



RESOLUTION regarding the church property restitution process in Romania

Restitution of property confiscated by the Communist regime in Romania is a process meant to compensate for crimes committed against national communities and their property rights, against individuals and against a value system in which the right of property is sacred. The restitution of confiscated land, forests, church-buildings and of other real-estate owned by the community is a primary goal for every religious and ethnic community in our country. The establishment of a legal framework for this restitution has proved to be a very challenging process. The restitution process in Romania is far from complete, it is characterized by contradictions and efforts at advancing this process are fraught with obstacles on a daily basis.

The Hungarian community in Romania is the largest traditional minority in the European Union, with a population of close to 1.5 million. The restitution of confiscated community property, including those owned by the historical Hungarian churches is indispensable for this community, in its struggle to keep its national identity. Restitution is also indispensable for this community to have its independent establishments and for its present and future viability as a community.

The case of the Székely Mikó High School has mobilized the entire Hungarian community of Romania due to the fact that although the building which houses the high school has previously been lawfully returned into the property of the Reformed Church, a recent doubtful court-ruling affectively re-nationalized it and condemned the members of the former Restitution Committee to lengthy prison terms, although they did their work at the time in full respect and in the spirit of laws.

On September 1st of this year, on the 'Day of Justice' 30 thousand citizens took to the streets of Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania), in protest against the re-nationalization of the building Székely Mikó High School and against the prison sentences handed down to the members of the Restitution Committee.

The case of the Székely Mikó High School shows the halt of the restitution process, while possibly creating a precedent aimed undermining the restitution process as a whole. There are hundreds of buildings throughout the country which were returned to their rightful owners and which house schools, just as they did before their confiscation by the Communist dictatorship - the fate of these are all cast into doubt as of now. All real estate that has been returned to its rightful owners faces now the prospect of re-nationalization.

We, Members of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, representatives of European national ethnic and minority language communities hereby express our solidarity with the Hungarian Community of Romania, a community that stands by the right to its property and that of its churches and stand by its expert politicians who carried out their work in good faith.

We decidedly support the continuation of the process of restitution of property confiscated by the Communist dictatorship in Romania, noting the responsibilities assumed by Romania at the time



of its accession to the European Union, according to which the state will resolve property claims by former owners in a favourable way.

Strasbourg, 13th September, 2012

Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament