

## **Statement of the General Convent regarding the so-called “national anthem law” in Slovakia**

It is an inalienable right of Hungarians living in Slovakia to sing the Hungarian national anthem. The Hungarian national anthem is not only the Hungarian nation’s prayer, but also one of the songs in the Hungarian Reformed hymn book. As the Slovak state guarantees freedom of religion to all of its citizens, this must also extend to the singing of the Hungarian national prayer.

We consider the 27 March decision of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to be a severe invasion into the public exercise of religion, which is a breach of constitutionality. The General Convent finds such a flagrant breach of the freedom of conscience and religion to be unacceptable.

We hereby urge lawmakers in Slovakia to repeal this amendment, which is in breach of fundamental democratic rights.

The General Convent furthermore asks every Slovakia-based Hungarian congregation to keep singing the Hungarian national anthem. Let us remind everyone today of all days, which happens to be National Poetry Day in Hungary, that the Hungarian national anthem, *Himnusz*, written by the great Reformed poet Ferenc Kölcsey, is a vital part of our national heritage.

Presidium of the General Convent

Budapest, 11 April 2019

Translated by Erzsébet Bölcskei