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24 January 2007

Discrimination against the Hungarian minority in the Romanian higher education system

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Lindblad and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Recalling the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994) ratified by Romania;

Furthermore Opinion 176/1993 of the PACE in which the Assembly appreciates the written declaration of the Romanian authorities in which they commit themselves to basing their policy regarding the protection of minorities on the principles laid down in Recommendation 1201 (1993);

Regretting that the commitments undertaken by the Romanian authorities in this regard have not been entirely met and as a consequence, ethnic Hungarian professors and students are still discriminated in various ways in using their mother tongue in higher education. As a result only 4.4% of the students in higher education come from the Hungarian-speaking minority and only 1.6% enjoy the opportunity to study in Hungarian, whereas Hungarians represent more than 6.6% of the total population in Romania;

Regretting the fact that although the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj, with its self-proclaimed three-language (Romanian-Hungarian-German) multi-cultural character laid down in its statutes, was declared to satisfy the needs of the Hungarian minority, in practice the three-language multi-cultural character is not reflected in decision-making, administration, language use and financial allocations of the University, hence making it unable to provide for the needs of the Hungarian minority, numbering 1.5 million people;

Noting that, despite the above-mentioned self-declared three-language multi-cultural character of the University, the Rector prohibited the use of the Hungarian language on different inscriptions in the premises of the institution; Hungarian students do not have access to all the subjects they required in their mother tongue;

Regretting that, as a recent manifestation of the above-mentioned discrimination, two university professors had been dismissed from the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj under the pretext of "damaging the property of the University", for having mounted certain general inscriptions on the walls in Hungarian, under their equivalent Romanian counterparts;

Noting that the two university professors had only acted in accordance with the letter and the spirit of relevant documents of the University as a three-language multi-cultural institution;

Reminding that the principle of university autonomy cannot overwrite the commitments undertaken by Romania with regard to respecting human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities;

Noting in this regard that Romania, 12 years after its signature, has still not ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Therefore, we, the undersigned:

- ask the Assembly to carefully examine, through its competent committees, whether the equal chances of the Hungarian minority in the Romanian higher education system are guaranteed, with special regard to the recent case of the two dismissed Hungarian professors at the Babes-Bolyai University;

- ask the Assembly to call on Romania to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

*Signed*¹:

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Abdülkadir ATEŞ, Turkey, SOC
Aleksandër BIBERAJ, Albania, EPP/CD
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Boriss CILEVIČS, Latvia, SOC
Kaarina DROMBERG, Finland, EPP/CD
Mikko ELO, Finland, SOC
Iván FARKAŠ, Slovakia, EPP/CD
Paul FLYNN, United Kingdom, SOC
György FRUNDA, Romania, EPP/CD
Piotr GADZINOWSKI, Poland, SOC
Andres HERKEL, Estonia, EPP/CD
Baroness Gloria HOOPER, United Kingdom, EDG
Ivan Nikolaev IVANOV, Bulgaria, NR
Eduard LINTNER, Germany, EPP/CD
Luc Zsolt NÉMETH, Hungary, EPP/CD
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Lajla PERNASKA, Albania, EPP/CD
Christos POURGOURIDES, Cyprus, EPP/CD
Klára SÁNDOR, Hungary, ALDE
Kimmo SASI, Finland, EPP/CD
Zoltán SZABÓ, Hungary, SOC
Rosmarie ZAPFL-HELBLING, Switzerland, EPP/CD
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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group