



Minutes*

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Hungarian Minorities Abroad
on Tuesday 19 December 2006 at 9.16 a.m.
in council room 55 of the main Parliament building

Contents

Proposed agenda	3
Participants	4
<i>From the Committee</i>	4
Present	4
Proxies	4
<i>Invitees</i>	4
Speakers	4
Chairman's introduction	5
Establishment of quorum	5
Briefing on the situation of Hungarian-language education in Romania	5
Address by Dr Péter Hantz	6
Address by Béla Kató	16
Address by Dr László Dávid	17
Address by Dr Pál Szilágyi	19
Questions and interventions	21
Replies by Dr Pál Szilágyi	29
Replies by Béla Kató	29
Replies by Dr László Dávid	30
Replies by Dr Péter Hantz	32
Chairman' summing up	32
Other matters	32

Proposed Agenda

1. Briefing on the situation of Hungarian-language education in Romania

Invited speakers:

Péter Hantz, lecturer, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár)

László Dávid, Rector of Sapientia University of Transylvania

Béla Kató, Chairman of the Sapientia Foundation

2. Other matters

(Edited version, excerpts)

Address by Dr Péter Hantz

DR PÉTER HANTZ, lecturer at Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca: Mr Chairman and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Thank you for arranging this audience and for devoting your attention to the problems of education for Hungarian minorities.

We greatly welcomed the joint five-party statement at the beginning of December, which demonstrated the possibility of national consensus on the future of the Hungarians in Transylvania. I would like to thank Zsolt Németh, Chairman of this Committee, and András Tatai-Tóth, head of the education committee the Hungarian Socialist Party, for their work in causing this statement to be produced. I trust that in future problems like the one we are discussing today will not be impediments to a national consensus.

I would also like to highlight the exemplary cooperation displayed by members from all parties in the European Parliament. I would particularly like to thank the MEPs Kinga Gál, Csaba Tabajdi and István Szent-Iványi for their cooperation and assistance.

My talk will focus primarily on the problems of Hungarian-language higher education in Romania, but this will inevitably cause me to touch on some very severe problems of school education, problems with serious implications for Hungarian-language higher education as a whole if not properly addressed. After a brief historical overview, I will turn to the problems demanding urgent attention. I will also make proposals for alleviation of these problems and outline some possibilities for political and civil action in which we might request your assistance.

First of all, how did we get here? It is well-known, almost a cliché, that every Romanian foreign policy success has been followed by reprisals against the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and in Romania in general. In 1948, there was Hungarian-language education throughout the whole spectrum in Transylvania: colleges of engineering and agriculture and the Bolyai University. The dismantling of Hungarian-language education in Romania started after the Paris peace treaty. Two dates stand out: the Bolyai University in Cluj, where teaching was in the Hungarian language, was closed down in 1959, and Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy was made bilingual in 1962. Engineering training was closed down in the nineteen fifties, and art education in 1976.

Shortly after 1989, it became clear that the Romanian state authorities were intent on completely eliminating the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. They attempted to preserve the pre-1989 setup and tried to stifle our attempts to establish structures with decision-making powers. The decision-making structures we were seeking could have provided the Transylvanian and Romanian Hungarian minorities with rights independent of political vicissitudes.

What were our chief demands in 1990? Primarily the establishment of a state-financed, Hungarian-language university in Cluj-Napoca, the Bolyai University, with a faculty of medicine in Târgu Mureş. Realisation of these hopes was impeded by what happened in Târgu Mureş in March 1990. We wished to have restarted the higher-education teaching of engineering, agriculture, forestry and veterinary in Hungarian. At present there is not a single publicly-financed engineering course in Romania where it is possible to study in Hungarian. We also set out to re-establish art education, and this is perhaps the only objective which was at least partly realised.

Let us look at the figures now, in 2007. The Hungarian minority makes up 6.6 per cent of the Romanian population but only 4.4 per cent of Romanian higher education students and only 1.6 – yes 1.6 per cent – have the opportunity of attending Hungarian-language higher education in Romania. There is no state-financed engineering, agricultural, forestry or

veterinary education, a situation unchanged since 1990. There are three institutions offering the chance to study in the Hungarian language: Babeş-Bolyai University, Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy and Târgu Mureş University of Drama. There is a fourth institution which is financed solely by the Hungarian state: Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania and its affiliated institution, Partium Christian University. Only in the University of Drama can affairs be described as settled. This essentially operates as a federation of two parallel universities, Romanian and Hungarian, which do not interfere in each others' affairs, and the whole institution works well. Although the absolute matriculation numbers at Babeş-Bolyai University and Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy have increased, there is no structure for Hungarian management, no Hungarian faculties and no Hungarian departments. Hungarians are effectively excluded from the senior positions; the one or two servile Hungarian-speakers in senior positions are very thoroughly selected and are the principal and most strenuous opponents of development of Hungarian higher education. Romanian dominance also shows up in the almost total absence of Hungarian signs and symbols in these institutions.

We should first ask the question as to why independent Hungarian faculties are necessary. Perhaps the most natural answer is that we would like them. The Hungarian minority in Transylvania proved by 500,000 signatures in the mid-nineties that they would like Hungarian-language higher education to be independent. The Hungarian Student Union of Kolozsvár considers itself as the student organization of the future Bolyai University. About 75-85 per cent of Hungarian lecturers openly support the establishment of Hungarian faculties, but about 10 per cent are still intimidated. The lecturers' petition for Hungarian faculties perhaps should have had three columns with the headings: for, against, and "intimidated."

An independent Hungarian structure would also be the guarantee of management efficiency. Why? Romanian deans and university managers, since they do not even speak Hungarian, are not aware of the problems of the Hungarian community and the Hungarian-language section of the university. Independent Hungarian structures would also be the guarantees of operational efficiency. In addition, if there were Hungarian structures, they would naturally be led by Hungarian-speakers. At present, we are severely under-represented in administration, and at present there are no Hungarian-speaking heads of department in Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy and no Hungarian-speaking deans in the Babeş-Bolyai University except for two deans of the theological faculties, of which no more need be said than that representatives of the theological faculty voted for our dismissal when the issue came up.

Independent Hungarian structures could also ensure that we had the right number of Hungarian teachers. One of the accusations against me on the Ethics Committee was that I had claimed several times that there was only one lecturer on the faculty of law. They claimed this was not true. I then produced official university documents showing that there was only one lecturer, to which they responded that these were in error, because there were in fact two lecturers. That even two lecturers, let alone one, are insufficient to provide proper legal training seems obvious enough.

Finally, and I think most importantly, these structures would be independent of political comings and goings. At present, it is solely up to the Romanian university management whether we employ or do not employ a teacher, whether a subject is to be taught or not to be taught in Hungarian. University charters are contradictory: some of their articles guarantee autonomy, others deny it. I will show you a copy of the charter of the Babeş-Bolyai University I have with me.

What is the obstructive strategy of the Romanian political and academic elite? They take what I think is very cynical, paternalist tone, expressing concern about the drawbacks of

establishing Hungarian structures. I do not think the Hungarian minority of Transylvania has any need for this concern. We are able to decide for ourselves what we need. A very frequent argument, especially from certain Transylvanian groups, is that the poor children would not learn Romanian well enough. This is not true. They do not learn Romanian at university, but in secondary school, and I venture to say that students at Sapientia University learn Romanian technical terms better than those at Babeş-Bolyai, because, it being a Hungarian university, they have to pay that much more attention.

Another common assertion is that there is no demand. The living rebuttal to that is we have already gathered 75 per cent of the numbers for a science faculty at Babeş-Bolyai University.

The other strategy aimed at intimidating Hungarian lecturers is that there will be no money for the faculties. At the end, I will bring up our request for some assistance in this respect. They are threatened by the assertion that the lower student numbers will make the Hungarian section unviable. This is not true. It is not true because the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) has won a double multiplier for Hungarian higher education. This would make the Hungarian faculties viable, but the per capita grant for Romanian universities will have to rise quite soon. This is because it is currently \$500 compared to €5000 in the European Union, and thus insufficient to maintain higher education. The Romanian economy is growing; therefore, if the per capita grant rises, I do not think there will be any problem with the Hungarian faculties, except perhaps for a transitional period.

It is an illusion that the Romanian-language section would maintain us if student numbers fell below a critical level. In fact Hungarian lecturers would be dismissed first. Sadly, many lecturers hope that if they behave themselves and do not, for example, sign a demand for setting up Hungarian faculties, they will be spared. History shows that they will not be. Many lecturers declined to sign the demand for setting up Hungarian faculties, saying they were signing for whoever pays more. One lecturer claimed he did not sign because Romanians put up with his poor professional performance, and would not do so otherwise. Many lecturers seem to be suffering from the learned helplessness syndrome, which develops when someone is prevented from resisting oppression for a long time and thus remains incapable of resistance even after the opportunity arrives. Others suffer from the Stockholm syndrome. Thankfully, these two categories account for no more than 10-15 per cent of lecturers.

The matter seems to me in many respects to have become stuck at the level of declarations of solidarity, and without political support nothing will happen. I repeat, without political support nothing will happen. Concessions have never been achieved solely within the university, with its highly anti-Hungarian, nationalist environment. Never in the last 15 years. I would like everybody to bear this in mind.

There was a step forward in 1993 when the DAHR decided to apply foreign political pressure, which resulted in Romania being monitored for two years after being admitted to the Council of Europe. Many concessions for Hungarian-language education in Romania were won during this time. I should note that the two people who wrote the report which resulted in Romania being monitored for two years were Barna Bodó and Miklós Bak. Barna Bodó is now Chairman of the Bolyai Initiative Committee and Miklós Bak is one of the committee's chief advisers.

I am not a politician, but I take note of the opinion of leading analysts. Leading Transylvanian analysts have said that the DAHR made a serious error with their strategy of remaining in the government at all costs. If the DAHR had left the government in 1998, then the Transylvanian Hungarian university would have become a reality; Bolyai University, and not the Petőfi-Schiller diversion.

We are often told by people in other countries that because the DAHR is in the government, there cannot be problems in Transylvania. Even when the minorities' bill was not passed by parliament, the DAHR stayed in government. I must warn you once again, that there will be very serious consequences if the Babeş-Bolyai cause is dropped. It has a symbolic significance, and will have an effect on the development of the Hungarian school system. To silence us in the university will set off a domino effect. What is at stake is not the personal position of my colleague Lehel Kovács and myself – we have incidentally already had many job offers at home and abroad – but the status of the Hungarian-language section within the university.

My request is therefore to exert your influence on every organization involved, including the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, to do their utmost in this regard.

I must now turn to some measures of Hungarian foreign policy which, in our own judgement and in the judgement of Transylvanian Hungarian analysts and Transylvanian Hungarian policy-makers, were not the most fortunate. I will also start here with a historical review, and repeat that every Romanian foreign policy success has been followed by anti-Hungarian reprisals. In 1948 we had cultural autonomy, and universities. After the Paris peace treaty, Székely territorial autonomy was gradually withdrawn, and the university and school systems were progressively undermined. In 1957, János Kádár visited Transylvania. He declared that socialism had to be built together, implicitly stating that everything was all right. In 1959, Bolyai University was closed, and in 1962 Hungarian-language teaching was gradually dismantled in Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy. In 1990, the state of Hungary recognized the new Romanian power structure within a very short time. Before that, Ion Iliescu promised everything: cultural autonomy, anything you like, so long as the Romanian power was recognized, and implemented nothing. In 1998, Romania joined NATO. In the lead up to its entry, Prime Minister Ciorbea made a whole lot of promises; afterwards, his government did not even pass the proposal for the Petőfi-Schiller University. In 2003, there was a joint Romanian-Hungarian government meeting. A few days before this, several thousand people demonstrated on the streets demanding that the Hungarian-language higher education issue be put on the agenda. Nothing was in fact achieved at the joint Romanian-Hungarian government meeting, and in the end not even the minorities' bill was passed.

I could continue, and indeed the same is true of the latest government meeting. Once again we are faced with a historical opportunity, the accession of Romania to the European Union. I feel that there are some national baseline issues which remain so even in events like this, and I trust that every party will take up this cause. I would like to thank the speaker of the house, Katalin Szili, for writing a letter to her Romanian counterpart. I would like to thank Mr Hiller for writing a letter to his Romanian counterpart. I hope that in future these things will not impede cooperation in what in fact are national baseline issues.

And so I come to what you could do for this cause, and what our requests are.

One: to address the matter in the Romanian-Hungarian joint committee. The Romanian-Hungarian joint committee was set up following the signing of the Romanian-Hungarian Basic Treaty. If this has no effect, I am aware, although I am not a diplomat, that the next diplomatic step is to send a note of protest. If nothing happens, please consider sending a note of protest to the Romanian government. Please use every possible international forum to propagate awareness that the Hungarian minority in Transylvania has no cultural autonomy and to draw attention to what has happened in Babeş-Bolyai University, events which I will come back to a little later. And please do everything that can be done to keep this matter alive at government level. If it falls out of the mainstream political agenda, it will wither away, and as I have mentioned, a domino effect will be set in motion. There can be no

talk of good neighbourly relations between Romania and Hungary or of Romanian-Hungarian understanding as long as what is happening in Transylvania continues, with lecturers being dismissed from Babeş-Bolyai University for their opinions, Hungarian signs being taken down, broken up and stamped on, and every means of Romanian policy being deployed to Romanianize Székely Land.

Now for the symbolic issues: symbols in the mixed-language establishments, and the signs affair. What set off this signs affair? Ever since 1990, we have been asking for Hungarian signs to be put up in mixed-language establishments or, if the Romanians cannot to put up with seeing Hungarian signs every day, for the establishments to be split into separate Babeş and Bolyai Universities. After we held the first minorities higher education conference in May last year, the University Principal's Office was forced to act, and a Principal's directive was issued to the effect that the issue of putting up Hungarian signs must be settled by June 2007. Since then, several resolutions have been passed by the governing council and the management council, all with the deadline 10 January 2006. On 8 November 2006, my colleague Lehel Kovács delivered an ultimatum to the university management: the 10th of January having long since passed, he said that if Hungarian signs were not put up within two weeks, we would put them up ourselves. The two weeks passed; the Babeş-Bolyai University opened an exhibition in the European Parliament proclaiming how multicultural it is. I would now like to show you some aspects of the Babeş-Bolyai University's multiculturalism. (*Takes books out of his briefcase.*)

The Babeş-Bolyai University has a little brochure, published in three languages, which it distributed in the European Parliament. I quote from the English version: "The symbols and inscriptions in the languages of the ethnic communities of Transylvania are present at the Babeş-Bolyai University." Here it is, have a look. This is my only copy of it, acquired by my colleague István Szent-Iványi, the Romanian observers having attempted to hide it from Hungarian MEPs. István managed to get a copy by a circuitous route, and immediately handed it over to me. I later obtained a French and a Romanian copy, also by very tortuous routes. You can look at them, but do let me have them back as they are my only copies. (*Laughter*)

Here is a little brochure on the multiculturalism of Babeş-Bolyai University in which, in slightly concealed terms but practically by name, I and Lehel Kovács are insulted because we offend the university's multicultural profile.

Here is a little book about the university's Hungarian section, stating word for word that there is only one lecturer in the faculty of law, the same statement which I was brought before a disciplinary committee for uttering.

And here is the charter of the Babeş-Bolyai University, with mutually contradictory clauses which attempt to prevent the autonomy of the Hungarian-language section.

Here is another information book about Babeş-Bolyai University, listing Hungarian recipients of honorary doctorates. Only three of them, the Nobel Prize-Winning professor of chemistry György Oláh, Professor László Csernay of Norway and Professor Ernő Pungor, have signed our petition for the reopening of Bolyai University.

I would like to show you some of the signs we were prevented from putting up in Babeş-Bolyai University: "Physics Library," "No Smoking" and "Office of the Dean of the Mathematics and Information Technology Faculty." A strange thing happened after the sign campaign. Following an encounter I had with one of the security guards during the sign campaign, the bag carrying the signs split open, and the signs were peeping out of the bag in our office. The signs were gradually taken off as souvenirs, so I would like to present to you four of them plus the sign that the chairman put up on the wall. The members of parliament and journalists present are welcome to take them away.

Another thing I should mention is a photograph in your folder of the rectorial corridor in Babeş-Bolyai University. The clay plaques displayed in the corridor commemorate only the Romanian rectors. There is a colour photograph of the rectorial corridor on, I think, the last page of this brochure. (*Shows*) The Hungarian rectors are not on the list. The rectors of the Bolyai University, for example, are entirely omitted.

The situation is similar in Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy. The Rector there refused to permit the placement of Hungarian signs on the grounds that it is a historic building.

Let me say a few words about why there is a need for an independent Hungarian university, and not just for Hungarian faculties. First of all, it would provide much stronger protection for us against political vicissitudes. The same consideration, incidentally, applies to keeping the board of governors of Sapientia University as it is and not subordinating it to any political party. Secondly, in an independent Hungarian university there would be no need to divert time and energy away from academic research and teaching in order to combat majority intolerance, as we are required to do. It would also afford many other benefits for educational quality and organization.

I would like to mention briefly the position of European national minorities. This is outlined on this little green sheet. Nearly every minority in Europe – and every minority in the European Union – numbering more than about a hundred thousand has obtained the right to an independent university or to a place in a multilingual university in the positive sense.

In Norway, there are only 100,000 Samis, but they have a university. It is small and has only a narrow range of education, but is a university nonetheless. (*Shows a document*) I have several of these with me if any reporters would like one.

Moving from north to south, there are 250,000 Swedes in Finland. How many is that compared to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania? About a sixth as many. They have a university system with one independent university and several multilingual universities in the positive sense.

To go a little further, beyond the European Union, the Moldavian Gagauz. This little people numbers a hundred and fifty thousand, and at one time faced nationalist forces which wanted to crush them, but they were protected by Russia. Now they have a university with four faculties, and are now so well set up that they do not even speak Romanian – I could only communicate in Russian when I was in Gagauzia.

There are 700,000 Macedonian Albanians, half the size of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. The Macedonian army bulldozed their university in 1994. One of their representatives was a sufferer of that siege. But things have happened since then, and there is now an independent Albanian-language university in Macedonia.

The Slovakian Hungarians negotiated successfully for the foundation of the Selye János University in Komárno.

The South Tyrolean Germans number about 250,000. Their higher education structure is very interesting. There are multilingual universities in the positive sense in South Tyrol, and students who would like to study in German can go to Innsbruck University in Austria at the expense of the Italian government.

In Spain, there are Basques, Catalans and Galicians. The Catalans form the largest minority group in Europe, and have a full higher education system. There are one and a half million Galicians, and they have a multilingual university where Galician is the primary language. The Basques have a university where every lecturer must speak Basque and Spanish. It is not surprising that there are very few Spanish teachers.

The Welsh minority in Britain. All Hungarians are familiar with János Arany's poem "The Welsh Bards." Only 25 per cent of Welsh people nowadays speak the Welsh language, which is one of the oldest in Europe, and there are multilingual universities in the positive

sense. These are covered in several Power Point presentations on the CD I brought you, one of which shows these universities' multilingual signs.

What is the position of the European Union on the Transylvanian Hungarians? I can sum it up in two points. One: they are afraid of the demands by non-traditional immigrant minorities. I think it is important to make a clear and emphatic distinction between traditional minorities and immigrant minorities. Two: it is not a matter of interest for the European Union whether there is or is not a university here, or whether there should be or not autonomy for Székely Land. I have become convinced that what the European Union is interested in is peace and quiet – and to a certain extent the same goes for the UN, as I found when I talked to the UN on this issue. If things are quiet when we have no rights that is fine for them. If there is peace and quiet with Székely autonomy and Bolyai University, that would do, as well. So we have to fight for our rights. Unfortunately, European history shows that rights are never given without a price.

What long-term structure do we envisage for Hungarian-language higher education in Romania? The question is highly complex. The Bolyai Initiative Committee approached Fidesz and the Hungarian Socialist Party for financial support for an updated study into this, for there have already been many studies over the past years. We think there is a need in Cluj-Napoca for a fully independent Hungarian-language institution of higher education which should grow out of the Babeş-Bolyai University. The need is not for a twenty-third state university of Hungarians in Romania, but for strengthening existing universities. We have enough universities, and we have to strengthen what we have and not set up new ones, Petőfi-Schiller or whatever.

In Târgu Mureş, the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania must be strengthened. It is envisaged as the centre of Hungarian-language engineering education in Romania. Unfortunately, however, it is unviable in the circumstances under which the Sapientia University is currently forced to operate. In addition, the medical faculties in Târgu Mureş must be made independent – these also would like to join with the Bolyai University. The Sapientia University of Csíkszereda (Miercurea-Ciuc) must also be strengthened. We see this as the best place for the future forestry faculty of Hungarian higher education in Transylvania. Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfintu Gheorghe). For reasons of national protection, or if you like national security, Sfintu Gheorghe ought to be strengthened, certainly not abandoned. The primary purpose of today's political leadership in Romania is to Romanianize Sfintu Gheorghe. They have swallowed the Hungarian position in Târgu Mureş, and now have turned their sights on Sfintu Gheorghe. I think that this should be the place for agricultural and veterinary faculties and faculties which already teach in Hungarian. In Nagyvárad (Oradea), Partium Christian University should be strengthened to make it into a high-standard college, and the college faculties should be maintained in Szatmárnémeti (Satu Mare).

I see a need for a much more coherent management for the whole structure of Hungarian-language higher education in Transylvania. This unified management would be able to resist local lobbies which at present weigh heavily on some aspects of higher education. Such a coherent management could stop the creation of duplicate courses, of which some, unfortunately, already exist.

This is all I wanted to say about higher education. I would now like to turn briefly to school education. I will not mention the non-specific problems. It is highly detrimental to the quality of school education that there is no institutional backup for Hungarian-language education. The backup institutions have no Hungarian employees and are situated all in Bucharest. There is a need for backup institutions based in Transylvania for in-service training, publishing and quality control.

Independent inspection bodies are also necessary. The most severe problem is that the number of students who continue in education after eighth year falls considerably short of the

national average. Between 1989 and 1994, the birth rate fell by half. When this follows through into higher education, Hungarian-language higher education in Romania will fall apart due to lack of students.

There must be assistance for setting up Hungarian schools. The DAHR does this effectively despite enormous resistance. As regards Romanian language examinations, Hungarian children should not be expected to pass mother-tongue language examinations. The Bolyai Initiative Committee submitted a complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Council, which upheld the complaint, saying that the situation is discriminative against Hungarian children. The Ministry, however, have made no moves to change the situation, and Hungarian children are still being failed in enormous numbers in the Romanian language examination.

What are the opportunities for action? This is my last point. The civil sector must exert its influence to produce reports and organize higher education forums. There must be more effort to inform public opinion abroad. We would like to request financial assistance for these.

What can the political sector do? I have two specific proposals that would require financial support. The first is the more important: a fund with a budget of about 100 million forints a year to tackle the obstacles in the way of establishing Hungarian faculties until they are established in Babeş-Bolyai University and Târgu Mureş University of Medicine and Pharmacy. The fund should be maintained until such time as the faculties become a reality, and should support lecturers who would like to teach in the future Hungarian faculties and who uphold the cause of establishing them. Funding would be needed for administration and for acquiring physical resources to raise the standard of education. I stress that the need for this will remain until the position of the Hungarian faculties consolidates.

There is a crucial need for a somewhat larger fund, with a cost of a few hundred million forints, to assist Hungarian students continuing at school after their first eight years. If this is not done within the next six months to a year, the follow-on effect for Hungarian higher education will mean the withering away of publicly-funded higher education, and I fear even of privately-funded higher education. Please exert your influence in the establishment of these two funds, both of which I consider to be extremely important.

There is of course a need for a thorough report on the aims of higher education and school education. The Bolyai Initiative Committee would like to play a part in this. The higher education report will take about six months to produce, at a cost of a few hundred thousand forints per month. Influence should also be exerted for obtaining accreditation for Partium University and proper funding for Sapientia University. Between the two world wars, the state of Hungary spent a few per cent of its budget on support of Hungarian minorities in other countries. The figure today is only a few tenths of a per cent.

My final point concerns the means of exerting political pressure. We would like you to help the DAHR in treating this matter as a political priority. The strategy of putting all our eggs in one basket and remaining in government at all costs is erroneous. We would like this problem to be brought up at Romanian-Hungarian government meetings, and not swept under the carpet as it has been up to now. To ignore the issue now is to spike the valve of a pressure cooker and then be surprised when it explodes, as is happening now. A much more resolute stance is required in international forums – the European Parliament, and the European Security and Cooperation Organization. Please exert influence in having the European Parliament pass the minorities' higher education charter adopted by the second minorities' higher education conference and – perhaps the most important of all, which is why I have left it to last – in having the European Parliament set into legislation European norms for protection of minorities. At present there is nothing of this sort, and so the Romanian government can cite anything they like.

I think that the present situation allows some scope for action. Everyone has a historic responsibility for grasping the opportunity, and that is what I am requesting of you now. I

would like to thank you for the five-party initiatives which have already been made, action that stands above party politics, and to request your continued support for the cause of independence for Hungarian-language education in Transylvania.

Please accept my thanks for granting me this audience, and I will be pleased to answer any questions.