



Erdélyi Magyar
Nemzeti Tanács
Hungarian National
Council of Transylvania
No. 39
February 2008

Transylvanian Monitor

minority and human rights watch

COMMUNIQUÉ

The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian historic churches contentedly fulfilled the request of MEP László Tőkés to actively support his work at the European Parliament with their suggestions and ideas.

1. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches appreciate the unique opportunity that through his mandate László Tőkés can authentically represent the interests of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches and their believers in the European Parliament together with other elected Hungarian-speaking representatives from Transylvania and the Carpathian basin. The clergy merrily acknowledges the fact that the Christian set of values can now be present in front of Europe's most important legislative forum in new and direct form.
2. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches salute and assure their full support dedicated to MEP László Tőkés' mission to strengthen the Christian spirituality and identity in Europe with the help of his programme entitled *Christian Europe!*, as well as to assert those religious and moral values in the European Union and Parliament that originate in our Christian heritage. In the same time the church leaders respectfully request from all the Members of the European Parliament to support László Tőkés' distinct objectives as far as possible.
3. The leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches were pleased to learn that MEP Tőkés had submitted an independent package of proposals to the Presidency of the European Parliament regarding the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In the same time the religious leaders fully support the proposals aiming at: (1) the organization of an international Bible exhibition in the European Parliament; (2) the organization of the dual conference – one in Brussels, one in Transylvania – entitled *Christianity and Europe* for the sake of real ecumenical dialogue between churches; (3) the invitation of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the European Parliament.
4. In order to share from the financial resources offered by the European Union, the leaders of the Transylvanian Hungarian churches recommend MEP Tőkés to possibly submit a motion for amendment to the current relevant laws so that the European Churches may win the right to participate in the competition for the EU funds.

5 February 2008, Nagyvárad/Oradea, Romania

Roman Catholic Archbishopric in Alba Iulia
Archbishop Dr. **György JAKUBINYI**

The Roman Catholic Bishopric in Oradea
Bishop **József TEMPFLI**

The Roman Catholic Bishopric in Satu Mare
Bishop **Jenő SCHÖNBERGER**

The Hungarian Baptist Alliance of Romania
President **István GERGELY**

The Transylvanian Reformed Church District
Bishop Dr. **Géza PAP**

The Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District
Bishop **István CSÚRY**

The Unitarian Church
Bishop Dr. **Árpád SZABÓ**

The Lutheran Church
Bishop **Dezső Zoltán ADORJÁNI**

STATEMENT
REGARDING DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

One year ago the recognised denominations of Romania submitted concrete proposals concerning the Bill on Education regarding denominational education and the teaching of religion as a subject at public schools. In January 2008, the issue became the subject of public debate. Partly, the Bill comprised the propositions made by the denominations and it included those articles which had already been organic parts of the Law on Religions passed with reference to denominational education.

The Transylvanian historic churches express deep regret that the Bill actually neglects or it has impaired the proposed fundamental principles which would grant full-scale denominational education, respect of church autonomy as well as governmental full-scale sponsorship accorded to denominational schools. The following conclusion can be inferred: the Bill does not accordingly support denominational education, despite the fact that Article Nr. 32 of Romania's Constitution enhanced the justification of denominational education already five years ago:

(5) *“Education on every virtual scale is granted in governmental, private and **denominational** institutions on terms determined by the law”*. (Paragraph 32, Article Nr. 5)

We state with astonishment that the section dedicated to higher education of the Bill mentions about the institutions of higher education maintained by religious denominations solely in one paragraph of, again, one single article. (Article Nr. 11, Paragraph 8).

On this occasion the Hungarian historic churches in Romania aim to express their aspiration that, in full accordance with their historical and religious traditions, they should be allowed to establish and operate educational institutions on every level, from kindergarten to university. Under such circumstances we ask for the denominational education, in the spirit of constitutionality, to be included and treated with proper weight within the aforementioned Bill. The Law on Education should guarantee independent denominational education and its gratuitous state, furthermore the autonomy of the educational institutions established by the churches. Moreover, it should assure and safeguard the right of the churches to either appoint, or recall the board of directors and the staff members of the religious institutions.

Considering the fact that the parents of the pupils and students attending denominational institutions of education are also tax-paying citizens in Romania, we emphatically demand that the law assures all three forms of subsidy – explicitly the fundamental, supplementary and compensational subsidies – as it does in case of state institutions of education.

It is our firm conviction that denominational education serves the benefit of the whole Romanian society. Once it is legally safeguarded, the educational institutions of the churches will positively influence the moral and spiritual life of our entire society. Therefore we demand that the law-makers include into the Bill on Education the proposals of the recognised churches of in Romania as renewed and accepted at their meeting at Oradea on 24 January 2008.

The above statement was signed on 5 February 2008, at Nagyvárad/Oradea, Romania, by Right Reverend **László TŐKÉS**, Member of European Parliament; Archbishop Dr. **György JAKUBINYI** of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia; Bishop **József TEMPFLI** of the Roman Catholic Bishopric in Nagyvárad/Oradea; Bishop **Jenő SCHÖNBERGER** of the Roman Catholic Bishopric in Szatmár/Satu Mare; Bishop Dr. **Géza PAP** of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District; Bishop **István CSÚRY** of the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District; Bishop Dr. **Árpád SZABÓ** of the Unitarian Church; Bishop **Dezső Zoltán ADORJÁNI** of the Lutheran Church; President **István GERGELY** of the Hungarian Baptist Alliance in Romania.

ROMANIAN “LANGUAGE LAW”

Romanian Senator Dan Voiculescu has been since 2007 insisting on the passing of such a law in the Romanian Parliament that would retract citizenship from all those Romanian citizens who “do not speak the official state language”. This initiative on the agenda of the Romanian Parliament is anti-constitutional, as Romania's Constitution states that (6/2) “The protection measures taken by the Romanian State for the preservation, development and expression of identity of the persons belonging to national minorities shall conform to the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens”. Further, Romania accepted the European citizenship agreement, whose Article 5 prescribes a “general prohibition of discrimination”. Thus the infamous and discriminatory “language law” of Dan Voiculescu is quite outdated in 2008, and only aims at harming the human and ethnic dignity of Romania’s national minorities.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The Hungarian Civic Party is to be formally registered soon in Romania, after the court decided that the new party can have a bilingual – Romanian and Hungarian – name: PARTIDUL CIVIC MAGHIAR - MAGYAR POLGÁRI PÁRT. The new party intends to become an alternative to the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and to be a modern, European party. It was founded in 2001 as the Hungarian Civil Union.



“We are excited! This is a huge satisfaction, especially after the bad experience of 2004, when we presented 56,000 signatures, and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania sabotaged us with the support of the government. This sentence is a legal and institutional framework as an alternative to the monopoly of the Democratic Alliance. We now can say that political pluralism is no more a dream, but a reality for the ethnic Hungarian community in Romania. Freedom of choice can be granted for our community from now on. And this is our immediate purpose by ensuring the liberty of election at the upcoming local elections and subsequently at the parliamentary elections in the autumn”, said Jenő Szász, President of the Hungarian Civic Party.

The registration of the Hungarian Civic Party was first tried before the local elections on June 6, 2004, but failed amid appeals on the validity of the support signatures. More precisely, on 1 May 2004, the Central Electoral Bureau unexpectedly rejected the registration of the lists with the supporting signatures of the Hungarian Civic Union in view of taking part in the local elections. Following the rejection, Jenő Szász accused the Democratic Alliance of having intervened for his party not being registered, fearing political competition.

Indeed, leaders of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania had repeatedly expressed their concern about the setting up of the Hungarian Civic Party which might split up the ethnic Hungarian community in Romania and affect its representation in the Parliament of Romania, considering that neither of them would reach the 5% parliamentary threshold.

“Since 1996, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania has been in the government, and we have seen them representing the interests of the Romanian majority and not the Hungarian minority,” said Zoltan Gazda, president of the new party in the Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfantu Gheorghe region.

IS KOSOVO A PRECEDENT FOR TRANSYLVANIAN HUNGARIANS?

Kosovo's declaration of independence is making big waves in our region. The Romanian parties that are currently preparing for elections are using the occasion to create anti-Hungarian hysteria. They are all lining up against Hungarians in Transylvania, which is similar in size to Kosovo and has a similar population to the Albanian province.

The 'deep concern' of the Romanian parliament is completely unfounded and unjustified. Romania must not be afraid of the Hungarians. Our national community in Transylvania does respect the Romanian constitution and territorial integrity.

At the same time, however, we have reason to expect that, based on the principle of 'territorial rights', Romania will deal with the situation of our national community in a European way, and ensure the personal autonomy of Hungarians (1) and the regional autonomy in Transylvania and other regions (2) on the basis of the principle of self-governance that applies in the European Union.

In line with Council of Europe Recommendation 1609/2003, based on the Gross report, we admit that autonomous regions largely promote conflict resolution and reinforce the stability of Europe.

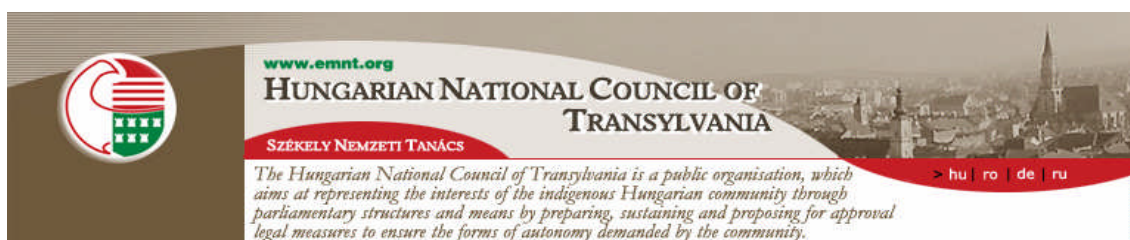
At the same time, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that Romania itself may also benefit from the new situation since the autonomy model of the Kosovan Serbs may also provide a solution for the Romanian communities living across the border in Serbia and Ukraine.

Taking all this into account, it would be advisable for Romania not to subordinate its amicable settlement to ethno-political prejudice, but to recognise the independent Kosovo as soon as possible, like most other Member States of the Union.

(Speech of László Tőkés, President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania at the Plenary of the European Parliament at Strasbourg, on 20 February 2008.)

Previous Transylvanian Monitor issues are available at:

www.emnt.org



Edited by the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania; drafted by János Antal and Zsolt Szilágyi
RO-410095-Oradea, str. J. Calvin 1; fax: +40 259 432837; email: antaljanos@partium.ro
ISSN 1841-0634