

Re-invitation to Transylvania

Tibetan politician and spiritual leader His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama visited Hungary for the seventh time between the 17-20 September 2010. On 20 September, His Holiness visited the Parliament of Hungary. He was welcomed in the Upper House by members of parliament and invited guests.

Following the reception, the Dalai Lama met Right Rev. László Tőkés, Vice President of the European Parliament, and President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania. As opening of the approximately 40-minute-long discussions, the Transylvanian politician presented His Holiness with a plaquette representing Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784-1842).

László Tőkés emphasized that the Transylvanian community is proud that Csoma, who with his English-Tibetan dictionary facilitated the recognition of the outstanding Tibetan culture in the Western world and civilization, was a Transylvanian Hungarian. He added that, among other reasons, this was why Transylvanian Hungarians have deepest sympathies with the oppressed Tibetans.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave an overview of the present-day Tibetan situation and conditions in a nutshell and asked the Vice President to make arrangements for a European Parliament fact-finding mission to travel to Tibet, since publicity and transparency are the most effective weapons against totalitarian regimes, just like it was demonstrated in the struggle against the Ceausescu regime in Romania, in 1989.

On the agenda of the discussion László Tőkés re-invited His Holiness to Transylvania. In the meantime he expressed his regret that this year His Holiness could not visit the native land of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma. His Holiness asserted that the rejective policy assumed by the Romanian diplomacy with patterns of servility towards China was regrettable.

He assured Mr. Tőkés that he would visit Transylvania with delight provided that the Romanian government changed its attitude in this particular matter. With the consent of His Holiness, László Tőkés would intervene at State President Traian Băsescu and the Romanian Government in order to assure that the Dalai Lama could visit under untroubled circumstances the native village of Csoma, the first European Buddhist Saint (Bodhisattva).

Hungarian street signs were removed

On 22 September 2010, local authorities removed several Hungarian street signs from center city Oradea (Nagyvárad). The street signs were erected below the former spots of the Romanian street signs, by the members of the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth (THY) organization. These Hungarian street signs were placed on properties belonging to the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District - not the local Romanian government.

About noon, employees of the Selina Building Company arrived at the corner of Primariei and Calvin streets. They began to dismantle the Hungarian street signs. Workers in the neighboring offices noticed the activity and called István Csomortányi, co-president of THY. Csomortányi and other THY members installed the street signs in May 2010.



THY member installing a Hungarian street sign / police intimidation

When approached, the *Selina* Building Company employees presented the decree passed by the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government. The issued decree authorized the removal of the Hungarian street signs because “of their white base and that they were not authorized.”

This action is questionable, since the street signs were not placed on properties belonging to the local government. Furthermore, the *Selina* Building Company employees removed the Hungarian street signs from a private residence on Calvin Street. The owner, ethnic Hungarian Mihály Orbán, declared that the same employees removed similar street signs from private properties on the corners of Malului and Ady Endre Streets.

Thus far, the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government has only removed Hungarian street signs. It is common knowledge that many Hungarian citizens erected historical Hungarian street signs on their private properties, during the last few months. This raises the question: Are all Hungarian private residence street signs endangered by the local government?

It is the opinion of István Csomortányi that these actions were directed exclusively at the five locations referenced. And that they were not necessarily subject to removal by the decree, as represented by the *Selina* Building Company employees.

This is substantiated by the fact that a total of five (5) specific locations were cited in the decree. No other Hungarian street signs were removed.

All five Hungarian street signs were simultaneously dismantled. The actual decree document was signed by Leontin Pățcaș, head of the mayor's office technical department, and other staff members.

Therefore, it is the aggrieved parties' conviction that they were condemned and specifically targeted by the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government. As such, this decree was issued specifically against them, with the purpose of condemnation, discrimination, and intimidation.

Mr. Orbán and Mr. Csomortányi stated that they would immediately replace the confiscated Hungarian street signs. They claim, rightfully so, that it is every individual's right to place Hungarian street signs on their private property.

Further, Mr. Csomortányi added that they would investigate the origin of the decree in the mayor's office. The investigation's purpose is to find out who authorized it, who drafted it, and who deemed it legally valid in Romania.

Likewise, the erection of ethnic Hungarian street signs on private property is guaranteed by Decree No. 1995/33. Therefore, it is clear that the perpetrators of this decree directly violated Romanian law. This action also constitutes a valid violation of European Union (EU) law, which prohibits ethnic discrimination and human rights violations.



Present day wall of shame, following the removal of the Hungarian sign

The Romanian government continues to disregard EU law, with respect to human rights. This calculated and chronic pattern of contempt for EU law is bound to surface and cause grave embarrassment to Romania.

Representatives of the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth (THY) and the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District will discuss, plan, and proceed with action on this case.

Exhibits of extreme measures by the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government are common.

The prior administration also initiated incidents of human rights violations, which were followed by scandals. Physical attacks (against ethnic Hungarians) consistently coincide with these activities.

In this instance, István Csomortányi was hit by an operative, while protesting the removal of his Hungarian street sign. His eye glasses were broken by the assault. Without any concern whatsoever, the operatives disregarded their act of abuse and continued removing the street sign.

During an official discussion with Mircea Ghitea, representative of the local government, THY was told that authorities would not conduct raids in the city. In addition, Ghitea stated that street signs would only be removed based on notifications, where the street signs did not meet “formal” standards or where the names were “improper.”

Conversely, even in the case of Romanian street signs, there is confusion. In Oradea (Nagyvárad), there is no standardization of street signs. The street signs are different in physical form, letter-font, color-scheme, physical mounting, and location parameters. This is a delicate issue, which continues to be contentious.

Addressing these factual points, Ghitea replied that Hungarian street signs may remain “non-standard” (presumably since there are no “official” standards) and that street signs would only be removed, after providing notice to the property owner.

In summary, the statutes of the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government, pertaining to street signs, are ambiguous. As such, all the Romanian street signs remain intentionally protected, by the ambiguity of the law, whereas, all the Hungarian street signs are “sitting duck targets” and remain intentionally unprotected, by the ambiguity of the law.

THY members announced that they would soon reinstall every Hungarian street sign that has been removed by the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government, without exception. Likewise, by the end of 2010, “we will add new Hungarian street signs in Oradea.”

Separately, THY will submit a petition to the local Oradea (Nagyvárad) government, demanding settlement of this issue. In conclusion, THY members stated: “If they sweep the matter under the carpet, we will bring it to justice.”

In their meeting with Ghitea, THY members presented a copy of Decree No. 1995/33, which grants the right to Hungarians to exhibit ethnic Hungarian language street signs.

This legislation was approved by the Romanian government and continues to be the law.

Previous Transylvanian Monitor issues are available at:

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ISSN 1841-0634