

**MEMORANDUM OF THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF HUNGARIANS IN
ROMANIA (DAHR) ON MINORITY CULTURE,
ADDRESSED TO MR. MARIN SORESCU, MINISTER FOR CULTURAL
AFFAIRS, BUCHAREST (JANUARY 5, 1994)**

Laying down as a principle that

national minorities, as organic parts of the society, make a rich contribution to the development of the society and state where they live in complete equality, and

emphasizing that

the rights of national minorities to cultural, linguistic and religious identity must be protected and promoted, the programme adopted at the 3rd Congress of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) recommends the principle of internal self-determination for the Hungarian minority. This principle is capable to offer the possibility to preserve and develop its national identity. Thus, persons belonging to the Hungarian minority in Romania are free of any attempts at assimilation against their will. This fundamental right, the right of identity is laid down both in the Romanian Constitution and in international conventions signed by Romania (see Appendix).

These documents emphasize the necessity to elaborate legislative regulations to guarantee the right of national minorities to a cultural life of their own and the need to take into consideration their specific historical and regional traditions. These regulations are very important especially in those areas where the democratic establishments are being consolidated and the question of national minorities, deprived of their rights in the previous years, requires special attention.

We consider that in the process of establishing the rule of law and Romania's integration into Europe, the Hungarians were given the possibility to exercise some of their rights and fundamental freedoms (i.e., to establish their own cultural organisations and association, to maintain professional art establishments, to receive a minimum state support for certain publications, to exercise the right of assembly). At the same time, the Romanian state failed to establish the legal framework for the decisive cultural fields essential for the maintenance of their national identity. Consequently, the process of assimilation and the acts of discrimination were not stopped (lack of appropriate measures to preserve in an institutionalized way the specific historical and cultural traditions, with special regard to monuments, historic buildings, archaeological areas and archives referring to the Hungarian minority; the culture of nationalities is not subsidized from the budget according to the principle of proportional financing; research in Hungarian studies is impeded; national minorities are denied to use their own language in specialized cultural institutions, archives and museums).

In order to stop this disadvantageous situation threatening the identity of the Hungarian minority in Romania, we submit the following requests and expectations regarding the elaboration of the Cultural Statute granting the accomplishment of self-determination, namely:

– the reestablishment of a department for minorities headed by a secretary of state granting the institutionalised practice of these rights;

– the proportional public financing of those organisations, associations and institutions that were established to preserve the specific cultural and scientific traditions and to organise the intellectual life of the Hungarian minority according to European standards;

– the establishment of a juridical commission in charge with the elaboration of a series of proposals that would supplement the present legislation in order to guarantee:

a. the unaltered preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the minorities and their display in museums; these objects shall bear inscriptions written in the language of the minority concerned;

b. the restitution and preservation of documents issued by churches, scientific and cultural institutions of national minorities by the owner. For the unimpeded study of their historical past, national minorities must have access to the National Archives and other libraries containing such documents;

c. the banning of all measures which violate the property rights and unimpeded functioning of traditional institutions, scientific and cultural associations of the minorities consequently, we request the restitution of all goods (real assets, archives, libraries collections, ecclesiastical objects etc.) These requests shall be included into the new bill on Cultural Heritage and Patrimony and into the Bill on National Archives;

d. the right of educational, cultural organisations and amateur artistic groups of the minorities to use the cultural infrastructure (cultural centres, technical equipment);

e. the right to establish separate funds to protect and preserve the monuments belonging to the history and culture of the minorities;

f. the right to post inscriptions in the languages of the minorities on every monument memorial house, holy place or on any other establishment that preserves the memory of certain important historical or cultural events of their native lands;

g. the right to maintain unimpeded contacts across frontiers with citizens or institutions of other States with whom the Hungarian minority in Romania shares a common ethnic, national and religious origin and cultural heritage. Thus we feel legitimate our claim that the DAHR representatives be present in those delegations which sign mutual cultural agreements with countries in which ethnic Hungarians are living;

h. the establishment of an institute of Hungarian Studies subsidized by the state which shall include all fields of research (linguistics, archaeology, history, folk art and folklore, history of literature, history of culture, protection of monuments, musicology, sociology, history of the theatre, etc.) which all serve the maintenance of identity and make possible the research of the everlasting values of this ethnic minority, part of the universal circulation of ideas, contributing also to the study of the coexistence of nations and minorities;

– the analysis of the system of subventions allocated to publishing houses and editorial offices publishing in the language of the national minorities and their proportional distribution in order to finance them;

– the thorough analysis in order to elaborate the schooling programme of higher education for experts in culture (for example cultural managers, librarians, etc.);

– the supply of village, town and county libraries with books written in the languages of the national minorities in regions inhabited by them.

Cluj, January 5, 1994

Markó Béla
President

Takács Csaba
Executive President

dr. Kötő József
President
Executive Vice-president

Appendix

I. Rights granted by the Romanian legislation

The Constitution of Romania:

Article 6.:

„(1) The state recognizes and guarantees the right of persons belonging to national minorities, to the preservation, development and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.“

„(2) The protecting 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.“

Article 36.:

„Public meetings, processions, demonstrations or any other assembly shall be free and may be organized and held only peacefully, without arms of any kind whatsoever.“

Article 37.:

„(1) Citizens may freely associate into political parties, trade unions and other forms of association.“

II. Rights stipulated in international agreements signed by Romania

„National minorities or regional cultures. The participating States, recognizing the contribution that national minorities or regional cultures can make to co-operation among them in various fields of culture, intend, when such minorities or cultures exist within their territory, to facilitate this contribution, taking into account the legitimate interests of their members.“ (Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed at Helsinki, August 1, 1975)

„In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.“ (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 27.)

[Quelle: Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, Documents 2, Cluj 1994, S.50-53.]