

Motion supports sacked lecturer

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Peter Hantz, one of two Hungarian lecturers dismissed from a self-proclaimed multicultural university in Romania for putting up notices in Hungarian, has had his case accepted by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Göran Lindblad, from the Swedish European People's Party, along with 24 high-level signatories from 19 European countries, presented a motion for a resolution on the breaching the 1994 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Romanian Government.

Last December, Dr Hantz, a physics lecturer, was sacked from Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania, for placing notices in Hungarian around the university. This was in spite of the rector having issued a decree permitting the use of multilingual signs and official claims that the university is a multicultural three-language institution (Romanian, German and Hungarian).

Its prospectus states that notices in the languages of ethnic minorities in Transylvania can be found on campus. Those campaigning for an end to the discrimination say that the political elite aims to liquidate the Hungarian community, in part by diminishing Hungarian representation in higher education.

Dr Hantz said: "We are fighting for our basic rights. All other universities in Europe have minority-language teaching and different nationalities co-operate. What about us?"

Romania was admitted to the European Union in January, but it has failed to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Hungarians make up 6.6 per cent of the Romanian population and 4.4 per cent of students.