



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

**Recommendations on Expanding the Concept of Multi-culturalism
at the Babes-Bolyai University,
Cluj-Napoca, Romania**

The Hague, 17 February 2000

The following recommendations are submitted to the Senate of Babes-Bolyai University (BBU) by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, after studying the current situation at the University together with a team of international experts.

The recommendations are designed to build on the already existing foundation and tradition of multilingualism and multiculturalism at the University. The drafters of the recommendations are encouraged by the pioneering efforts which have been made in the past few years in order to make Babes-Bolyai a modern, multicultural University. They are aware of the challenges in further developing multicultural, multilingual education at Babes-Bolyai University, but are convinced that these can be overcome with adequate planning and funding. These recommendations are made in the spirit of contributing to that process.

The recommendations are designed to further develop the offering of courses and programmes at BBU with a view to increasing the opportunity of minorities to study in their mother tongue, promoting multiculturalism, and fostering academic excellence in a multilingual environment.

An additional aim of the recommendations is to develop BBU as an institution of multi-cultural higher learning which could act as a model for other universities in Romania (particularly those with faculties not included at BBU like medicine, music, agriculture, engineering etc.) and for other European universities.

1. Mission Statement

It is important for the University to clearly articulate its view of multi-culturalism. The multilingual character of BBU should be officially stated, and reflected in the University's mission statement. BBU should set clear goals for itself in further implementing multiculturalism. Therefore,

- 1.1 The University should clearly lay out its mission statement in regard to multiculturalism and how it is committed to implementing its objectives in that respect. The University should adopt a multi-year (3 to 5 years) for the development of programs in minority languages and, more generally, multi-culturalism. The plan should include a credible costing of resources required for its implementation, and should be reviewed annually in the light of agreed upon performance indicators, such as the number of courses, teaching staff, number of students, promotions structure,

etc. The elaboration of the plan should be made after due consultation with the various constituencies involved.

- 1.2 Annual objectives in regard to multiculturalism should be elaborated and included in the University's strategic plan. The activities in that plan should be included in the reports provided by the University pursuant to Section I, sub-section 3, article 13 of the Charter.
- 1.3 Every faculty should elaborate objectives and guidelines regarding the development and implementation of a strategy for multi-culturalism in its own Statute.
- 1.4 Implementation of the initiatives designed to further develop multi-culturalism should be annually reviewed by the lines of study (through the Staff Councils – see 2.2. - and the Senate). Continuous monitoring by an independently constituted body (including international experts) is a key element in this process.
- 1.5 In order to raise the awareness of the University as a multi-cultural and multi-lingual institution, both within and outside of the University, a greater emphasis should be put on using all three languages of the University in public documents and information.

2. Decision-making

Decision-making should be transparent, accountable and truly representative of the multi-cultural dynamic of the University, and should be seen as such. Therefore,

- 2.1 The Management Board of the University should be elected by the Senate with the exception of the heads of the Romanian, German and Hungarian degree programmes. These three vice rectors should be selected by their peers from their respective lines of study.
- 2.2 Teaching staff of the three lines of study should meet (separately) at least once a year as a Staff Council (Romanian Staff Council, Hungarian Staff Council, German Staff Council) to discuss matters of concern to their particular line of study. During University elections, every Council should elect (by secret ballot) the head of the degree programme (or “line” of study) who would then become a vice-rector.
- 2.3 In making proposals to the Curricula Commissions of the Teaching Councils, representatives of the three lines of study should take the lead role in questions relating to their respective curriculum development. Proposals made by any line of study concerning curriculum in their respective mother tongue should be adopted unless opposed by a two-thirds majority of the Teaching Council of the faculty concerned. Any vote defeated in a faculty Teaching Council may be re-submitted to the Senate curriculum commission. In order for the decision of the Teaching Council to be upheld, the vote in the Senate curriculum commission would require a two-thirds majority.

3. Curriculum and Academic Standards

The curriculum should reflect the multi-cultural character of the University and encourage a high level of academic excellence. Therefore,

- 3.1 In cases when students are required to take entrance exams, they should be allowed to do so in Romanian, Hungarian or German.
- 3.2 Students should graduate with a well-rounded knowledge of their field of study and with an education grounded in the multi-cultural character of the university. Students in non-Romanian lines of study should be encouraged to take at least one course in the Romanian language.
- 3.3 A greater emphasis should be placed on providing teaching materials and courses in languages other than Romanian. Libraries acquisition policy should be expressly directed to this end.
- 3.4 The University curriculum should be harmonized with European standards.
- 3.5 The University should adopt external peer review as a general principle for program evaluation. This would be consistent with section 1, subsection 3, article 5 of the Charter, whereby curriculum are to “comply with the criteria adopted by outstanding universities.”
- 3.6 BBU should establish a calendar for the review of its programs by outside peers, starting with the Faculties of law, economics and European studies.
- 3.7 External peers should be asked to comment and make recommendations on the quality and content of the program and on the program’s contribution (existing and/or potential) to multiculturalism at BBU and in Romania. Consideration should also be given to research methods and institutional management.
- 3.8 The practice of professor exchanges and visiting professors should be further developed and intensified.
- 3.9 The High Commissioner proposes to create a chair in multi-culturalism at Babes-Bolyai University (see annex). The chair would be created for an initial three year period (beginning September 2000) to teach subjects relating to the development of multi-culturalism.

4. Personnel Policy and Recruitment

It is important for the staff of the University to reflect the University’s multi-cultural character and to be sufficiently qualified in order to implement effectively the University’s commitment to excellence and multi-culturalism. Therefore,

- 4.1 An Equal Opportunities Commission should be established within the university to encourage the hiring of minority and female staff – on the basis of academic

credentials - regulate guidelines on the recruitment and promotion of staff in this context, and monitor performance against clear and transparent success/failure criteria.

- 4.2 An affirmative action hiring policy should be practiced in order to promote the recruitment of Hungarian and German speaking professors to vacant posts (not limited to their lines of study).
- 4.3 In accordance with Section 1, subsection 3, article 14 of its Charter, the University should establish a systematic appraisal of its scientific and teaching activity that complies with international standards of quality. Where such appraisal leads to the identification of important gaps, appropriate steps, including actions regarding academic personnel (further training, early retirement, etc.) should be taken as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Other things being equal, professors who teach courses in more than one language should receive additional financial compensation or academic facilities.
- 4.5 Language conversion and enhancement courses for both teachers and students should be introduced to increase comprehension of, and proficiency in, all the languages of BBU.

5. Funding

Further developing the concept of multi-culturalism at Babes-Bolyai University will require additional resources. Therefore,

- 5.1 Recognizing the unique status of Babes-Bolyai University and in keeping with the Government's commitment to multi-culturalism, the High Commissioner recommends that the University should request that the National Council for Financing Higher Education apply a higher co-efficient for the Hungarian and German lines of study at BBU.
- 5.2 Support for further development of the project should be solicited by a joint submission by the University and the Office of the HCNM to the European Commission.
- 5.3 A foundation should be established within the University for voluntary contributions (including books and equipment) for specified or unspecified funding of projects relating to the further development of multi-culturalism at the BBU.

Annex

Proposal for a Chair in Multi-Culturalism at the Babes-Bolyai University

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities proposes the creation of a Chair in Multi-culturalism at Babes-Bolyai University. The chair would be created for an initial period of three years (beginning in September 2000) to teach subjects relating to the development of multi-culturalism at Babes-Bolyai University and, more broadly, in Romania.

The chair would aim to encourage professors to visit Babes-Bolyai University to teach subjects relating to multi-culturalism. Teaching fellowships would be awarded to professors who have a proven record of academic excellence in multi-cultural related studies and/or international aspects of Law, Economics, European Studies, Political Science, Journalism and Public Administration.

Teaching positions may be held for a period of two weeks to a maximum of one academic year. Remuneration will be awarded accordingly. Appointments to the chair and the running of the programme would be overseen by an international board of experts (associated with the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities) in consultation with the University.

The project also envisions funding a multi-lingual student newspaper at the University (in Romanian, Hungarian, German and English). The programme also proposes to award scholarships of \$1000 a year for students doing research in subjects relating to the study and/or development of multi-culturalism.