

## STATEMENT REGARDING ROMANIA'S EU ACCESSION

The General Assembly of the Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District is thankful to God for **Romania's** upcoming European accession. We draw attention to the fact however, that besides the achieved results since the 1989 fall of atheist-communist dictatorship Romania's society is still bothered by serious unsettled issues. Corruption, predilection of jurisdiction as well as the unsettled vital questions of **minorities** – including the **Hungarian community** – are such major neuralgic points.

With respect to the Hungarian community, we need to emphasise the following **problems**: delaying restitution of church and community property; limiting mother-tongue higher education; prohibition of re-establishing and/or establishing the Hungarian-speaking state university; objection of Transylvania's Hungarians' efforts to gain autonomy; neglecting the national-cultural rights of Csángó Hungarians and continuing their artificial assimilation; discriminating minority churches; obstructing the re-establishment of denominational education; sustaining the internationally criticised electoral law which discriminates minority communities.

The upcoming European accession provides a **historic chance** to the inhabitants of Romania, and also for Transylvania's Hungarians, since at one hand it gives our country a chance to fall into line with the developed Europe, and on the other hand, due to the principles of regionalism and subsidiarity, it offers the opportunity to phase in the self-government and autonomy forms, which are already well functioning in other countries of Europe.

Keeping in mind all this, the General Assembly was astonished to learn that while previous Romanian country reports included an itemised list of Transylvania's Hungarians' problems waiting to be settled – the elaborators of the 16 May 2006 report **completely forgot about the Hungarians of Romania**. We seek to emphasise, that the problematic issues as included into the 2005 country report have not been settled, and the Hungarian community has not "disappeared" from Romania either.

The General Assembly received with proper astonishment Commissioner **Olli Rehn's** relevant explanation: "the condition of the Hungarian minority improved since the **Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania** is member to the government coalition" (sic!). We are concerned because the additional comments of the Commissioner – "[DAHR] is the political party which has the right to negotiate on behalf of the Hungarian minority" – echoes the domestically well-known, misleading propaganda slogan of DAHR itself. We have experienced for almost a decade that this slogan has been used to sweep off the table any initiative or opinion or demand of Transylvanian historic churches and civil society – and this slogan has seemingly been now "smuggled" to Brussels as well.

Nonetheless, the General Assembly assesses with moderate recompense that the movement started with its own resolution in Szatmárnémeti/Satu Mare dating 2003 brought an impetus to the autonomy aspirations which were hushed up by DAHR. As a result, DAHR needed to act as promoter of autonomy in the election campaign, furthermore the European political public opinion could also hear about the just autonomy claims of Transylvania's Hungarians.

The General Assembly emphatically raises the **responsibility of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania** that by providing the EU officers with misleading and false situation reports about Romania, the Hungarians in Romania actually ended up with an extremely unfavourable country report this spring. In the same time, we are concerned that this year's country report – which **simply withheld important questions** – mirrors methods of political corruption, as habitual in Bucharest.

The General Assembly hopes that the **autumn country report** will include the relevant corrections. We trust that by our country's EU accession the European political culture and practices will prevail in Romania, and by no means will the Byzantine-type predatory policy gain space in the capital of Europe.

9 June 2006

On behalf of the General Assembly:

*László Tőkés*  
bishop - president

*Zoltán Kovács*  
first elder – president

## EU COUNTRY REPORT ON ROMANIA

### Transylvanian Hungarians neglected



A group of fifteen Members of the European Parliament have accused enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn of ignoring the plight of the Hungarian minority in Romania in his approach to Bucharest's EU membership bid. A letter delivered to the European Commission on Tuesday referred to the commission's "apparent readiness to regard the questions troubling the Hungarian minority, which have serious human rights implications, as being of no concern to the commission".

MEP György Schöpflin, who initiated the letter, said Mr Rehn's attitude towards the issue appeared to have changed and hardened by the time he gave a crucial assessment on Romania's readiness for EU membership to MEPs at the beginning of April.

Seventeen civil organizations of Transylvania, including the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, two MPs of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation initiated a campaign which resulted in more than 5,000 letters addressed to Commissioner Olli Rehn. The campaign aimed to warn Commissioner Rehn before the making the Romania Report public that he was misled regarding the actual situation of Hungarians in Transylvania.

The report presented on 16 May 2006 by the commissioner for enlargement Olli Rehn, to the European Parliament, gave Romania four red flags, three at the agriculture and one to the finances, as well as several yellow flags.

The chapter on the minorities included one single reference, namely the non-enactment of the minorities' law. Several MEPs drew up the attention that no reference was made to various issues signaled in 2005's October report though they were not solved. Besides others, these issues referred to restituting churches' properties or to the establishment of a state university in ethnic Hungarian language.

Mr Olli REHN, Commissioner for Enlargement  
Mr Michael LEIGH, Director for Enlargement

Your Excellencies,

According to recent news, it is your belief that the situation of Hungarians living in Romania is completely satisfactory, that the human and minority rights abuses facing the Hungarian community are basically resolved.

Reality however reflects a very different and disturbing picture for the native Hungarian community in Romania.

Romania virtually treats the legitimate request for autonomy of Transylvanian Hungarians as an act of treason, while it refuses to enact a long-awaited law on minorities. Decentralization, regionalism and the rights of national minorities – all embodied in the principle of subsidiarity – are the main principles of the European Union. It is incomprehensible why a prospective member of the EU, Romania, is so much opposed to these concepts. And it is even more inexplicable why high officials of the EU do not stand up for those very principles.

I would like to draw your honouring attention to four additional evidences of serious discrimination against Hungarians in Romania with the enclosed detailed case studies issued by the Monitoring Service of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania\*:

1. Inadequate restoration of confiscated Hungarian church properties (*encl 1*);
2. Discrimination against Csángó Hungarians (*encl 2*);
3. Hate-speeches daily against Hungarians (*encl 3*);
4. Obstruction of Hungarian-speaking education (*encl 4*).

Although our community is hopeful that Romania will qualify for EU membership, it needs to adopt much-needed reforms in the aforementioned and related areas. Romania can look to several European models, including Italy, Spain or Finland.

Romania should respect the rights of its Hungarian minority and the rule of law, thereby converting international commitments into deeds. This would promote genuine democracy in Romania and defuse tensions caused by discrimination and intolerance – and it would also strengthen the EU as it gains a new member.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop **László Tőkés**

President of Hungarian National Council of Transylvania

[Enclosures are available Transylvanian Monitor issues: No 14, No 15, No 16, No 17; [www.emnt.org](http://www.emnt.org)]

## ATTACK AGAINST TRANSYLVANIAN HUNGARIAN LEADER

Home of Bishop László Tőkés, President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania was attacked in the morning of 19 March 2006. The window of President Tőkés' study room was broken with a huge stone.

This violent manifestation was considered to be a result of the anti-Hungarian incitement, political intimidation and ethnic instigation which are again strongly dominating the Romanian political and public life. Anti-Hungarian manifestations in Romania can only be compared to once anti-Semitism. The anti-Hungarian verbal aggression of politicians and the press is culminating around the leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian autonomy movement.

The police started an investigation in the case.

**There was no suspect found however ever since.**



*The study room window of President Tőkés*

## GENDARMES WERE CRUELLY BEATING UP HUNGARIAN YOUNG ADULTS

**25 gendarmerie officers attacked and cruelly beat up in a club of Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni (Szekler-land, east Transylvania) 4 ethnic Hungarian young people on 17 June 2006. The gendarmes hit young girls too.**

The young people stated that the aggression started when one of them accidentally bumped a gendarme on the dance floor. They were attacked in the following second, and they did not have any chance against the 25 officers – declared M. V. to the question of Objective TV.

## Background information:

- **1988-1989:** Reformed Pastor László Tőkés spoke up against Ceausescu's despotism. In the month preceding the revolution of 1989, László Tőkés was kept in house arrest. All of the windows of his home were broken with stones.
- **1990-1996:** A continuous anti-Hungarian propaganda prevailed in the Romanian press.
- **1998:** Organizers of the Autonomy Forum in Alsócsernáton were denounced by Romanian extreme-right mayor of Kolozsvár/Cluj. The police started investigations and the organizers were interrogated by prosecutors.
- **2005:** The police illegally interrogated several times Bishop László Tőkés who did not accept the despotic decision of the local authorities of Nagyvárad/Oradea which deprived Reformed schoolchildren of their sports ground.
- **2006:** Ethnic prejudices, anti-Hungarian incitement, political intimidation and ethnic instigation dominated the Romanian political and public life in the first half of March. The verbal aggression regarding the draft of minorities, the re-establishment of the Hungarian university, the education of Csángó Hungarian children, etc, was culminating around 15 March, the national holiday of all Hungarians, and the demands for self-governance of Hungarians of Transylvania.

The boys were kicked onto the floor and the girls were smacked. L. E. lost his consciousness. A. J. was knocked out two teeth.

Medico-legal reports say that all of them suffered serious injuries.

To the question of Objective TV, Gendarmerie Commander of Gyergyószentmiklós, Lazar Laurentiu declared that he had heard about the case, but the duty off gendarmes did not actually belong to the local commandment...

## HOW TO EXERCISE THE EU'S PATIENCE?

### THE DRAFT LAW ON MINORITIES

On **15 December 2005**, the European Parliament expressed its "disappointment over the continued delay in the adoption of the law on minorities" and "wished to see the law on minorities approved as soon as possible, respecting the political criteria." (*European Parliament Resolution on Romania, Article 26*)

The draft was prepared all of a sudden by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, member of the government coalition. The Roma Civic Alliance, the Hungarian historic churches of Transylvania, the Alliance of Hungarian Civic Organisations of Transylvania had strong reservations against the text proposal, since there was no social and professional dialogue when drafting the Bill on National Minorities and .

In **mid-June 2006**, the Chamber of Deputies' Permanent Bureau decided to send the draft law on the minorities' status to the plenum for debates, even though the specialized commissions have not yet concluded discussions on the bill.

This signifies the first time a draft will be debated in the Chamber's plenum without being accompanied by the commission's report.

The Chamber of Deputies' secretary, Social Democrat Victor Ponta, said the decision was made following a proposal by Deputy Márton Arpad of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), which was approved unanimously by the deputies.

The draft law is currently being debated by the commissions for judicial matters, human rights and education. According to Ponta, the proposal was accepted as Márton pointed out that it is very hard to have the necessary quorum when it comes to the Deputies' commissions.

Thus, the deputies will start to debate on the minorities' bill this week, Ponta said. "All the issues that have not been tackled by the commissions are to be discussed in the plenum. **And we are talking about 800 amendments, which prompts me to say that we might finish the debates in about 8 years,**" stressed Ponta.

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You will find a lot of useful information on the history of East Central Europe, Hungary and the Danube Basin, published in the United States of America, in the English language on the homepage of Corvinus Library:

[www.hungarianhistory.com](http://www.hungarianhistory.com)

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Previous Transylvanian Monitor issues are available at:

[www.emnt.org](http://www.emnt.org)



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