

ARGUMENTS

The ENCEF regards the European Union as a partner, which as the organisation chosen by the citizens of the Union protects formally national minorities' interests. The aim of the ENCEF is on the behalf of the representation of national minorities' interests, the creation of the bases of along term cooperation. The ENCEF does not strive after exclusiveness, it does not think that it is solely entitled and manages to represent the Central-Eastern European minorities. It aims at a formal and efficient cooperation with the help of the minorities and organisations standing behind it.

For the support of the aims of the minority organisations the ENCEF and the Ethnic Circle of Hungarian German living in Pécs - Baranya organised a conference on the 11th of March in 2006. in Pécs. At the conference besides the representatives of Hungarian, German, Roma, Croatian, Serbian, Greek, Slovenian, Polish and Armenian minority organisations, Hungarian and Moldavian minority organisations were also represented. The goal of the conference was that the Ethnic Civil Organisations could directly relate each other's experience, without the initiation of the political parties, and they demand united and unifiedly their needs toward the Hungarian government and the European Union. At the conference the invited experts held presentations then on the workshops the representatives of the minorities discussed the situation of ethnic education, the question of language and identity, the minorities' history, their cultural heritage, the minority individual and collective rights and their enforcement and the topic of ethnic social welfare. The participants arrived at the followings:

- 1. The terrible experiences of the past century have proved that the peaceful and democratic Europe can't be realised without guaranteeing the minority rights, furthermore their enforcement strengthens the stability and security of Europe.**

The ignoring ideology of the democratic values and human rights and the national and ethnic conflicts considerably contributed to the World War II, which caused a vast human and financial loss. Following the war the states of Western Europe stepped to the way of democratic development, while new ordeals were waiting for Eastern Europe. With the deportation millions were deprived of their fundamental human rights and chased out from their homes, then the socialist countries considerably restricted the human rights and at the same time they arrived at the minorities' assimilation. Following the disintegration of Yugoslavia ethnic conflicts, genocides threw light again on the fact that the ethnic tension, although with different intensity, is present till our time in Central-Eastern Europe. On the basis of the historical experiences it turns out that the stability of the democratic and continuously growing Europe's one of its base condition is the handling and arranging of the ethnic conflicts

- 2. The rights connecting to the minority existence are fundamental human rights; their enforcement is the pledge of the continuance of the given minority.**

The participants of the conference also gave an account of the fact that, although the state makes sure several rights for the minorities, these can be enforced with difficulties. The participants experience as a constitutional grievance that they cannot take part in the practice of power and the ethnic education is not assured in several areas. So, for instance, minorities living in Romania feel aggrieved at the opinion of nation state of the Roman nation. According to it the roman nation unified, in Hungary the parliamentary representation of the minorities is not assured. In connection with the planned modification of Hungarian suffrage

the law originator would like to introduce the registration belonging to minorities. This, on the other hand, recall bitter memories for elder generation, it can give motive to abuses.

3. The minority problems of Central and Eastern Europe are of historical reasons basically different from the problems of Western Europe, consequently their solving requires different approach and instruments as well.

In Western Europe because of the rulers' centralising efforts the formation of the nation states – with the assimilation of the minorities like Wales, Breton, – finished earlier than in Central and Eastern Europe. Rulers from here – at least the Habsburg Empire – for strengthen of their power with the adaptation of the principal 'Share it and rule', they strived to inflamed ethnic conflicts. By the 20th century the integrating empires (the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, The Ottoman Empire) disintegrated and instead if them also multinational, smaller states were established (e.g. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia). With the failure of the communism the multinational states' convergent power lost its strength and the former minorities became independent.

In Western Europe with historical reconciliation (German-French), the appreciation of the minority rights (Switzerland, Germany) and with the assuring of the autonomy in many areas (South-Tyrol, Belgium) the minority conflicts were more or less managed to arrange, so the minorities resorted to violent means only on Basque Land and in Northern Ireland. At the same time in Western Europe the other cultural immigrants, whose settlement is continuous even nowadays as well, arrived the last decades, cause more and more tension. In contrast to it in Central Eastern Europe the larger social movements – except the emigration and the period after the World War II – finished decades, centuries ago and the immigration and the rate of conflict resulting from this compared to the entire population is insignificant. The Western European conflicts resulting from the lack of the immigrants' social integration must not be mixed with the problems of the Eastern Central European national minorities integrated in society. In the former case we talk about a present process, while in the latter case a historically ended condition, in consequence of it we cannot talk about supply in the case of the given minority.

In Central Eastern Europe there is no such a state, which has no minorities. Century old grievances create distrust between nations, which with demagogy nationalism can be the source of serious conflicts and wars. Yugoslavia's breaking up shows well the hidden tension under the relatively peaceful surface, in the course of it the world could experience closely the ethnic purge's bloody reality.

The million Roma populations is a peculiar in Eastern-Central European minority that not only in social, culture and health disadvantage compared to the other population but also it has struggle with prejudices, racism. The social integration of Roma people (gypsies) are one of the biggest tasks of the Central-Eastern European states as because of financial and educational reasons their poverty and social exclusion will be reproduced. In 2004 at the Eastern part of Slovakia owing to the decrease of the social welfare rebellions broke out and the participants plundered the groceries. The order was managed to restore by the units of the army and the police.

The dissolution of the national tension and easing the distrustful atmosphere is every nation's minority's common responsibility, appreciation of other culture and the exploration of the historical grievances can lead to the peaceful coexistence. The goal must be such an open society that does not experience the minority as a historic constraint, but an exceptional opportunity, which can join the people and the culture more closely. In this historical process the European Union has to play an outstanding role and back it with its entire authority, as

with the Eastern enlargement of the Union the earlier almost unknown ethnic conflicts became a common Union case.

4. The Central and Eastern European civil organisations are not integrated, the level of the enforcement of minority rights in the European Union is not adequate.

Other parties usually do not take on the representation of the minority interests, so the minorities established their own parties in several Central-Eastern European countries. Where their proportion is high at the level of the country as well (like the Hungarian proportion in Slovakia and Romania) they may take part in decision making. For other minorities the participation in the decision making, that affects many of them, is relatively small. The settlement and minority governments compared to the civil organisations are not flexible and are usually politically bounded.

Their advantage that through the subsidy they can easily come by incomes while the civil organisations' application opportunities are limited.

The civil sphere is weak in Central-Eastern Europe and the minority civil organisations are particularly infirm. Many times the politics also plays a role in it (like in Serbia, Montenegro), neglecting significance of the control function. To the latter mainly the Roma Civil Society would lay claim. At the conference on the basis of participant's estimation the service and interests protection functions at different minorities are divided as follows:

Minorities	Roma	German	Transylvanian Hungarian	Ukrainian Hungarian	Serbian Hungarian
Services	40%	70%	60%	60%	100%*
Protection of interest	60%	30%	40%	40%	0%

*By minority representatives coming from Zombor (Serbia and Montenegro) till now they received aid only one time from the city

In many countries the Church is the social organising power and assures the conditions of the language, identity and education. In Ukraine the remaining of the Hungarian minority was due to the Romanian Catholic Church as well as the Orthodox or the Lutheran religion do operate in Hungary.

In connection with the civil ethnic organisations' role we conclude, that our functioning would complete the political organisations' activities, so between the minorities' political and civil organisations we could find the balance that even neither an external power could turn it its favour.

5. The regional borders of the European Union and the administrative borders of the member states do not cover the homogeneous cultural circle, in which the single minorities, in a territorial different region, in mass or dispersedly take up. In aid of the minorities a new approach is necessary.

After the world war I. and II., through the territorial arrangements, the consideration of the minorities' territorial position was pushed into the background and in many cases during the formation of the administrative boundaries it was ignored as well. The new member states of the formation of the regions, fitting into the European sphere, took these administrative boundaries as a basis not the economic-geographic-linguistics homogeneity. The Hungarian minority living in Slovakia struggled vainly for the geographically, economically, linguistically unified *Csallóköz* become an independent region, this area was broken up and

annexed to regions where the Slovaks are in majority. The Romanian *Székelyföld* is also in the same situation, it can look back on many centuries as a linguistic, historic and economic unit, and however it was incorporated into other regions. The area of *Bákó* County, where the *Csángó* minority lived, falls under 3 regions. So, it would be a practical solution suggested by us, that with the respect of cultural values to manage these areas as a unified region.

The medias' role is particularly emphasising in the matter of minority questions. The majority of the conference's participants related the appearance of the press. In this respect the *Csángó's* situation is the most alarming as they have no Hungarian-written newspaper. Because from 1955 to the nineties there was not Hungarian speaking education, in many areas writing is unknown. The complexity of the problem, because of the fear of the language is disappeared, needs an acute and separate research.

In the European Union's aiding policy the cultural and tradition preserving cooperation has to be handled in a stressed way as a device strengthen the union's cohesion and rate of subsidies based on the cooperation of the other regions available by the minorities belonging to common culture circle must be enhanced. It creates an inter-regional connection, this is why the media is particularly important within it the impartial, valid function of the press and the television.

6. The key for the continuity in the minority existence is to ensure the primary, secondary and university education for the future minority generations.

Many participants of the conference have mentioned the well-functioning civil connections; such as, first of all the twin-town partnerships based on civil services, cultural programmes. However the motherland (except Germany) in many cases does not support well enough the ethnic civil services. Besides, the cultivation of nationalities' traditions is more difficult by the hardly available aiding and also because the contact-keeping with other similar ethnic organisation is difficult as well. Good examples and experiences with direct pooling of expertise would have spread more effectively, than with the limited available mediatory means. Culture is a such value, that educate us to get to know and to respect each other's values and is a communal adventure common which brings together not only people, but also organisations, regions and countries.

7. The culture of the national minorities is part of the universal cultural heritage, the exercising and the financial support of the collective rights are essential conditions from the point of view of the continuance of the minority culture.

There are fewer and fewer minorities who speak the minority language as mother tongue. The age of these people is also alarming: with the reduction of age also diminish ethnic-speaker relation percentage. This process can be reversed in one way only: if the education of minority language and culture gets in to School-education. In many cases, referring to the shortage of money don't set up minority classes, hereby minority students' rights to instruction in the mother- language gets in matchless disadvantage contrary to their classmates, who speaks the official language. Parents, furthermore, don't have their child enrolled to minority class, because the intermediate and higher education in ethnic language is not ensured, therefore further education of their child will be endangered. For example, it is a similar problem in connection with the Hungarian minority in Transsilvania and in the Voivods, that although the basic language education is ensured, - many comprehensive and high-level branch can't be studied in Hungarian language. However, the institutions of the mother country remains "a closed door" for parents, who don't have available financial means, therefore equal chances what injures in connection wit instruction in mother tongue.

A special problem can be mentioned: of the Hungarian-speaking native of Moldavia. from the 9000 children in 45 village altogether of 720 child is able to study the Hungarian language, all in all 3 hours in a week.

In the same phenomena can be realised a special, but global question of the Roma's: they have a segregated role in the education system, which increase their social segregation.

8. The cultural relations between national minorities reinforce the cementing force of the cross border regions and the multicultural character of the European Union.

The cultural relation between national minorities formed and developed from generation to generation. If this chain of generations breaks off, the language and traditions vanishes forever, and the humanity will be poorer.

Most of the minority's rights can be practise only in the communities, not by alone. Individual ethnic usage, fostering of traditions doesn't exist. It is our responsibility to be much more protected culture and language, counterbalancing the effects of the globalisation, leaving also with this a richer cultural heritage to ours ancestors.

ENCEF holds the problem of national minorities a complex, complicated question. In order to be able to handle this requires, major efforts from the European Union then are exist in the present.

Enlarging the European Union in the immediate future (Romania, Bulgaria, the west part of the Balkan), the minority question will appear as a much more heavier topic as now.

For that – with enlarging – this questionnaire not to cause heavy and hardy handable conflicts in the European Union, principle and constitutional guarantees are needed.

This is, what ENCEF suggests, that to the constitutional engagement of the European Union adjuring private rights – should be get in also collective minority rights, as education, usage and the intention of traditions is unimaginable without it's community.

Our opinion is that is needed to constitute a kind of committee that observe and handle successfully the minority rights in the European Union. We also think that some member states doesn't pay enough attention towards the infringement of lawful rights what refers to the minority, law doesn't come into practice. A permanent committee would bring qualitative changes in the European Union's policy – towards ethnic people.

Roma minority's number and the weight of their problems justify a vice-committee; which is interested in their problems and deals with its observation.

Cultural heritage of minorities is a retainable value. It is the European Union's task to maintain this position. This treasure's endure could not be depend either on the goodness of the majority's society, nor on the market's competition.

Living traditions, practises and franchises of craftsman's trade are not material reminiscopes, they can't be closed to a box. If it isn't protected enough, it can be lost and can't be compensate any more. Constant budgetary aiding is the warranty to transport these live traditions.