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Giving the Slovenian minority in Hungary a voice

This article has been written by Tibor Horvat and Joël Gerber of www.vendvidek.com. Their aim is to present the Slovenian minority in Hungary to the world. This is your invitation to visit their website and Slovensko Porabje.



Slovensko Porabje - Slovene Raba Region

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The project of our website gives us an opportunity to discuss the eventful history and diverse culture of the Slovene Raba Region. Additionally, Tibor Horvat has his own very personal connection to the Slovene Raba Region since he comes from Apátistvánfalva/Števanovci on his father's side. Tibor wanted to learn more about his Slovenian roots and Joël was interested in the history and culture of the Slovenian minority.

While searching the internet for sources of information, we found some material in Hungarian and Slovenian, however, there was hardly any information available in English or other languages. We assumed that many descendants of the Slovenians from the Raba Region who cannot speak Slovenian would also be interested in learning more about their heritage. For this reason, we considered creating a bilingual website in English and German which is what we did ten years ago. In 2005, we were the first to make available extensive online information on the Slovene Raba Region (Slovensko Porabje) to the general public.

According to the 2011 census, the community of the Slovenes in Hungary consists of almost 3,000 people and is in danger of becoming extinct. With our website we want to make a contribution to the preservation of the cultural heritage of this minority, especially where history, culture and traditions are concerned. It is our aim to bring the Slovenian population living in Porabje to a broader international public and specifically to inform the Slovenians from the Raba Region and their descendants living in the English and German-speaking areas about their origins.

Those who wanted to get informed about the Slovenians in Hungary and who possessed no language skills in Slovenian or in the regional variation of Slovenian, a circumstance that, for example, applies to the vast majority of the Slovenians from the Raba Region living in the US, used to search unsuccessfully for any information about the region of their origin before the launch of our website in 2005.

On our website, we introduce the seven villages of the Slovenian Raba Region by providing information on cultural customs such as festive days, dances, popular beliefs and regional cuisine. For those who are interested in languages, the website offers an English/German - Porabian (Porabščina) dictionary. Porabian is the local Slovenian dialect that is partly still spoken in the Slovenian Raba Region today. Moreover, we frequently attended public events and festivities periodically taking place in the seven Slovenian villages of Porabje, not least in order to gain personal impressions that we can then publish as brief reports on our website.

One of the most popular categories on our website is Genealogy. It contains a photo gallery showing the tombstones of the villages' graveyards. Owing to this segment, it is now possible for the descendants of the Slovenians from the Raba Region living overseas to see the last resting places of their deceased family members and to do family research with the help of the epitaphs shown on our website. Furthermore, many US citizens and persons living outside Hungary in general have contacted us via our guest book and asked us questions concerning their heritage, the history of the region, their family members, the terminology (Slovenski, Porabski, Prekmurski, Windish), the difference between Porabje and Prekmurje, etc.. We always answer such questions as quickly as possible.

It has occurred several times that families who had been separated for decades found their relatives and could be reunited due to our website. As various guest book entries prove, many people who take interest in the history and culture of ethnic groups learned of the existence of a Slovenian minority in Hungary due to our website. A lot of them knew about Slovenians living in Austria and Italy, but not about the existence of a Slovenian minority in Hungary.

Moreover, very often tourists who visit Porabje discovered this region due to our website. In 2007, we installed an exhibition in four languages (Slovenian, Hungarian, English and German) on the emigration of the Mura and Raba Region Slovenians to the USA. The exhibition toured Hungary and Slovenia. We guided members of the Slovenian diaspora in the USA through the Raba and Mura Region and introduced them to their historical roots and thus helped them perceive the cultural diversity of the region as if they were a part of it. Many people have already become enthusiastic about the Slovenian Raba Region. Now it is your turn to go on an expedition to the fascinating Raba Region and to get to know the rich history, culture and customs of Porabje!



We are Tibor Horvat and Joël Gerber and since 2005 we have been running a website about the Slovenes living in Hungary (Slovene Raba Region/Porabje). The website is both in English and in German. In the last ten years, we have been working completely without any financial aid. Tibor Horvat holds a Master's Degree in Economics, Political Science and Media Studies, and Joël Gerber holds a Master's Degree in History and English Language and Literature. Furthermore, we are both certified teachers of German as a foreign language / German as a second language. Together we share a profound interest in history and ethnic minorities in particular.

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