

## **Tensions mount as staff fired for using Hungarian**

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The dismissal of two ethnic-Hungarian lecturers from the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj (Romania) has prompted a high-level response from the Hungarian Government.

They were dismissed for putting up notices in Hungarian alongside the officially approved ones in Romanian. Hungarians perceived this as an attack on the autonomy of the Hungarian "stream" of the officially multicultural university.

The Hungarian Government, which until now has tended to soft-pedal the issue of Hungarians "across the border", at once issued a statement of concern.

The Hungarian Foreign Ministry announced that it would take a "resolute stand", while Katalin Szili, the Parliament Speaker, and Istvan Hiller, the Education Minister, sent letters to their respective Romanian opposite numbers asking them to intervene.

In 1945, two institutions teaching respectively in Romanian and Hungarian merged to become the Babes-Bolyai University, teaching in both languages.

Under the Communist regime of Nicolae Ceaucescu, the university was Romanianised.

After the 1989 revolution, the Transylvanian Hungarians began campaigning for a Hungarian-taught university within the Romanian state system.

The Romanian Government would not agree, but instead turned the Babes-Bolyai University into an "international" institution, with courses also being taught in German and English.

According to Marta Horvath, Secretary of State at the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, the promised autonomy of the Hungarian stream never materialised.

"Hungary will keep the issue on the agenda until it is settled," she said.