

## PREVENTING DEMENTIA

Sleepyville/Ljubljana. **Newest research clearly testifies that active bilingualism already in an early stage of life is preventing symptoms of dementia.**

This flabbergasting fact enables to look from a new angle on the heated debate about the Slovenian minority's proposal in the Italian border city of Sleepyville to make the Slovenian language obligatory for all secondary schools.

The meeting of the council seemed to begin quite as usual until the mayor Varenka Esperanza was forced to scream with her gentle voice into the meeting hall to overtone the journalist's gossip.

Never has this one-horse town attracted more attention than in these days. Due to the proposal of the Slovenian minority this city hit the headlines in many European countries, which have to deal with challenges related to ethnic minorities.

It's all about the question how far should a government go to establish the rights of minorities in a sustainable way?

Although this topic gained quite a lot of attention it is not the first time that a local government made the decision to incorporate a minority language into the education system, as with the case of South-Carinthia in Austria. After the Second World War in 1945, a new law was passed obligating all schools in South-Carinthia to give lessons bilingually. Unfortunately, the majority of people opposed this certain law, what resulted in the change of the law in 1959.

The current situation in Sleepyville resembles pretty much that of Carinthia. The delegates of the liberal party "We are the Real Deal" announced that they won't vote in favor of the new law because of the funding issue. This statement raises the questions what is it worth for us to be educated in a multiethnic way and isn't it rather an investment in our common European future?

Furthermore, Zvone Žigon from the Ministry of Slovenians abroad pointed at an official press conference out that the main interest of Slovenia concerning its diaspora is to enforce economic relationships. Thus, the establishment of a bilingual education system can certainly improve the local economy, as

well as the bilateral cooperation in economics between Slovenia and Italy.

Both countries, which are experiencing deep economic crisis, would gain from such a development.

Even the mayor answered on the question if the municipality would profit from a stronger cooperation between both countries with a clear and convinced "Yes".

Even though the proposal didn't pass the council, the mayor proclaimed to finance private Slovenian kindergartens and schools. At the same time Ms. Esperanza couldn't answer the question if a division of the education system after the lines of nationality could be a danger for the multiethnic society. Afterwards the party "We are the Real Deal" addressed if it makes sense to learn the language of a minority.

*„Why should we learn the language of a minority? “*

Let's just answer this question in a broader sense by using a citation by Bertrand Russell:

**“Majorities cement the existing; progress is only possible through minorities.”**