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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT
ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under
articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum
SLOVENIA*

[26 March 2004]

* The information submitted by Slovenia in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.35).

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Article 15

The right to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and to benefit from the protection of moral and material interests resulting from copyright work

A. The field of science

1. Scientific progress and results

886. On the legislative level, a new Research and Development Activity Act (Ur. l. RS, 96/02) has been adopted, and its first four articles set out general provisions laying down the framework and orientations that are important for ensuring the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications. The following provisions of the Act are worthy of mention:

Article 1

“This Act lays down the principles and objectives, and regulates the manner of implementing research and development activity policy, which is financed from the national budget and other sources (from European programmes and funds,

local communities and the commercial sector) and is orientated towards achieving the goals of social and economic development for Slovenia.”

Article 2

“Persons who perform research and development activity shall be guaranteed the autonomy of their research. Research and development activity shall be based on the principles of ethics and responsibility for fulfilling the objectives set out in the National Research and Development Programme and in budget memorandums, while respecting the social, environmental protection and sustainable aspects of social development, on the principles of competitiveness, quality, efficiency, openness and cooperation, and on links serving mutual interests in the national and international environment. Financing of research and development activity shall be carried out in such a way as to ensure the efficiency and transparency of the use of public funds. Priority in international cooperation shall be given to involvement in the European Research Area and European Union framework programmes. The results of research and development activity financed from the national budget shall be public, with restrictions provided by the regulations governing protection of intellectual property, protection of copyright and data protection.”

Article 3

“The purpose of this Act is to create the organization of, and lay down the conditions for, financing research and development activities for fulfilling the fundamental strategic development objectives, which ensure:

- The creation of new knowledge and awareness, and the transfer of this and internationally attainable knowledge to the public benefit and commercial application so as to increase the prosperity of society;
- The strengthening of capacity to manage general social progress and technological progress as the main source of raising labour productivity and the national competitive capacity in the global environment;
- The raising of individual and public quality of life and affirming the national identity.”

Article 4

“The objectives of the Act are:

- To increase the social importance and effectiveness of research and development activity by establishing a polycentric model for the development of science and a network linking research organizations in the area of science, education and the economy;
- To create the conditions for autonomous and professionally independent guiding, evaluating and monitoring of research and development activity;

- To encourage the operation of development cores in science, commerce and society in areas that constitute the basis for long-term economic and social development;
- To develop human resources while ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and to develop research creativity by increasing the role of science in the education of executive personnel, especially at university;
- To increase the total extent of funds and investments in research and development activity, which will be achieved by directing public funds into strategic development areas;
- To promote international and interdisciplinary cooperation.”

887. In support of scientific progress and fulfilment of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, on the national level there are three institutional support systems in operation, namely:

- Basic and applied scientific research projects;
- Targeted research projects;
- Independent research of all other line ministries.

888. Research is conducted at the two universities, 18 public research organizations and certain institutes, and involves over 10,000 full- or part-time researchers, including research for preserving the cultural heritage and promoting a healthy and clean environment. Special mention should be made of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, which is the country’s largest research organization in the area of humanities, and studies the fundamental elements of national identity and cultures. Studies are conducted as part of the permanent programme of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Slovene nation.

889. The application of scientific progress to benefit the preservation of human cultural heritage and the promotion of a healthy and clean environment is ensured through basic and applied research in the areas of natural sciences, technology, medicine, biotechnology, social sciences and humanities. In these areas, 10 research projects have been carried out in recent years for the purpose of preserving the human cultural heritage and a further 14 research projects for promoting a healthy and clean environment. A specific number of research projects with these objectives have also been financed by other ministries.

890. Similarly, in order to ensure the application of scientific progress for the benefit of preserving the human cultural heritage and of promoting a healthy and clean environment, within the Ministry targeted research programmes are in operation to support the strategic development of Slovenia, “Competitiveness of Slovenia 2001-2006”, represented by nine multidisciplinary framework strategic programmes at the government level, linking the research and development programmes of several sectoral fields. Given the national priorities, the programmes are as follows: competitiveness of the economy; efficiency of the State and the development of democracy; human resources and social cohesion; economic infrastructure; balanced regional and spatial

development and the developmental role of the environment; integrated development in the area of food safety, healthy diet and the countryside; international relations and national security; national identity, pluralism and international integration; and the information society. In the programme of balanced regional and spatial development and the developmental role of the environment, there are 28 research projects under way; in the programme of integrated development in the area of food safety, healthy diet and the countryside there are 32 projects, and in the programme of national identity, pluralism and international integration there are 9 projects.

2. Encouraging application

891. Application of the results of scientific progress is encouraged through the following measures:

- In the evaluation of research groups, alongside scientific excellence and the international importance of results, account is also taken of the applied developmental orientation and application of research results;
- In the promotion of researchers to scientific and research positions in the public sector, alongside scientific and professional quality, again account is taken of success in translating results into practice.

892. Under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport there exists a special form of State support for the planned training of junior researchers in six scientific disciplines. Each year the programme involves between 150 and 200 junior researchers.

893. Many persons trained for research are systematically employed in institutions, in the State administration and in local community administration in the area of preserving cultural heritage and promoting a healthy and clean environment.

894. Spreading information about scientific progress is ensured through the following measures:

- In the electronic and printed media there are special sections on science and on the results of science and its applications, aimed at the general public;
- Systematic support for professional and science as well as popular science journals in Slovenian and other languages targeting special circles and the general public, including young people;
- Subsidizing monographs and scientific meetings.

895. The Ministry co-finances programmes to promote scientific and research achievements, designed to provide a better understanding of science, to encourage the popular presentation of scientific achievements to various circles, to encourage the acquisition of new knowledge, to present in a comprehensive manner the work of Slovenian scientists and to promote science institutions.

896. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport together with other ministries that support science and its applications provide regular annual reports in written form and via the Internet on research work and on public spending to support research activities. The research reports are available as integrated texts in the national public library system.

897. Anyone interested can find over the Internet in the databases provided by the COBISS system (Cooperative Online Bibliographic System and Services) and SICRIS (Slovenian Current Research Information System) data on research organizations, research groups, researchers, research projects and programmes and bibliographical data on researchers. Data on projects in the SICRIS system are integrated into the European information system.

898. The Ministry does not take any steps directly to prevent the application of scientific and technical progress for purposes that run counter to the enjoyment of human rights, but in medical disciplines there is a committee that judges the ethical aspects and permissibility of carrying out research in medicine.

899. The conditions and procedures for formulating, selecting, financing and overseeing implementation of basic and applied projects, targeted research programmes, financing of meetings, publications and monographs of junior researchers and the promotion of science are regulated by relevant implementing regulations.

3. Promoting and developing international contacts and cooperation in the field of science

900. The new Research and Development Activity Act (Ur. l. RS, 96/02) lays down fundamental principles that highlight openness and mutual-interest cooperation and linking in the national and international environment. Priority in international cooperation is given to inclusion in the European Research Area and framework programmes of the European Union.

901. International cooperation in the area of science is largely governed by bilateral and multilateral agreements on scientific and technological cooperation which Slovenia has concluded since independence with individual countries or international organizations. Slovenia has concluded bilateral agreements on scientific cooperation with 27 countries, these being the majority of European Union member States, all neighbouring countries, the majority of European Union candidate countries, all the countries of South-East Europe and all the major countries of the world, such as the United States of America, the Russian Federation, China, Japan, India and Brazil. Under bilateral agreements, work is currently under way on around 550 joint research projects co-financed by Slovenia in compliance with international agreements.

902. Slovenia has also concluded international agreements on cooperation in the area of science through the United Nations Development Programme, other intergovernmental organizations and international centres, with the European Union and other European programmes, and cooperates in regional organizations such as the Central European

Initiative and the Alps-Adriatic Working Community. The most extensive cooperation is in the fields of science, research, technology and development with the European Union, with which Slovenia already collaborated as an equal based on the relevant agreement in the fifth framework programme for the period 1998-2002, and through the Memorandum of Understanding of 29 October 2002 the full and equal cooperation of Slovenia has been provided in the new sixth framework programme of the European Union for the period 2002-2006. In addition, Slovenia has been a full member of the COST Programme since 1992 and the EUREKA Programme since 1994. Within the range of European programmes there are currently under way more than 500 research and development projects in which Slovene organizations are collaborating.

903. The manner of including and financing the cooperation of Slovene scientists and experts in international cooperation programmes is regulated in detail by the Rules on Financing and Co-Financing the International Scientific Co-operation of the Republic of Slovenia (Ur. l. RS, 62/96, 11/98, 48/99 and 46/01), which lays down the issuing of a public tender for every activity and the extent of funding. On the basis of the annual public tender, the Rules also provide for co-financing the participation by Slovene scientists and experts in international scientific conferences and other international meetings, and the work of Slovene non-governmental scientific and expert associations in appropriate international, European or regional scientific and expert associations.

904. It should be noted that Slovenia's scientific cooperation and the contacts of Slovene scientists and experts around the world are very extensive and developed, and no special problems have been noticed in this respect. The main limiting factor is the limited budget funds mentioned above.