

Closing declaration

On the situation of the Hungarian language Higher Education in Romania

We, the participants at the 2nd European Conference on Higher Education of Minorities, have personally informed ourselves on the situation of the Hungarian-language higher education in Romania. We have been astonished to find out that there is a national minority in Europe, numbering 1.5 million souls, which neither possess an independent state-financed university in the mother tongue, nor does it benefit of cultural autonomy, *i.e.* the Hungarians in Romania.

In present day Europe, as an accepted practice, states grant the right for traditional national minorities, indigenous people to access higher education in their mother tongue. The Sami of Norway, the Gagauz in Moldova, the Swedes of Finland, the Germans in South-Tyrol, the Hungarians in Slovakia, the Albanians in Macedonia and the Catalans in Spain possess public (state-financed) higher education institutions that teach in the respective mother tongues. The Galego and the Basque in Spain, as well as the Welsh in Great-Britain possess public higher education institutions where their own language usage is equal in rank not only on the level of discourse, but in daily life.

Despite that the Hungarian community in Transylvania is one of the largest national minorities in Europe, it is heavily under-represented in the Romanian higher education. As long as the proportion of Hungarians in the general population of Romania is 6.6%, only 1.6% of the students in Romania are able to pursue their studies in the Hungarian language. Among many important areas, for instance, none of the engineering sciences may be studied in Hungarian in the public higher education system. The Hungarian teaching staff that promotes the extension of the higher education in minority languages are intimidated at the self-proclaimed multicultural “Babes-Bolyai” University, and the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Târgu-Mureş / Marosvásárhely, where such personalities are placed in top positions who do not represent the interests of the Hungarian community. It is unacceptable that, opposed to the propaganda of the “Babes-Bolyai” University, there are no multilingual signs placed in the institution, the Hungarian teachers are denied their right to organize independent departments, and the Hungarian language may not be used as an official language at the institution. It is not normal that the Hungarian state had to intervene to improve the situation, and that, at present, the state budget of Hungary is the exclusive financial resource that supports two private Hungarian language universities in Romania, while Hungarians in Transylvania pay their share of taxes to Romania.

We, the representatives of the minorities of Europe, who benefit of better conditions, assume solidarity with the Hungarians of Transylvania, who are, in many aspects deprived of their rights. We share their view, that it is their rightful demand that the Hungarian language “Bolyai” University abolished during the communist dictatorship be re-established, and that they should be granted the right to have the higher education institutions in their mother tongue. This is also a shared European interest, as all citizens should feel at home in this region, and nobody should be disadvantaged because of their mother tongue. We ask the European political leadership to make firm steps in order to end the minority discrimination experienced in Romania. History has shown in several instances that hiding the infringements of rights cannot lead to sustainable solutions.

Igor BREITNER, Budapest, Hungary
Manuel GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ, Galicia, Spain
Tibor KMET, Komárom, Slovakia
Pigga LAUHAMAA, Saamiland, Norway
Natalia NACHOGLO, Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova
Jusuf MUSTAFA, Tetova, Macedonia
Vicky RABENSTEINER, South Tyrol, Italy
Gwen RICE, Wales, Great Britain
Irina TABANOVA, Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova
Ágnes SLAVITY, Vojvodina, Serbia