

Facts and Arguments in Support of the Hungarian-Language Bolyai University in Transylvania (Romania)

Overview

During the communist dictatorship, the education conducted in the Hungarian language in Romania was almost completely dissolved. Even the Hungarian-language 'Bolyai' University was forced to merge with the Romanian-language 'Babes' University. After Ceausescu's dictatorship was abolished, tens of thousands of ethnic Hungarians of Transylvania participated in mass demonstrations in 1990 demanding the creation of the independent Hungarian-language education system in Romania, including the re-establishment of the state-financed Hungarian university.

From 1992 to 1997, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) collected over 500,000 signatures to support these objectives. This civic initiative would be more than sufficient in a true democracy to grant certain rights, which otherwise do not hinder the interests of any other groups.

In 2001, the Romanian Parliament rejected 2 bids submitted back in 1998 by the representatives of the Hungarian minority demanding the re-establishment of the state-financed Hungarian-language 'Bolyai' University. In the same year, the Romanian Intelligence Service labelled the intention to create the Hungarian university in Romania as a threat to national security.

In October 2005, thousands of people marched the streets of 4 major cities in Transylvania demanding the same education rights. In December 2005, 149 university teachers of the 'Babes-Bolyai' University, i.e. 83% of the involved Hungarian teaching staff demanded in their petition the creation of the Natural Sciences, Humanities, as well as Social and Economic Sciences faculties teaching in the Hungarian language at the 'Babes-Bolyai' University. Moreover, the Regular Report of the European Commission on Romania also urged the development of the Hungarian language higher education and that the necessary financial resources are provided to this end. The 'Babes-Bolyai' University ruling to impede the creation of the above-mentioned three Hungarian faculties infringes on Article 123 of the Romanian Education Act as well as on its own University Charta.

Although the Romanian Education Act allows for the establishment of Hungarian departments and faculties within the existing universities, it does not allow the establishment of a state-financed Hungarian university. In February 2006, 80 professors enjoying international recognition, among them 11 Nobel, Fields or Wolf Laureates, demanded the re-establishment of the Hungarian-language 'Bolyai' University. Their petition, addressed to the Romanian President and Prime Minister, as well as to the president of the European Commission, remained unanswered.

The spokespersons of the Romanian majoritary intolerance, among them some ethnic Hungarian university staff, often propagate lies and false arguments to hamper the process of building an independent, Hungarian-language higher education institution. Therefore, we believe that it is very necessary to provide an insight of the most important arguments and facts to support the re-establishment of the state-financed Hungarian university in Romania.

The mouthpieces of intolerance on behalf of the majority, which include even a number of ethnic Hungarian teachers, very often use false arguments and even lies to hinder the Hungarian education to break independent. Their misleading analyses are deliberately addressed to a public very little familiar or unfamiliar with the current situation. Their obvious aim is to generate prejudices against the endeavors of the Hungarian community. Therefore, we deem important to summarize the most important arguments for and against the autonomy of the Hungarian university.

1. The opponents' position: In no country are separate universities or faculties organised on a language basis.

Not true. The Swedes in Finland (community of 300.000), the Sami in Norway (community of 80,000), the Catalans in Spain (community of 6,000,000), the Hungarians in Slovakia (community of 500,000), the Gagauz in Moldova (community of 150,000), and the Albanians in Macedonia (community of 700.000) benefit of one or more state-financed universities that teach in their native languages.

In addition, there are higher education institutions in Nitra (Slovakia) and Fribourg (Switzerland), which function with Hungarian and Slovak, as well as German and French structures, respectively. Moreover, even the 'Babes-Bolyai' University has two small Hungarian-language Theology faculties. We need to stress out that the Hungarian-language Natural Sciences, Humanities, and Social and Economic Sciences faculties at the 'Babes-Bolyai' University will be created on a language basis, not on an ethnic one.

2. The opponents' position: After the First World War, the universities of Cluj/Kolozsvár, Bratislava/Pozsony and Strasbourg/Strassburg were transferred under the authority of a different country. Presently, only the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University is following the path of multiculturalism, while the other two universities are not.

Not true. In 1919, a Romanian-language university was founded, and most of the teaching staff of the Hungarian university sought refuge abroad, in Szeged (Hungary). After the Second World War one Romanian-language and one Hungarian-language university was founded, the 'Babeş' University and the 'Bolyai' University, respectively. The 'Babeş-Bolyai' University, still existing, was founded by forced merging of the Romanian and the Hungarian institution, and as such, it may not make reference to the universities established after the First World War. We wish to emphasize that in Slovakia a state-financed Hungarian university is functioning, and that there is a Hungarian department at the "Constantine the Philosopher" University of Nitra/Nyitra.

3. The opponents' position: Ethnic Hungarian youth are represented in the Romanian higher education system according to their share in the general population.

Not true. According to the 2002 census, 6.6% of the general population in Romania are ethnic Hungarian. Data released in 2005 by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research reveal that of 650.335 university students 29,136 are ethnic Hungarian, which count for only 4.4% of that population.

Statistically speaking, in Romania, one state-funded higher education institution serves a population of 400,000. Since the census of 2002 puts the number of ethnic Hungarians of Romania to some 1.5 million, it would be justified to maintain 3 or 4 state-financed (public) Hungarian universities. Therefore, the Hungarian minority in Transylvania claims no privileges, but wishes to dispose over the funds collected from the taxes paid by them.

4. The opponents' position: The ratio of university degree holders in the ethnic Hungarian population matches the average in the general population.

Unfortunately, this is not true. 2002 census data shows that the ratio of degree holders in the general population is 6.6%, whereas in the Hungarian community this is only 4.48%, i.e. some 30,000 less than expected. According to data collected in 2004/2005, there are 300 students per 10,000 ethnic Romanians, while there are only 207 students per 10,000 ethnic Hungarians, which may be regarded as a serious discrimination. The negative impacts of lower education levels can easily be identified on the short run, with a clear trend to increase further in a knowledge based society. Ironically, as for high school graduates the Hungarian community tops the list of ethnic groups of Romania: 64.64% of ethnic Hungarians graduated from high school, while 58.1% of ethnic Romanians have the same level of education. When it comes to university degrees though, the Hungarian community lags far behind the national average.

5. The opponents' position: A considerable number of ethnic Hungarian students are continuing their studies in Hungary, so there is no justification for maintaining a state-financed Hungarian university.

False. According to the data released in 2005 by the Hungarian Ministry of Education there are about 2,900 Hungarian students with Romanian citizenship studying at Hungarian universities or colleges. This represents less than 10% of the ethnic Hungarian students in Romania.

6. The opponents' position: After the accession of Romania to the UE, the ethnic Hungarian students with Romanian citizenship will be allowed to study in Hungary, and therefore there is no justification for the development of a Hungarian-language higher education system in Transylvania.

Malicious statement. The Hungarian community in Transylvania pays its taxes to the Romanian state, thus it is entitled to have a higher education system funded by Romania. Only a very small proportion of the ethnic Hungarian youth studying abroad will return to their homeland. Unfortunately, one of the aims of the intolerant Romanian political elite and academic leadership is to make impossible the emergence of the next generation of Hungarian intellectuals; this explains the reasons for the false statement.

7. The opponents' position: A wide range of specialisations taught in the mother tongue are available to future Hungarian students.

Not true. No courses in engineering specialisations are offered in Hungarian at any state-financed university, apart from chemical engineering and physics-engineering studies involving not more than a few dozen students. No studies are available in Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural Sciences, Forestry Science or in most of the Arts specialisations for those who wish to pursue courses in the Hungarian language. Though

training is formally offered in Hungarian to would-be lawyers at the “Babes-Bolyai” University, the vast majority of the courses are taught in the Romanian language, since there is only one full-time Hungarian teacher employed at the Department of Law.

These shortcomings explain why only one-third of the Hungarian university students, i.e. some 10,000 may study in their native language, which amounts to only 1.6% of the total number of students in Romania.

8. The opponents’ position: Hungarian students are not supportive to the re-establishment of the Hungarian-language ‘Bolyai’ University.

Not true. This statement stems from the false interpretation of the findings of a controversial survey conducted in 1996. The survey showed that 80% of the Hungarian students would support more independence given to Hungarian higher education. The Hungarian Students’ Union of Kolozsvár/Cluj, one of the major students’ associations in Romania states in its by-laws the demand of re-establishing the ‘Bolyai’ University, and claims itself to be the students’ organisation of that institution.

Since its creation, the Hungarian Students’ Union actively participated in the actions aiming at the re-establishment of the ‘Bolyai’ University: they organised a number of mass demonstrations during the 1990s and were the co-organisers of the recent street marches in October 2005.

9. The opponents’ position: Not all ethnic Hungarian teachers support the autonomy of the Hungarian higher education.

Over 80% of the teachers have overtly voted for the pursuit of the autonomy. Some other 10% are supportive of the idea, however, due to the threats and blackmail they undergo from the management of the university, these people simply avoid to openly declaring their views on this matter. The remaining 10% of teachers with Hungarian names support the nationalist views of the majority in return for the higher salaries and positions they get from the management, and sometimes even for simply being excused by the management for their poor performance as teachers. The Hungarian community views these teachers as ‘traitors’, this, however, does not hinder them to play the role of the ‘Hungarians-on-duty’, and to justify with their presence and declaration the unlawful anti-minority practices.

10. The opponents’ position: The initiators did not pursue a wide-ranging social dialog with their fellow Hungarians relative to the need for the autonomy of the Hungarian higher education.

The exact opposite of this statement is true. The ‘Bolyai’ Initiative Committee organized several public debates on this topic with the participation of a large number of teachers, students and stakeholders. Unfortunately, those teachers who try hard to block the autonomy did not honor these meetings with their presence. Moreover, the ethnic Hungarian vice-rectors of the “Babes-Bolyai” University and of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Targu-Mures / Marosvásárhely are those who try to sabotage at all costs the calling of the general meeting of the ethnic Hungarian teachers. The representatives of majority nationalism use a very effective method: they continue approaching certain groups, until they are able to find someone ready to oppose autonomy, and whose voice will then be presented as being the “people’s voice”. If this method does not work, they argue, “well, then we have to ask another group”, while deliberately omitting the request of the Hungarians of Transylvania, supported by several hundreds of thousands of signatures.

11. The opponents’ position: The majority of the ethnic Romanians oppose the creation of an independent Hungarian university.

This is not true. The overwhelming majority of the Romanians are not familiar with this issue. Those who are, get their information from the partly objective and partly heavily anti-Hungarian articles and news of the Romanian press. Few Romanians speak Hungarian, and there is a very low number of printed and electronic press in Romanian edited by ethnic Hungarians. Consequently, information is very often biased, while the prejudices and lies propagated by the nationalistic political and academic elite create serious confusion.

It is noteworthy however, to consider the consequences of the public debates organized by the Pro Europa Liga and the ‘Bolyai’ Initiative Committee. In spite of being invited, the Romanian leaders who openly and vehemently oppose the re-starting of the “Bolyai” University by propagating lies, seldomly if ever attend any of these events. Those attending rarely argue frankly, but rather come up with absurd and untrue statements. This is probably due to the fact that these days it is “expected” to suppose that the Hungarians in Transylvania pose a national threat to Romania, and therefore, it would be much better to have them leave the country or to assimilate them.

12. The position of the ‘Babes-Bolyai’ University leaders: The Hungarian academic community at the University enjoys large autonomy.

Not true. The provisions of the University Charter are contradictory in this regard. The leaders of the University show to the public the paragraphs guaranteeing the autonomy, but in practice they apply the provisions with opposite content.

The lack of autonomy is best shown by the fact that the supreme decision-making body of the University, the Senate, completely disregarded the demand of 149 university teachers of the ‘Babes-Bolyai’ University concerning the establishment of three faculties teaching in Hungarian language. The situation is the same at the level of faculties; the Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics refused the unanimous request submitted by the Hungarian teachers of informatics to establish a Hungarian-language Informatics Department within the Faculty.

In several departments, Hungarian colleagues cannot take decisions concerning the subjects they teach in class and/or exam topics. The restriction with the most adverse consequences is that the syllabi for primary and secondary teacher training depend on the syllabi elaborated by the Romanian colleagues. It is impossible to take into account the specific issues and problems in Hungarian primary and secondary teacher education, as their syllabi are direct translations of the corresponding Romanian ones. In one case the Romanian majority did not accept the representative selected by the Hungarian teaching staff in the faculty council. The faculty councils with Romanian majority repeatedly have impeded or postponed the professional promotion of Hungarian staff. Note that the proportion of Hungarian full professors is much lower than that of their Romanian colleagues.

The 2 teachers who organized and carried out the placing of the Hungarian language inscriptions were excluded from the teaching staff by the Senate without the representatives of the Hungarian departments being asked or even against their will. In protest, the Hungarian deputy rectors resigned from their positions.

All these indicate that a priority goal of the Romanian academic leaders is to impede the development of Hungarian higher education structures with autonomous decision making authority. Real autonomy could be ensured only by establishing Hungarian faculties and providing these faculties with complete independence in decision making, otherwise the Romanian majority can turn down the proposals made by the Hungarian teaching staff at any time. In default of Hungarian faculties or university, an aggressive academic or national leadership could easily liquidate even the existing Hungarian higher education; that would be much more difficult if there were Hungarian faculties or institutional structures.

13. The opponents’ position: Granting independence to the Hungarian-language higher education would result in the deterioration of education in Hungarian language.

Paradoxically, this false argument is brought up by those Romanian professors who tried to hamper the quantitative and qualitative development of the Hungarian-language higher education on several occasions. They enumerate in an apprehensive, paternalist voice all the disadvantages that the Hungarian community might have to endure, should the independent Hungarian-language higher education structures be established.

All communities should be provided with the opportunity and conditions to self-construct, and the majority is not entitled to speak in the name of the minority. In the case of independent faculties or university, the responsibility of making important decisions would be in the competence of those who know the situation the best. At the present, the majority of the Hungarian “lines of studies” at the ‘Babeş-Bolyai’ University are entirely subordinated to the Romanian leadership. The faculty/department leadership, with a Romanian majority, can turn down the proposals made by the Hungarian teachers at any time.

We wish to emphasize again, at this point, the followings: In several departments, Hungarian colleagues cannot take decisions concerning the subjects they teach in class and/or exam topics. The restriction with the most adverse consequences is that the syllabuses for primary and secondary teacher training depend on the syllabuses elaborated by the Romanian colleagues. It is impossible to take into account the specific issues and problems in Hungarian primary and secondary teacher education, as their syllabuses are direct translations of the corresponding Romanian ones.

In one case the Romanian majority did not accept the representative selected by the Hungarian teaching staff in the faculty council.

The faculty councils with Romanian majority have impeded or postponed the professional promotion of Hungarian staff more than one time. Note that the proportion of Hungarian full professors is much lower than that of their Romanian colleagues.

Without decision-making power, the meetings held by Hungarian teachers are informal, there is no organizational body to hold them together, and they are not able to effectively supervise the operation of the over the departments where some courses are conducted in Hungarian. The problems arising from the lack of

autonomy in decision-making are only made worse by the financial vulnerability of the Hungarian faculties. The revenues allocated by the budget, or obtained from tuition fees and other resources are managed by the deans of the faculties, while the departments of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University have minimal financial independence. Real autonomy could only be guaranteed through Hungarian faculties or an independent university.

Apart from a few exceptions, the deans and the heads of departments don't speak Hungarian. Even though the Hungarian teachers already work separately from their Romanian colleagues, those Romanian academic leaders have a decisive word concerning the Hungarian teachers' problems.

14. The position of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University leaders: The establishment of an independent Hungarian-language university lacks planning and is not properly prepared from a professional point of view.

Gross untruth. In 1998 a detailed plan of a Hungarian campus was developed, but the Romanian political elite and academic leadership prevented the practical realization of this project. Similarly, detailed plans were developed concerning the organization and operation of the Hungarian-language faculties to be established at the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University, but the leaders of the University used all means to impede the establishment of these three Hungarian faculties. Therefore it may be stated that the development is hampered not by the lack of planning, but the lack of policy decisions.

15. The position of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University leaders: The Hungarian teachers are properly represented in the management of the University.

The reality: The situation of the Hungarian teachers, their exclusion is best shown by the fact that, except for the Theology faculties, none of the deans of the other faculties (Natural Sciences, Humanities, Economic Sciences or Social Sciences) are Hungarians. Although at the time of the unification of these universities the proportion of the Hungarian leaders at Rector and Vice Rector level was 50%, at the present this percent dropped to 29%. The proportion of Hungarian deans was 33%, while today it is only 10%. As regards the heads of departments, their percent dropped from 31% to 12%.

The faculty councils with a Romanian majority tried on several occasions to prevent or to delay the promotion of Hungarian teachers with excellent professional performances. It is worth mentioning that the proportion of Hungarian full professors is much lower than the proportion of Romanian full professors at the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University.

16. The opponents' position: The Hungarian-language University would be intellectually isolated.

Malicious statement. The Hungarian teachers would maintain contact with their Romanian colleagues, but they would be cooperating with them as equal partners. If there are independent structures, it is also much easier to build and maintain international relations.

17. The opponents' position: There is no Hungarian teaching staff for many subject areas.

Partly true, but this cannot under any circumstances, be an impediment to the development of the Hungarian-language higher education, but rather a reason for it. There is a large number of examples of local experts or visiting professors from Hungary who helped supplement the lack of teachers. This is clearly a cause-and-effect issue: it was the lack of proper higher education institutions that lead to the decrease in the number of teachers and not the teaching staff left the well-developed Hungarian faculties.

With no more than 1.5 million inhabitants, Estonia has a competent teaching staff, and has successfully developed a high-quality higher education system. Therefore such conditions must be created as to allow the Hungarian community in Transylvania to achieve all these.

18. The opponents' position: Granting independence to the Hungarian-language higher education would worsen the Romanian language skills of Hungarian students, which indirectly increase emigration to Hungary.

Not true. Students learn the Romanian language in high school or before, not at the university. Romanian technical terminology can be learnt in dedicated courses, which do not exist as yet at the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University. There is no sound evidence that the supposedly 'poor' Romanian language skills motivate ethnic Hungarians of Romania to emigrate to Hungary.

First and foremost, students of the teacher training departments should be required to speak proper Hungarian as they will teach in Hungarian schools. In addition, all university graduates entering the labour market should be provided with proper English language skills, which currently is not happening at the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University due to its faulty foreign language teaching strategy.

The real danger right now is that students learning in the Romanian environment are assimilated and change their language and loose identity. Experience shows that many Hungarian students learning in Romania do not know the Hungarian technical terms and gradually loose even their Hungarian language skills. It is a sad fact that ethnic Hungarian specialists graduating from Romanian universities are not able to complete a research paper in the Hungarian language.

Note that a numbers of ethnic German students of South Tyrol (Italy) study in the German language in Austria at the University of Innsbruck on scholarships provided by the Italian government. On their return to Italy they meet no difficulties in getting jobs on the Italian labour market. Likewise, graduates of the former Hungarian-language 'Bolyai' University, liquidated in 1959, could also get well along in Romanian workplaces.

19. The opponents' position: The private Hungarian-language university of Transylvania (Sapientia-EMTE) provides poor education, lacks teachers and faces many issues. Hungarians of Transylvania are not able to sustain the quality of their higher education institutions.

False. Establishing a University has never been an easy task, however, most departments at the EMTE got over the difficulties of the first stages. Without proper independent institutions, a reliable pool of teaching staff will never be available. The newly started Romanian departments at the 'Babes-Bolyai' University face the same issues as the EMTE, only that no-one speaks about them.

20. The opponents' position: There is no need to re-establish the 'Bolyai' University as the needs of the Hungarian-language higher education may be resolved with the Romanian government co-financing the Hungarian private universities (EMTE and PKE).

Evasive statement. The Hungarian-language private universities of Transylvania (EMTE, PKE) were set up from the taxpayers' money of Hungary to meet the higher education needs of the Hungarian community in Romania. This, however, did not put an end to the state-level discrimination. It is unprecedented in the international experience that the taxpayers of a certain country benefit of basic services paid for by the taxpayers of another country. EMTE and PKE may not be turned into a state university even with the support of the Romanian government. Occasional support never made a sustainable institution.

Moreover, the EMTE and PKE are private universities, which cannot fully take over the task of providing higher education to the full spectrum of the Hungarian community in Romania. There is no university capable of providing education for all the professions needed for a community from teachers to engineers, to artists and physicians.

21. The opponents' position: Let the market drive the real needs. Many learn in Romanian, because it is better for them.

False assumption. The Romanian polical elite and academic leadership spare little resources to hinder that the Hungarian students learn in higher education institutions that really meet their needs. Many specialisations are overwhelmed by students at the EMTE. These are mainly engineering specialisations, with a clear market demand, still, no such training is provided in the Hungarian language at the existing state higher education institutions. Moreover, Agricultural Engineers, Forestry Engineers and Veterinarians are very much needed on the market, still, the organisation of such training in the Hungarian language faces fierce opposition by the majoritary intolerance.

The 'Gheorghe Dima' Music Academy, the Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine University of Cluj/Kolozsvár and the 'Petru Maior' University of Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures refused to set up at least courses in the Hungarian language for their ethnic Hungarian students.

22. The opponents' position: The 'Babeş-Bolyai' is a multicultural University.

The exact opposite applies. Hungarian is not an official language of the University. Hungarian inscriptions and indicators are missing; almost all important publications are printed only in the Romanian language. While the information materials published by the University announce that multilingual inscriptions are displayed, the Hungarian inscriptions commissioned and placed under the Romanian ones by the 2 teachers were torn off on an order by the Rector. Diplomas and certificates are issued only in Romanian. It must be mentioned that Hungarian staff is underrepresented in University administration.

On the main page of the BBU homepage Hungarian has only a subordinated role. This webpage contains gross falsifications of history; the names of the Hungarian Princes are written in Romanian. The museum presenting the history of the University, according to the leaflet, intends to present the development of the University beginning with the Jesuit College founded in 1581, but the material presented is tendentiously

selective, and most of it focuses on the Romanian-language 'King Ferdinand' University (founded in 1919) and the development of the 'Babeş-Bolyai' University after 1989. The leaflet makes no references to Hungarian personalities or events with Hungarian relevance. ("The most important exhibits in the museum are the photos illustrating the visit of the Romanian Royal family made at the University in Kolozsvár/Cluj, as well as some original documents dating from the period between the two World Wars.")

Nevertheless, University management permanently stresses the multicultural nature of the institution, probably hoping that "lies, which are often repeated, would eventually turn into reality".

23. The opponents' position: The Romanian government was generous enough to double the subsidy for university students learning in Hungarian as compared to the Romanian students.

Indeed, the specific costs of Hungarian higher education exceed those of the Romanian. However, this emerges from the state's constitutional obligations to counterbalance the demographic disadvantages of a minority community. It is a matter of obligation, not generosity. Nevertheless, the Hungarian community in Transylvania would assume this obligation, if left alone to decide on its own of the use of their tax money.

The Romanian government spends on average only EUR 500 / year / student, whereas the Western-european average amounts to EUR 5,000. This comparison clearly reflects that if the state subsidy devoted to the Romanian higher education reached acceptable levels, there would be no need to provide any supplementary grants. The creation of independent faculties and of the Hungarian university would allow for establishing a system of supplementary earmarked grants, so that the sponsors would know where their money goes.

24. The opponents' position: The new Hungarian faculties at the BBU would not be able to survive financially.

Not true. Doubling of the subsidy for university students learning in Hungarian is sufficient to ensure the financial sustainability of the three new Hungarian faculties at the 'Babes-Bolyai' University. These comprehensive structures would ensure the long-term viability against the temporary fluctuations of student numbers.

25. The opponents' position: We are facing low demographic numbers, and the independent university would go bankrupt because of lack of students. Students are going to study abroad in Hungary, and this process will even enhance after Romania's accession to the EU.

This is partly true. Undoubtedly, birth rates are low and the Hungarian population decreases also due to emmigration. However, there are 1.5 million ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and several minority communities in Europe with less than 500,000 souls benefit of state-funded higher education institutions that teach in their mother tongue. Nonetheless, several states in Europe have a population similar to the number of Hungarians in Romania (ranging from Estonia 1,500,000 to Latvia 2,300,000), and are able to sustain and develop their higher education system.

There is a significant potential within the secondary education as well: only about half of the 8th graders learning in Hungarian succeed to graduate from high school. It is true that the EU accession provides the theoretical possibility to a Romanian citizen to study at a German university, but to most families in Transylvania this would be almost impossible because of financial reasons. Moreover, some families barely afford to send their children to study in a nearby city, and they would not even consider sending their children to more distant and expensive places to study.

26. The opponents' position: The Hungarian population of Romania is ageing, and young age groups of Hungarians in the general population represent less than 6.6%. Therefore, Hungarians are entitled to lower sets of numbers of students being accepted into higher education in the mother tongue.

Gross untruth. Data released in 2005 by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research reveal that 6.38% of the all kindergarten pupils in Romania are ethnic Hungarian. The proportion of ethnic Hungarian children of kindergarten age is also about 6%. Therefore, the decrease in the population is relatively small.

27. The opponents' position: „Bolyai” University was forced into being by the communist regime.

The exact opposite is true. 'Bolyai' University was created by a Royal Decree in 1945, so as to demonstrate to the international opinion the existence of a positive approach to minorities. It was the communist Romanian government that dissolved the university in 1959. The forced merging with the Romanian-language 'Babes' University was a retaliation for the Hungarian sympathy demonstrations in Transylvania with the Hungarian anti-communist Revolution of 1956, and it never had any legally justifiable grounds.

The abolishment of the Hungarian-language University of Kolozsvár / Cluj was orchestrated by the

former communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and Ion Iliescu, a recent president of Romania, elected after 1989. Several Hungarian teachers and students were imprisoned because of their views on that occasion, while others were driven to commit suicide.

28. The opponents' position: Supporters of the independent University wish to establish ethnic segregation.

Not true. Leaders of the Hungarian section of the 'Babes-Bolyai' University repeatedly declared that at the independent University solely the language of the education would be Hungarian – ethnicity would, of course, be immaterial when hiring staff or admitting students. Only language and professional skills would matter. Moreover, several ethnic Romanian students or students having the first language as Romanian already study at the Hungarian-language section of the 'Babes-Bolyai' University; consequently, there is no sign or intention of any ethnic segregation.

The independent Hungarian system of institutions would serve the sole purpose of preserving the Hungarian identity against the assimilationist bias of the Romanian political elite and academic leadership.

29. The opponents' position: The creation of the Hungarian faculties / University leads to ethnic conflicts.

False. Ethnic conflicts always emerge as the result of denying certain rights as it happened in South Tyrol, Basque Country, Kosovo, Macedonia or the Republic of Moldova. A good example in this sense is that the creation of the private Hungarian-language University of Transylvania (EMTE) did not lead to any ethnic conflicts. The re-establishment of the 'Bolyai' University and the settlement of the situation of the Hungarian national community in Transylvania would strengthen the stability of Romania and improve its international appreciation. Otherwise, Romania will drag into the European Union a series of unsolved problems.

30. The opponents' position: The Hungarian university would lose laboratory equipment.

Malicious statement. There would be no legal grounds for such a decision. Nether less, both parties are interested in the joint use and development of the laboratory equipment. This should be regarded as a technicality. Moreover, most of the laboratories are very poorly equipped. In order to ensure the quality of education new laboratories should be set up.

31. The opponents' position: The Hungarian University would lose the books and manuals held at the Central University Library.

False. The books are recorded in the inventory of the Central University Library (BCU) in Cluj, and not in the inventory of the "Babeș-Bolyai" University.

Moreover, most of the faculty libraries lack newly edited and printed manuals and books, and their functionality is far from the expectations.

32. The opponents' position: Development of the Hungarian higher education can only be realized if the goals are adapted to the interests of the Romanians.

This statement is meant to hide the real objective, which is the truly equitable settlement of the relationship between the minority and majority. Let us look briefly at some examples around Europe:

- the Sami in Norway did not have to face any nationalist opposition and could easily establish their University;
- after hard negotiations Hungarians in Slovakia obtained the right to establish 'Selye János' University in Komarno/Révkomárom and the Hungarian faculties at 'Constantin the Philosopher' University in Nitra/Nyitra;
- Wales autonomy came into being also following decades of negotiations and hundreds of years of English domination and assimilation, with the number of speakers of the Welsh language falling below 800,000, i.e. just under 20% of the general population of Wales;
- Catalan autonomy emerged after series of mass demonstrations, and was developed after hard negotiations;
- Basque autonomy resulted partly after mass demonstrations, partly after the violent manifestations of the Basque resistance movement;
- the Swedish Army was mobilised in 1919 to protect the Sweds in Finland; the resolution was brought about by an international compromise;
- the Italian government granted autonomy to the German minority in South Tyrol after partisan actions paralysed Milan's electricity supply;
- Albanians in Macedonia could re-establish their previously destroyed University only after fierce fights won by their guerilla army;
- Gagauz autonomy in Moldova was developed only after a civil war in 1992.

Such tensions can be avoided by ensuring minority rights.
Turks in Bulgaria are still denied a series of basic minority rights.

33. The opponents' position: The fight for minority rights would spark disagreement of the EU political leaders.

The exact opposite is true. There are politicians in the EU who wish to gloss over the real issues and preserve the status quo, though it is known that this approach caused enormous suffering on our continent. However, EU decision-makers increasingly admit that Hungarians in Transylvania are not determined enough in demanding their rights, and they do not employ all means both internally and externally to do this.

The EU is interested in resolving and avoiding tensions in any of the member states. If Hungarians in Transylvania settle for being deprived of certain rights, there will be no tension for sure, but no-one will stand up for their rights instead of them. If the community is able of showing legitimately that they do not accept the current situation, and they are persistent in their endeavour, the international community and the Romanian political elite will eventually realize that the only solution is granting the rights and not denying them.

34. The opponents' position: The Romanian political elite and academic leadership supports the establishment of the Hungarian-language faculties of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University and the re-establishment of the public Hungarian University, the only obstacle is the lack of financial resources.

The reality: this is one of the false arguments produced for the opinion from abroad. Prime Minister Tăriceanu has announced at the press conference following the Hungarian-Romanian joint cabinet meeting that he does not agree with the establishment of Hungarian-language faculties at the "Babeş-Bolyai" University. The Ministry of Education and Research stated in a public resolution and in an official communication sent to the University that the Ministry does not agree with the establishment of Hungarian-language faculties (December 2005). The Minister reiterated his refusal in a statement issued in April 2006. Emil Boc, the president of the Democratic Party (member of the government coalition) and also the mayor of Kolozsvár/Cluj, rejected the plan of the Hungarian-language faculties in a public resolution (March 2005, March 2006). President Basescu has announced this refusal at a press conference in March 2006. The leaders of the University attacked the efforts of the Hungarian teachers to obtain autonomy and threatened the supporters of this cause in a whole series of statements. The University's supreme decision-making body has not even discussed this proposal.

The operation of Hungarian-language education of BBU as independent faculties would not cost more than it costs at the present, and technically the Hungarian teachers already work separately from their Romanian colleagues. Extra resources would be required only to solve the problem of the lack of teachers and to launch the long-delayed developments. In the current structure, the Hungarian faculties are not able to utilize the extra Romanian or Hungarian resources allocated for minority higher education, since all the funds flow into the common budget of the faculties.

Nothing shows any clearer how this argument is misleading than the very fact that the ethnic Hungarian teachers who stood up for the autonomy of the Hungarian higher education were summoned in front of the Ethics Committee of the Babes-Bolyai University and were fined for pretended reasons.

35. The opponents' position: The establishment of Hungarian-language faculties would put the German faculties of BBU at a disadvantage.

The German community from Transylvania has almost entirely left the country. The existence of the German "lines of studies" is just serving as a self-justification for the false "multiculturalism". The experiences of our colleagues teaching at the Physics Department shows that it is difficult to find even one student who declares himself or herself to be of ethnic German among two-three classes of students. The majority of the students speak only basic German. There are several signs indicating that mostly students who dropped-out from Romanian or Hungarian "lines of studies" enrol to classes taught in German.

36. The opponents' position: The discontent expressed by the Hungarian teachers is incomprehensible since among all the universities in the country, the "Babeş-Bolyai" University ensures the greatest number of rights for the Hungarian-language higher education.

Not true. In contrast with the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, the University for Theatre Arts in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureş has implemented real bilingualism. The University for Theatre Arts has one Romanian and one Hungarian section, and about half-and-half of the students are registered to each of these sections. The sections decide for themselves about the establishment of departments. There are no faculties, and each section can organize departments on their own. These departments have large staffing and financial

autonomy. The school programme of the departments obtained accreditation together, but the Romanian and the Hungarian Acting Departments, respectively, have been accredited separately. The institution is currently chaired by a Hungarian rector.

At the University for Theatre Arts all inscriptions are bilingual; the classrooms are named after both Hungarian and Romanian personalities, in an equal proportion. Both Romanian and Hungarian languages are official languages of the institutions, and none of these languages is subordinated to the other on the institution's webpage.

37. The position of the BBU leaders: The demands of the Hungarian teachers undermine the Hungarian negotiation position achieved so far, and thereby set back the development of the Hungarian-language higher education

A defenceless situation can hardly be considered a negotiation position, in which the outcome of all the decisions depends on a few leaders' moods, regulations contradict each other and can be construed in anyway, and the enforcement of decisions taken can be delayed for indefinite periods if that is what an intolerant group wants. It is also far removed from a negotiation such a process which will derail if we make public the lies and abuses committed by the leaders of the University.

Negotiations conducted in a paternalist style (like "we will tell you what is best for you and what you may demand") are unacceptable for the Hungarian community. The Hungarian teachers can not give up the mean of making external pressure because nowhere in the world were minority higher education structures established by persuasion of the academic elite. In all these cases political actions were necessary.

38. The opponents' position: The European organizations are satisfied with the multiculturalism promoted by the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, as it is expressed in the letter sent by Max van der Stoel to the then rector of the University, Andrei Marga (dated 2000/11).

In reality this is a gross untruth. After the introductory protocol paragraphs, the letter emphasizes that autonomy should be ensured for the Hungarian "lines of studies" (not accomplished yet), and it contains the following recommendations (also completely ignored):

"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."

There is a decision of the Rector, which orders the placement of multilingual signs; however, its implementation never happened due to interference. Although the information materials published by the University announce that multilingual inscriptions are displayed, the Hungarian inscriptions commissioned and placed on November 22, 2006 under the Romanian ones by the 2 Hungarian assistant professors were torn off and broken on an order by the Rector.

39. The position of the BBU leaders: The BBU Charter provides that no reprisals shall be taken against teachers for expressing their opinions, and that the goal of the University is to continuously renew itself.

This statement is obviously untrue. Assistant professors Péter HANTZ and Lehel KOVÁCS were illegally excluded from the teaching staff, because they merely wanted to put in practice the Rector's decision concerning the placement of multilingual signage.

Many of the teachers fighting for the independency of the Hungarian-language higher education were slandered and humiliated in an unprecedented manner by University and faculty leaders in the official journal of the University, denying them the possibility to reply. Because of what has happened, a group of Hungarian teachers lodged a protest in an open letter.

In February 2006 the three leaders of the Bolyai Initiative Committee received a slanderous and threatening letter from the rector, also published in the official journal of the University (The Official Bulletin). In this letter the rector also raised the prospect of possible reprisals.

Organized with the intention to intimidate the Hungarian academic staff, the Ethic Committee of the Babes-Bolyai University penalized in July leaders of the Bolyai Initiative Committee without taking in consideration their arguments, this decision being taken in the absence of the Hungarian and German members of the Committee.

The actions of the Bolyai Initiative Committee have triggered several hysterical reactions on the part of the University's leaders. The Rector's Council and the Academic Council adopted a resolution in March 2006, holding the prospect of sanctioning those who will not comply with this resolution, which states that only the rector and its spokesperson may draw up an opinion about the institution. In addition to the threats against the

Hungarian teachers, they also held the prospect of legal proceedings against the Nobel Prize winner writer, Imre Kertész, because he signed the open letter requesting the re-establishment of the Bolyai University, which was also signed by 11 Nobel, Fields or Wolf Laureates, and 70 renowned professors. Furthermore, they try to restrict the freedom of expression of the teachers and their right to hold meetings within the University. Their tendentious communications are often published in the Romanian press as paid advertisements.

40. The “Bolyai” University would end up on the streets since if the Hungarian university would be re-established no buildings necessary for its operation would be made available.

This false argument is used as a threat by certain Romanian academic leaders. We are going to live in the European Union, not under dictatorship, and no-one will be allowed to do whatever they please. It would also be unacceptable from the legal point of view that the buildings, which in part were built with the tax money and donations of the Hungarians of Transylvania, are kept away from the would-be Hungarian university. In certain cases operation under a consortium could also be a possible solution.

We believe that it is worthwhile to look at some of the facts that allow for predicting what tactics the opponents of the Hungarian higher education would adopt in various stages of the process.

1. Questioning the goals

This stage lasted from 1995 until October 17th, 2005 (when demonstrations were organized in several Transylvanian cities), in respect to some Hungarian academic leaders; however most of the Romanian political elite and academic leadership still questions whether the goals set by the Hungarians are legitimate or not. In this stage it is perfectly acceptable to openly declare that the very existence of the independent Hungarian higher education system would harm both democracy and the interests of the Hungarian minority. This sort of diversion reached its peak in 1996, and it continued in 2004, when even a chat forum was dedicated to it entitled “Do we really need this? Hungarian faculties at the Babes-Bolyai University?”. In spring 2005 one of the newly elected vice-rectors of the said University declares: “I fear that if the ministry of education issues the decree that provides for the creation of the Hungarian faculties, it will create for itself a problem that can only be solved by withdrawing or declaring void that decree within a year.” Many declarations of the university leaders contain hidden threats, i.e. if you continue complaining, you will lose whatever you still have.

The leaders of the fight are threatened and are isolated in this stage: the University’s Official Journal launched a lamentable attack on one of the leaders of the group that demands independent Hungarian higher education, others had to face unjust accusations.

2. Questioning the means and the timing

This stage started on October 17th, 2005, and it is about to end. The success of the demonstrations, the press echo and the latent support turning into open advocacy forced the opponents to give up their up front strategies against the independent Hungarian higher education structures. They organised scientific conferences and used other disguises to undermine the idea. Opposition leaders either ceased to make declarations or changed their views saying that they have always been supportive of the idea, adding that they just do not agree with the methods adopted. It is also important to note that only 2 out of the 179 Hungarian teachers at the „Babes-Bolyai” University voted for keeping the present structure of the institutions. One of the 2 opponents happens to be one of the the Hungarian vice-rectors of the „Babes-Bolyai” University.

Many invoked the lack of dialogue and proper preparations, but failed to show up on the occasions dedicated especially to having a dialogue and preparing the process of creating the independent structures.

In this stage supporters and sympathisers are threatened or isolated. Supporters are often accused that they deliberately time their demonstrations so as to undermine those plans of the opposers, which otherwise would have miraculously solved the whole issue if only they were let to carry them out on their own.

3. Derailing the decisions

If it becomes obvious that certain concessions will eventually have to be made to the Hungarians, the opposition attempts to minimize the importance of the fight by saying that what could be obtained is much more than the initial goal of the fight was. This stage is just unfolding: one of the vice-rectors said: “I do not rule out the possibility that an even more ambitious agenda is born, going way beyond the goals for which the initiators of the „Bolyai University” started their campaign of collecting signatures”. By the way: this is the strategy

employed by the Romanian politicians to mislead EU decision-makers.

In this stage the opposition will try to challenge the legitimacy of the initiators, and will attempt to select Hungarian teachers easy to manipulate or racket to be the party they negotiate with. The opposition will even take back on the second day the promises they make on the previous days' talks.

4. Hindering the implementation of agreements obtained with difficulty

This stage will occur after the creation of the Hungarian faculties / University. The opposition will attempt to make impossible the functioning of the newly created structures, for instance, by giving „reasons” why costs should be cut. It is also expected that the staff is instigated against the management of the new institutions.

Conclusion

Having listed the above arguments, a sole answer remains to the frequently asked question, why the Romanian political elite and the academic leaders impede the development of the Hungarian-language higher education system in Transylvania. One of the priorities of the Romanian political elite is the liquidation of the Hungarian community in Transylvania. Thus, their full assimilation can only be achieved if no institutions are allowed, which otherwise would provide the Hungarian community with the right to take decisions independently and to manage significant financial resources, be that a Faculty at the University or territorial self-governance. A University is much more than an education institution: it is a pool of intellectuals that creates knowledge and opens up the minds of the people for the material and spiritual benefit of the community that supports it.

We believe that the re-establishment of the "Bolyai" University can only be delayed but may not be impeded. Those who want to delay it, regardless to who they are, will remain as dark figures on the pages of the history books. Hungarians in Transylvania will enhance the fight for their human and minority rights. If our demands find a positive response, Romania will be part of the European Union as a member state that is able to provide stability and sustainable solutions; otherwise it will drag into the Union a series of unresolved issues.