

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY ON HUNGARIAN MINORITIES (18 August, 1992)

It is a precondition for Eastern and Central European stability and security that the various (national, ethnic, religious, political) minorities should not fall victim to the power politics of the state. As a result of 20th-century power and interest relations in the region, states have become the property of majority nations rather than function as an institution for the public good of all citizens. Accordingly, minorities are surrounded by suspicion, their citizens' loyalties are questioned, and their endeavours to preserve their language and culture are often termed attacks on state order and unity.

Peoples and states trying to find their place after the collapse of the communist system sadly tend to return to this outdated idea of national exclusiveness, and to use double standards. This is one of the main obstacles to the region's democratic transformation.

The tragic conflict between South Slav peoples, which led to the most inhuman crimes that have been committed in Europe since World War II, in the spirit of "ethnic cleansing", clearly shows this loss of direction. But it also shows the need for seeking radically new solutions through joint efforts by those concerned and the world community. Joint action must be taken to forestall not only bloodshed, but also the instigation of hatred against minorities, the fabrication of news and history, and attempts to change the ethnic make-up of regions by artificial mass resettlement.

In the Western half of Europe the integration of states is deepening, the freedom of settlement and employment has become general right. It can be stated that time has passed the nation-state idea by for good. Under such circumstances, efforts to set up ethnically pure states are considered anachronistic, inhuman, and contrary to the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter.

Here we recall the splendid traditions of Hungarian political thinking, the ideas of St. Stephen (cca. 970-975 - 1038, state founder, the first Hungarian king) on the coexistence of different peoples within a state, and József Eötvös (1813-1871, baron, poet, and statesman) saying in the mid-19th century that "the world is proceeding towards a general application of the federal principle" and "this is where we shall arrive one day".

A new peaceful order of states and nations can only come through the constitutional recognition of national and ethnic diversity within states. The necessary compromises should be reached through a democratic dialogue between the states and the national and ethnic minorities living on their territories. This is the way to the emergence of the internal constitutional order that will enable states to maintain really modern forms of coexistence of a new type.

The self-organisational ambitions of Hungarian ethnic minority groups, like those of other national and ethnic communities, represent a major element of the region's sociopolitical reconstruction, primarily the reorganisation of civilian society.

By the will of electors the Hungarian communities living in the Carpathian basin participate in their countries' legislative bodies and local authorities. They do not call into question the existing state frameworks, within which they want to build constitutional and legal

conditions for self-organisation, for exercising their rights and ensuring their cultural autonomy. Various levels of autonomy make up this process. In specific minority situations, this can be a system of personal autonomy in diasporas, self-administrative autonomy in case of local minorities, and territorial autonomy where a sub-regional majority is concerned.

In the view of the Hungarian government, the ideas formed by the Hungarian minorities about their own future fit well into the main European currents and offer a sound basis for minority policy cooperation between Hungary and her neighbours.

We are convinced that the evolution of genuine dialogue between the national minorities and their governments, and the resultant new relations between Hungary and her neighbours could largely lessen tension in the region and help create modern democratic systems of relations both within and between countries. This is how we can come closer to the lasting stability and integration of Europe as a whole.

[Magyar Külügyminisztérium, Sajtóközlemény, 40/1992 (19. August 1992)]