



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
High Commissioner on National Minorities**

Ref.11/00

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Dear Professor Marga,

Thank you very much for the hospitality that was extended to us during our visit to Cluj-Napoca on 2 March. We highly appreciated our discussions with you. As we indicated in our recommendations of 17 February, we are very much aware of your pioneering efforts regarding the concept of multiculturalism at Babes-Bolyai University. We are also impressed by your commitment to its further development. We welcome a number of concrete steps which have been taken in this regard, such as the provision of courses in Hungarian in the faculties of Law and Economics during the second semester of the 1999-2000 academic year, and the offering of programmes in Romanian, Hungarian and German for the fall 2000 admission by these two faculties. Obviously there is a clear need for these commitments to be implemented. Any deviation from them could cause damage to the mutual trust which is so essential for the further development of multiculturalism at the Babes-Bolyai University.

Reflecting on the discussion we had with you and other professors at the Babes-Bolyai University during our visit on March 2, we were impressed by the progress of multiculturalism since this concept was introduced, but we also felt that multiculturalism can only come to full fruition if all sides feel confident that the interests of each of the lines of study will be given equal weight, and if the professors and students of all lines of study are able to identify with what the University is trying to achieve in the field of multiculturalism.

Against this background, we welcome especially the intention to revise the Charter of the Babes-Bolyai University. It was adopted in 1995, when multilingual education at the University was still in its early stages; indeed the concept of multiculturalism is hardly mentioned in the Charter. Furthermore, it does not take into account developments within the University during the past five years concerning the "lines" of study and the possibilities afforded by the 1999 amendments to the Law on Education. Chapter 3, paragraph 7 of the Charter (on Organization and Functioning Principles), seems to be particularly outdated, not only because new programmes in German and Hungarian have been established, but especially because it fails to express the central aim of multiculturalism: to serve the interests of all ethnic groups on the basis of

complete equality. To formulate this clearly in the Charter would help to ensure that professors and students from the various ethnic minorities in Romania will consider Babes-Bolyai University as “their” University.

While being aware that the success of multicultural education of a high academic standard at Babes-Bolyai University depends on the efforts of all lines of study, but we also have an understanding for the wish of particularly the Hungarian line of study, constituting a minority in the decision making process at the Babes-Bolyai University, to have additional guarantees that its interests will be adequately safeguarded. We are aware that the proposal of Hungarian professors to create separate faculties is opposed by the two other lines of study, notwithstanding the fact that the amended education law mentions this option under article 123. These observations bring us to the conclusion that it is even more necessary to develop an alternative formula which could provide the Hungarian line of study the guarantees that it is seeking. Bearing this in mind, we would suggest that the following formula be included in the Charter:

“Proposals made by any line of study in the Teaching Councils of the various Faculties and their specialised Commissions should be adopted unless opposed by a two-thirds majority of the Teaching Council. Any votes defeated in a faculty Teaching Council may be resubmitted to the Senate. In order for the decisions of the Teaching Council to be upheld, the vote in the Senate would require a two-thirds majority.”

Perhaps the objection might be made that in practice such a guarantee is not necessary, because usually decisions of relevance for the various lines of study are taken by consensus. Our answer to this is that the fact that such a mechanism might only rarely be used does not in itself constitute a reason to oppose it. Even if it might be considered to be superfluous, it serves an important purpose: to provide the line of study which seems to be most in need of it with an important reassurance.

In our view, the promotion of trust, which is so essential for the success of multiculturalism, would also be served if the Charter in its revised form would not only give an up to date description of the various courses provided at the Babes-Bolyai University in the German and Hungarian languages, but would also stipulate that these programmes would not be reduced unless all lines of study would agree to this.

Equally, it would be of significance to promote the multilingual character of the University. We are thinking especially of the issuing of diplomas and other official documents in all three languages of the University as well as signage and public information in Romanian, German and Hungarian. It will increase the feeling that the University serves all groups within it.

In conclusion, we would like to draw your attention and that of the commission drafting the revised Charter to those points of our recommendations of 17 February 2000 which were not addressed in the 23-point paper that was presented to us on March 2. These include the need for a strategic plan for the development of multiculturalism (with a clear, fixed timetable and objectives), initiatives to update curriculum and review academic standards, an affirmative action hiring policy, and programmes to encourage language conversion and enhancement.

We are aware of your intention to develop the concept of multiculturalism at the Babes-Bolyai University in such a way that it can serve as a model for other states in South Eastern Europe. Please consider the suggestions we have made in this letter as an effort on our side to help you in achieving this aim. With this in mind, we would also hope to receive a copy of the first draft of the revised Charter.

The experts and myself wish you the best of luck in your important and challenging endeavours and look forward to our further co-operation.

Sincerely,

Max van der Stoep