

Academic rights in Romania and an Open Letter of Nobel Laureates (2006)

... to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, Traian Basescu, President of Romania and Calin Popescu Tariceanu, Prime Minister of Romania.

Hungarians are excluded from state-financed education in mother tongue at Universities in their homeland Transylvania i.e. Erdély in Hungarian. Erdély/Transylvania was carved out of Hungary on 4th June 1920 and now belongs to Romania.

Source of the referred open letter: MAGYAR LOBBI i.e. Hungarian Lobby <http://hungaria.org/hal/lobby/> via e-mail on Friday, February 10, 2006 1:41 PM.

Further reading concerning the cultural, scientific, and political background of that discrimination, please read the following article on this homepage (see "content"): Peace Dictate Trianon and the Haunting Past (2005).

Comment, as follows.

"Open Letter to

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

Traian Basescu, President of Romania

Calin Popescu Tariceanu, Prime Minister of Romania

Academic rights in Romania

Your Excellences, fifteen years ago, when the revolution in 1989 demolished Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship, a group of intellectuals expressed their concern about academic freedom and minority rights in Romania: they demanded the restoration of the Hungarian-language Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár. Now, the appeal is repeated because no progress has been made in achieving this aim.

This Hungarian-language university existed in Romania from 1945 till 1959 and its planned liquidation, by forcedly assimilating it into the mainly Romanian Babes-Bolyai University, was one of Ceausescu's personal political triumphs. Over the last fifteen years coequality in higher education could not be achieved and it is clear that the present structure does not serve the adequate training of Hungarian professionals in Romania. Although two private universities in Transylvania are sustained by the Hungarian government, Hungarians in Romania are heavily underrepresented in higher education.

There are successful examples of higher education in minority languages in Europe and elsewhere – e.g. Albanians in Macedonia, Catalans in Spain, Gagauz in

Moldavia, Hungarians in Slovakia, Sámi in Norway, and Swedes in Finland who enjoy the benefits of a public (state-financed) university or universities in their own languages.

We understand Romania's pressing current problems but feel that in order to create a truly democratic society, the Romanian authorities should grant the minority rights mentioned above to the one and a half million strong Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. We, therefore, urge that immediate steps be taken to re-establish the public Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.

8th of February, 2006

Yours sincerely,

Atiyah, Michael F., Sir, Prof, Abel Prize Laureate and Fields Medalist, Fellow of the Royal Society of London, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, UK

Gennes, Pierre-Gilles de, Prof, Nobel Laureate and Wolf Prize Laureate in Physics, Fellow of the Royal Society, Member of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, Institut de France, Académie des Sciences, College de France and Institute Curie, Paris, France

Hubel, David H., Prof, Nobel Laureate, Member of the US National Academy of Sciences, Harvard University, Boston MA, USA

Kandel, Eric R., Prof, Nobel Laureate, Member of the US National Academy of Sciences, Columbia University, New York, USA

Klug, Aaron, Sir, Prof, Nobel Laureate, Fellow of the Royal Society of London, University of Cambridge, UK

Levitzki, Alexander, Prof, Wolf Prize Laureate, Member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Lovász, László, Prof, Wolf Prize Laureate, Member of The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Microsoft Research, Redmond, USA

Oláh, George A., Prof, Nobel Laureate, Member of the US National Academy of Sciences, University of Southern California, USA

Wiesel, Elie, Prof, Nobel Laureate, Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Boston University, Massachusetts, USA

* * *

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