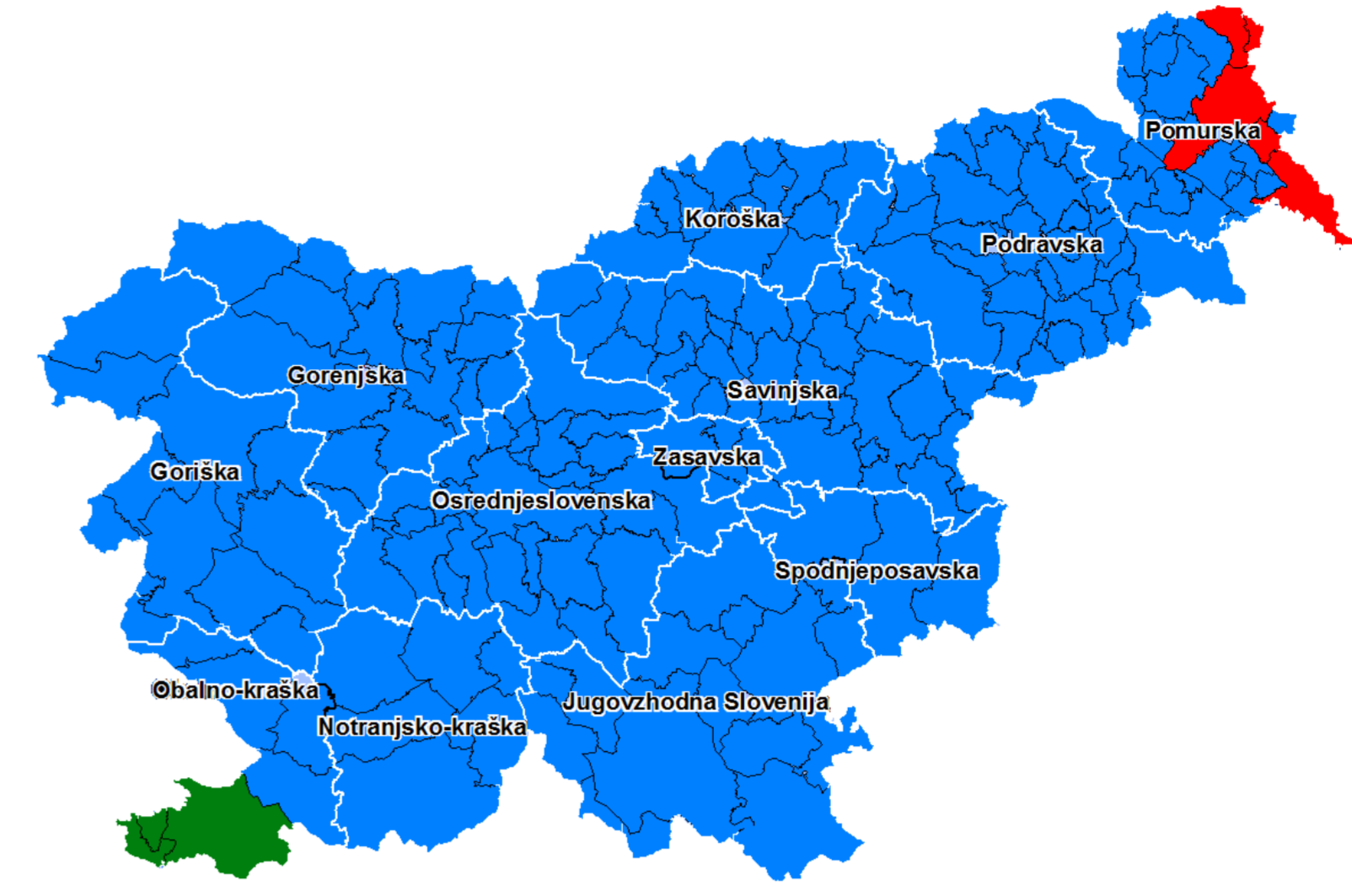


# Hungarians in Slovenia

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## Short facts



The Hungarians in Slovenia are a small minority mainly settled in the Pomurje region (Hung. *Muravidék*) in the north-eastern part of the country, near the Hungarian border, within an area of less than 200 km<sup>2</sup>. The Hungarian national community in Prekmurje/Muravidék became a minority as a result of the peace treaty in Trianon. They make up only 0.32% of the total population of Slovenia (1,964,034).

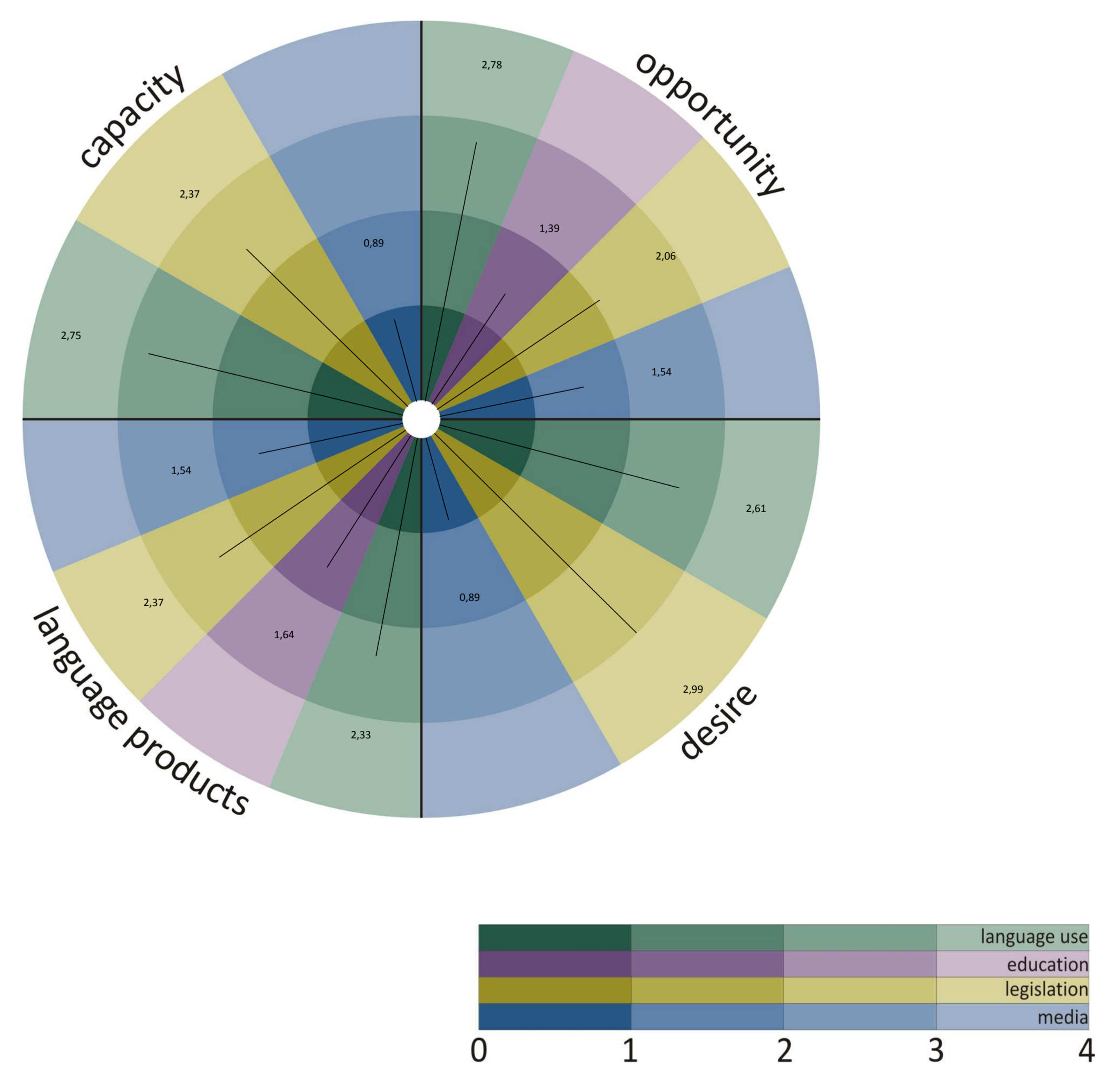
According to the census of 2002, 5212 people declared themselves as Hungarians and 6237 regarded Hungarian as their mother tongue. The Hungarian minority enjoys a high level of legal protection: the Hungarian language has the status of a regional official language, the Constitution grants the minority special rights on all fields of life, and they have a representative at the parliament who has a right to veto in questions related to the minority.

Their bilingual educational program grants that both the majority and the minority learn the language of the other, both languages are used as target and as medium languages. Compared with other Hungarian communities outside Hungary, the Pomurje Hungarians have the highest grade of cultural autonomy. In addition to the Pomurje Hungarians, there are also some 1000 more recent Hungarian immigrants living in different parts of Slovenia.

## ELDIA's results

- Hungarians in Slovenia generally have a positive attitude towards multilingualism; they are bilinguals or multilinguals, have a wish to use both Hungarian and Slovenian and display various bilingual language use patterns. The community is multilingual: beside Hungarian and Slovenian, the sample shows a high level of competence in Croatian – the language of a neighbouring country. Respondents further reported relatively good competence in German and somewhat weaker skills in English.
- Hungarians in Slovenia reported to be balanced bilinguals in all four language skills (understanding, speaking, reading and writing). The level of competence in the more prestigious Slovenian is only higher in reading and writing.
- The data show that the Hungarian-language communication between the respondents and their mothers decreases more considerably than in the case of Slovenian. Using both languages is further more common in the communication between the mother and the child than between the father and the child.
- Hungarian is maintained mostly within the family and in the private sphere. Slovenian has become part of the everyday communication within the family. Families have become bilingual, adapting to the Slovene environment. There is, however, no drastic change in the use of Hungarian. In general, the sole use of Slovenian or the joint use of Slovenian and Hungarian is increasing.
- Hungarian is used primarily at home, in communication with relatives and neighbours and in the church. It is least often used in formal domains, especially rarely with public authorities. The data highlights the major problem of the Prekmurje bilingualism: the gap between theory (legal situation) and practice (de jure bilingualism).
- When examining the language domains the fewest responses were received about Hungarian language use at work, in the library, and in the school, even though there are bilingual schools (mandatory to all students in the territorial bilingual area, including children with Slovenian mother tongue as well).

## EuLaViBar



- In the case of the Hungarian language in Slovenia, the barometer shows 2.24, which seems to be a proof of the advanced level of language shift.
- It seems that the Hungarian community's situation is a highly complex one, full with contradictions. Slovenian-Hungarian bilingualism clearly has an important role. Using Slovenian words and expressions and other contact phenomena are one of the most prevalent characteristics of the speech community.
- The language use values (capacity, opportunity, desire), with the exception of language products show that there is a discrepancy between real and the desired language use.