> , (convenor)   |
| 09.30 - 10.30 | <u>KEYNOTE SPEECH</u><br><b>Albert F. Reiterer</b> (Villach/Beljak)<br><i>"Concepts of Minority, Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity"</i>   |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | <i>coffee break</i>   |
| 11.00- 13.00  | <u>SESSION I: Theoretical aspects</u><br><b>Eduard Staudinger</b> , (Graz)<br><b>Robert G. Minnich</b> , (Bergen)<br><i>"Speaking Slovene - Being Slovene' reconsidered. Language and Identity with Reference to the Situation of Ugovizza Villagers in Val Canale, Italy."</i><br><b>Christian Promitzer</b> , (Graz)<br><i>"Hidden Minorities: A New Research Concept?"</i> |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | <i>lunch break</i>  |
| 14.00 - 15.45 | <u>SESSION II: Language &amp; Ethnicity</u><br><b>Mojca Ravnik</b> (Ljubljana)<br><b>Nikola Živković</b> (Berlin)<br><i>"Sichelburg (Žumberak) – a small Balkan Enclave in Central Europe"</i><br><b>Tanja Petrović</b> , (Beograd, Ljubljana)<br><i>"The language of the Autochthonous Serbian Minority in Southern Slovenia"</i>  |
| 15.45 - 16.15 | <i>coffee break</i>   |

16.15 - 18.00

Chair:**Giorgio Ziffer**, (Udine)**Biljana Sikimić**, (Beograd)*"Ethnolinguistic research of Serbs on the island of Csepel, Hungary, possibilities and perspectives"***Mirko Križman**, (Maribor)*"Sociolinguistic research of the German speaking (hidden) minority in the Mur-region on the Slovene-Austrian border"*  
dinner

19.00

**Friday, 22 March 2002**

09.0 - 10.45

**SESSION III, The Vanishing of Hidden Minorities**Chair:**Duška Knežević-Hočevar**, (Ljubljana)**Klaus-J. Hermanik**, (Graz)*"The hidden minority of Styrian Slovenes - including examples of Soboth region"***Eduard Staudinger**, (Graz)*"Remnants of the German Speaking Minority in the Northeast of Slovenia: The Abstall Region"*

10.45 - 11.15

*coffee break*

10.45 - 13.00

**Ivica Šarac**, (Mostar, Graz)*"Some Remarks on the Catholic Serbs of Dubrovnik"***Marijana Jakimova**, (Sofia, Graz)*"Bulgarian Migrant Gardeners in Austria: Integration and Assimilation"*

13.00 - 14.00

*lunch break*

14.00- 15.45

**SESSION IV: Ethnicity & Hidden Minorities**Chair:**Robert G. Minnich**, (Bergen)**Mojca Ravnik**, (Ljubljana)*"Family and Identity in Slovenian Istria"***Duška Knežević-Hočevar**, (Ljubljana)*"Language and Self-Ascriptions at the new Slovenian-Croat State Border in the Upper Kolpa-Valley"*

15.45 - 16.15

*coffee break*

16.15 - 18.00

**Marija Jurič-Pahor**, (Trieste/Trst)*"Hidden identities in national minority groups: the case of Slovenes in Carinthia and in the Province of Trieste"*

Slovenes

**Oto Luthar**, (Ljubljana)*"An invisible Community. Between dispersal and a new sense of belonging: Surviving Strategies of Gypsies in Prekmurje-Slovenia"*

19.00                    *dinner*

**Saturday, 23 March 2002**

09.0 - 10.45            **SESSION V, Law & Politics**

Chair:                    **Oto Luthar**, (Ljubljana)

**Mirjam Polzer-Srienz**, (Innsbruck)

*"The Representation of small ethnic groups in States Bodies: The case of Austria and Slovenia"*

**Wolfgang L. Gombocz**, (Graz)

*"How to call back to public life a "dying" minority in Austria? The example of establishing the very first cultural organization (kulturno društvo člen sedem [7]) of the Styrian Slovenes"*

10.45 - 11.15            *coffee break*

11.15 - 13.00            **SESSION VI: Additional Input and Final Discussion**

Chair:                    **Christian Promitzer** (Graz)

**Giorgio Ziffer** (Udine)

*"Languages in contact in the Alpine-Adriatic Region in the High Middle Ages"*

13.00 - 14.00            *lunch break*

14.00 - 22.00            **Excursion to the region of Prekmurje/Slovenia**

Organised and financed by the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC – SAZU)

**Sunday, 24 March 2002**

*day of departure*

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